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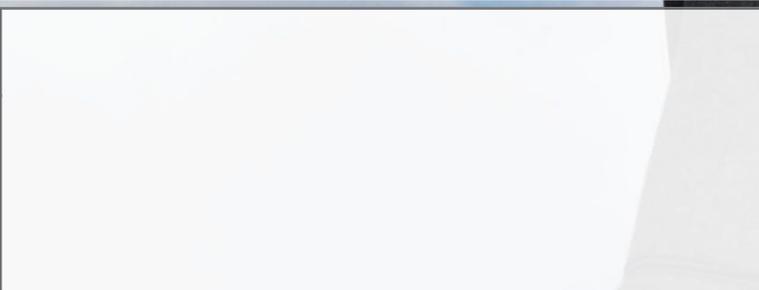
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 Emiko Hori, DTM:
A Musician's Mindset

Pianist makes the connection between music and speech.

BY CRAIG HARRISON, DTM, PDG



Emiko Hori's book draws parallels between preparing and playing music and preparing and presenting speeches.

For Emiko Hori, a shy girl born in Osaka, Japan, learning to speak was difficult. In kindergarten, she hardly spoke a word of her native tongue, Japanese. Arriving in California as a 13-year-old, her reticence also made it difficult to learn English.

“If I did not have music, I don’t think I’d have survived in the United States.” — Emiko Hori

“I was timid. I did not want to learn English. I did not want to make friends,” says Hori, DTM, a member of the WRY Toastmasters in Bellevue, Washington.

Instead, she channeled her energy into playing the piano. “Piano became my passion,” she says. “If I did not have music, I don’t think I’d have survived in the United States.”

Music also became the key, along with joining Toastmasters, to overcoming her

personal and cultural shyness. In fact, Hori has made such a successful transformation that she is now a professional speaker.

Hori won various competitions as a teenager before enrolling in one of the top music schools in the United States, Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana.

Immersing herself in the study of music, and especially piano, Hori studied classical composers; mastered the art of preparation, performance and appraisal; and developed a singular focus on her goals. While piano became her primary instrument and music her favorite “language,” speechmaking remained foreboding for Hori. However, her background as a concert pianist would turn out to provide a foundation for becoming a good public speaker.

Learning to Speak Up

After graduating, Hori delivered piano recitals throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. She wanted a more financially stable career, so she took evening classes

at Boston University in computer software programming while teaching piano during the day. However, transitioning into the high-tech field was a tough challenge. She recognized her need to speak up more at work and assert herself.

“In Asian cultures, and especially in Japan, women are not supposed to speak up,” she says. To survive, Hori needed to adapt to American culture. Still speaking with a thick accent and lacking formal training in business presentation skills, she sought help, and found Toastmasters.

Hori became a member of the WRY Toastmasters. She practiced her Ice Breaker like she practiced on the piano. She scripted her speech in Japanese, translated it into English, and for two weeks practiced like her speech was a musical score, rehearsing its rhythms, cadence and pauses.

When Hori presented the Ice Breaker, she engaged her audience. Little did she know she had made the connection between music and speech.



A Novel Idea

A few years later, Hori gave a speech about the parallels between piano performance and presentation. “People loved it, and marveled that they’d never thought about speechmaking in this way,” she says. “This became my ‘light bulb’ moment.”

Hori went home and catalogued all the ways practicing, preparing and performing piano was similar to speechmaking. With the encouragement of her club members, she expanded on the theme. She published a book in 2013 titled *Let’s Play Speech!: How to Give a Better Speech Using the Principles of Musical Performance*.

Through her book, Hori helps readers understand the many similarities between preparing and playing music and preparing and presenting a speech. She takes readers through the musician’s mindset—on and off stage—in technique, backstage preparation and onstage performance. In other words, she describes how to own the stage.

Her book is written in a way that beginners can use its concepts as they learn to write and deliver their speeches. More seasoned speakers will find numerous tips that resonate with their own practices for preparing and delivering presentations. And music lovers will smile at references

to pieces by Chopin, Debussy, Mozart and other classical composers.

Helpful Principles

For Toastmasters competing in contests, Hori’s stories of mentally and physically preparing for piano recitals will be especially helpful in thwarting nervousness and exuding confidence. She describes the 120/80 principle that’s popular in music circles: preparing 120 percent of what one wants to accomplish to achieve 80 percent of what is expected. Even her approach to performance appraisal parallels the speech evaluation process.

Others have sung Hori’s praises after attending her *Let’s Play Speech* workshop at a recent district conference where she both spoke and played piano. Diann Hitzel, DTM, a past District 2 governor, says, “I especially enjoyed Emiko’s stories about how she learned various performance secrets like the use of the pause and measure, preparation and delivery.”

Joyce Nugent, a past District 2 chief contest judge, says, “Emiko Hori had energy and enthusiasm to spare, and she lets both shine bright.”

Hori transformed her life by applying musical techniques to her speechmaking.

A former area governor, she recently leveraged her Toastmasters training to become a professional speaker. Among her recent engagements, Hori has spoken to audiences of high school students, parents, faculty and hospital patients through the Transplant Recipients International Organization (TRIO) about the connections between music and speech, and between music and communication. She has also spoken to the Swedish Medical Center (now Prudential Insurance) in Seattle, Washington.

You needn’t aspire to be a professional speaker to benefit from Hori’s discoveries. And you needn’t be musically inclined to learn from her musical approach to speaking. Her stories of overcoming shyness and fear will surely strike a familiar chord with many.

CRAIG HARRISON, DTM, PDG, founded *LaughLovers Comedy club in Oakland, California*. For more information about him, visit www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com.

Read a sample chapter of Emiko Hori’s book at <http://emikohorispeaks.com/lets-play-speech-12080-principle>.

Keys to Speaking Success

Here are speech delivery tips from musician Emiko Hori.

Music term	Meaning of the term	How to apply to speaking
<i>Dolce</i>	Sweetly	Soften the voice and smile often. Use to describe something precious (i.e., baby’s cheek or blooming flower).
<i>Crescendo</i>	Growing; i.e., progressively louder	In speech development, build the story with suspense, tease the audience with curiosity, and finally reach the climax.
<i>Espressivo</i>	Expressively	Express strong emotions (happiness, despair, joy, love or agony), particularly in dialogues.
<i>Encore</i>	Again	In case of a standing ovation, give a short recap of what was presented to the audience.
<i>Pizzicato</i>	Pinched, plucked; i.e., in music for bowed strings, plucked with the fingers as opposed to played with the bow.	Emphasize a particular word repeatedly in a short, rhythmic way (i.e., Go, go, go!).
<i>Arco</i>	Italian for bow. It is used as an indication to string players that they should use the bow, rather than pluck with the fingers (see <i>pizzicato</i>).	Generate a longer phrase within one breath. This requires control and projection of the voice to go from point A to B using a longer, steady breath.