Stage Presence for Beginning and Experienced Singers
Cabaret Connexion 2026 - Susan Dennis

Beginning Singers

Establish a Grounded Posture: Stand with your feet firmly on the floor, hip-to-shoulder-width apart, with your knees slightly bent. Open your chest to optimize breath control and vocal projection. Avoid leaning or shifting your weight constantly, it makes the singer look nervous.

Look above Eye Contact: True eye contact can be terrifying at first. Start by looking at the back wall of the venue or just above the heads of the crowd. To the audience, it looks like you are engaging the entire room.

Feel the Music: If you feel overwhelmed, let the music speak. Focus purely on delivering the correct notes, lyrics, and rhythm. It is more comfortable to say very little between songs, “banter”, and let your performance rest on the music.

Rehearse the Performance, Not Just the Vocals: Practice walking onto the stage, getting into your prepared pose, and adjusting the microphone. Rehearse in front of a mirror, film yourself, and sing for friends to get comfortable with the feeling of being watched.

Experienced Singers

Master the Space on the Stage: Do not get stuck in the center "sweet spot." Use anchor points on stage to move deliberately between sections of a song. Move to the left and right of the stage to pull in all of the audience.

Lighting Technique: Work intentionally with the venue's lighting—knowing where your spots are that have light. Don’t perform in the shadows.

Emotional Vulnerability: Exceptional stage presence requires taking emotional risks. True connection happens when you expose the raw subtext of the lyrics. If you make a mistake, don't break character; the audience thinks you meant to do this. Maintain the energy of the show.

Sing through your mistakes: Rehearse your set at home. Adrenaline and stage pressure pulls our focus on stage. You should be able to perform your set effortlessly at home before stepping in front of a crowd