REFINING YOUR CLOWN

I’m not funny. What I am is brave.
—Lucille Ball

MUSICALLY INCLINED

We’ve held off on using music until now because it has a powerful influence on clown choices and can lead you in the wrong direction if introduced too soon. Since your clown journey is now well underway and you have a solid impression of your primary persona, this is the perfect time to enhance your clown investigations with music.

When music is first introduced in the studio, clown emotionality and expressivity skyrockets. Singing, dancing, and playing instruments invigorates a clown’s spirit, and you will likely enjoy these opportunities to deepen your primary persona. Keep in mind that first-rate clowning carries with it a commitment to expressive physicality, and since we’re not using words yet, this is the perfect time to let your body do the talking. Remember to “think” with your physical being rather than relying solely on great ideas. This will allow the true nature of your clown to flourish.
SINGING

We’ll begin incorporating music with a simple lip-syncing routine to a song of your choice. There are numerous options for this exercise, starting with the style of music you select. Surprise yourself and your audience by choosing a piece of music that isn’t in your music library. Consider the following genres:

- blues
- pop
- folk
- opera
- rap
- heavy metal
- jazz scat
- reggae

In Slava’s *Snow Show*, Russian-born creator Slava Polunin yielded center stage to a trio of lip-synching clowns. With precision and panache, these red-nosed zanies sang their hearts out to prerecorded opera. The simplicity and passion with which they delivered the arias provoked gales of laughter. Once you’ve settled on a particular piece of music, be as precise as possible and throw your heart and soul into your performance.

**Exercise 3.1: This Is My Song**

This exercise demands thorough preparation—practice several hours before performing. Begin rehearsals by listening to the music repeatedly. Make sure that you learn the lyrics to perfection. Next, put on your nose and practice just saying the words. See what images come to mind. Make the words and images your own. Finally, practice “singing” along with the music. Be sure to express your true feelings as the song evolves.

Preparation: Bring music with lyrics you know by heart.

1. Enter as clown and connect with the audience.
2. Stand center stage as the music begins.