

Introduction to Issue No. 1

The studies, keynote addresses and reflections offered in issue # 1 of the Journal of Excellence point out that each performance domain poses unique challenges for the performer, and each performer has unique experiences within their personal performance domain. Yet there are common elements to the pursuit of excellence - links that connect those committed to being the best they can be, at whatever they do.

Marc Garneau, speaking about his experience as an astronaut, and Jing Guan Pirie, describing the challenges of a television host, bring up the very public faces these performers wear - a responsibility to an audience and the effect on the individual of being so well known. Both Pirie and Talbot-Honeck, in her study of classical musicians, mention the element of spontaneity that is essential in keeping performance a constantly evolving creation. Curt Tribble, a thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon and Garneau, both experienced at making life and death decisions in critical situations, discuss the importance of being able to deal with suboptimal outcomes. Professionals who spend large periods of time away from home, such as astronauts and national coaches (Zitzelsberger and Orlick), speak about the leaving process - the strategies they use to make it easier for all involved and the recognition that it is easier for them to be away than it is for those left at home. Hans Gertz, an opera teacher, and Garneau remind us that although our interest is in the mental, the mind interacts with the body and this should not be forgotten. Classical musicians along with other performers emphasize that the enjoyment they experience in their individual pursuits keeps them connected to their dreams and committed to their goals. Finally, in their presentation of the Mental Training Exercise for Quality Practice, Partington and Orlick provide performers, coaches and consultants with a useful tool for assessing the shared core skills: commitment, goals, imagery, focus distraction control and ongoing learning, all of which are necessary in the day-to-day striving towards greatness.

This first issue of the journal exemplifies the philosophy of the Journal of Excellence - to be international in orientation and scope, to be open to learning from people in different fields, and committed to the value of shared wisdom. We hope the articles offered here give you new insights into the pursuit of excellence, whether for yourself or in helping others to be the best they can be.

The Editor,
Louise Zitzelsberger, PhD.