

# **Practice is Not Homework!!**

## **Making the most of your practice time.**

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### **1. Basic Concepts**

- a. variety and fun are the keys
- b. you must feel successful after each session
- c. the most difficult thing is getting started
- d. practicing with a friend makes it go easier
- e. it doesn't have to be perfect – it's a process
- f. a performance deadline adds priority
- g. double the time you think you need
- h. project yourself into a performance situation
- i. it's not what you know, it's what the music conveys
- j. what would your teacher/audience say
- k. every session should have technique, reading, style and soloing
- l. discovery is the best teacher but it takes time
- m. set goals – short term, long term  
keep a practice log – schedule your sessions  
structured and/or non-structured
- n. you are in control/responsible for what you learn!!!!!!

**Many of the ideas given below can be used in other categories.**

### **2. Tone Quality**

- a. record yourself
- b. listen to professional performances
- c. quality is always quality
- d. build exercises that reinforce this basic concept
- e. what other instrument could play your part

### **3. Rhythmic Accuracy**

- a. use a metronome – GROOVE!
- b. metronome on upbeats
- c. play opposite rhythms
- d. play the rhythm by itself – complete values, say rests?
- e. take out the embellishments
- f. play to prerecorded music
- g. add lyrics

- 4. Note Accuracy, Articulations, Bowing, Sticking**
  - a. steps – count, sing, finger, play**
  - b. “post it note” technique**
  - c. 5 x rule – DRILL**
  - d. identify the problems measures**
  - e. make up variations**
  - f. theory, analysis – scales, sequences, chords**
  - g. hear/play it as if you were singing it**
  
- 5. Pitch**
  - a. use a tuner for every note – mark your tendencies**
  - b. identify what part of the chord you have**
  - c. know your alternate fingerings**
  - d. play on piano**
  - e. play with other section leaders**
  
- 6. Style, Dynamics, Phrasing, Tempo**
  - a. what is the mood/style – how to establish it**
  - b. add a storyline – cultural, historical**
  - c. point to what is written on the page while singing it**
  - d. identify phrases – what makes them different**
  - e. identify intensity (1 to 10)**
  - f. accents are explosions, use them wisely**
  - g. adjust your dynamics to fit the ensemble that is playing**
  - h. change the style – jazz, rock, waltz**
  
- 7. Performance Issues**
  - a. start in different places – recovery**
  - b. start at the end and work backwards – consistency**
  - c. know the accompaniment – fitting together**
  - d. know how to get on a off stage, bowing – etiquette**
  - e. establish tempo, mood, 1<sup>st</sup> measure before you play**
  - f. practice with the clothes that you are going to wear**
  - g. visualize a perfect performance before going to sleep**
  - h. memorization – theory, motion, dynamics**
  - i. your audience is with you**
  - j. there is no such thing as a perfect performance**
  - k. over-preparation provides confidence**
  - l. pre- performances**