



The Art of Good Practice — 練習法

-Your practice is the most important musical activity you will engage in your life.

-**Regular practice:** The actual amount of practice will vary from person to person: discuss this with your teacher. Many music scholars practise for a couple of hours a day on their main instrument: others, for whom learning an instrument is just one of many things they do, may do 10 or 15 minutes on perhaps 5 days of the week. Just *some* practice is infinitely better than none, but it is vital to do it regularly or you'll get rusty and disheartened when you actually get around to doing it. Decide when you intend to practise, and write the times in your personal diary.

-**Slow practice:** That means *very* slow practice, with no mistakes. You will learn the piece in a quarter of the time if you do this. Try to teach yourself: you are the best teacher!

-**Repeat:** Repeat difficult bits many times, always *correctly*. Single bars or even groups of just two or three notes can be repeated: sometimes fast, sometimes slow. Imagine you are wearing a "groove" in your memory that you hope to follow next time. You only know a passage properly when it *feels easy!*

-Your practice should reflect the content of your previous lesson and you should have a clear idea of what you are aiming for all the time. Start and finish the session with a feeling of success. Don't just play through your pieces: this is not practice! The following is a common plan:

Warm-ups: This can include improvisation (develops freedom with the instrument), sight-reading, and any exercises given by your teacher, or made up by yourself.

Scales and Studies / Pieces: Important for learning the geography of the instrument and refining your movement and co-ordination. Start with slow work on the sections you find most difficult. Occasionally play the piece through as an imaginary performance giving yourself permission to make mistakes this time.

Repertoire: Practice old pieces that you can already perform well. Memorise as much as you can and rotate them.

-If you can't practice on a particular day do some "virtual practice": a few minutes studying the music mentally away from the instrument is very beneficial.

-Practising is often hard work and we all experience times when we find it difficult to motivate ourselves: so take a pride in your ability to "get on with it" whether you feel like it or not!

Praise yourself for anything that has improved since the last practice, and be patient: remember that it is normal for things to take a while to improve.

Despite the amount of effort involved you should have an overall feeling of enjoying your music, and possibly, as many people do, get a sense of profound satisfaction from it!

Problem Solving

1. Set your goal
2. Identify any problems (to achieve the goal)
3. Explain the situation
4. Analyse the cause
5. Come up with some possible solutions
6. Test solutions and operate
7. Keep up 2 to 6 until the problem is solved.
(Remember to check and reassess your main goal at micro and macro level.)

Trivium

Input (Information)
Processing (Practice)
Output (Result)

knowledge > understanding > wisdom

“All we are ever doing is putting things together or taking things apart...”

Allow your judgments their own silent, undisturbed development, which, like all progress, must come from deep within and cannot be forced or hastened. Everything is gestation and then birthing. To let each impression and each embryo of a feeling come to completion, entirely in itself, in the dark, in the unsayable, the unconscious, beyond the reach of one's own understanding, and with deep humility and patience to wait for the hour when a new clarity is born: this alone is what it means to live as an artist: in understanding as creating. {Letter 3}

In this there is no measuring with time, a year doesn't matter, and ten years are nothing. Being an artist means: not numbering and counting, but ripening like a tree, which doesn't force its sap, and stands confidently in the storms of spring, not afraid that afterward summer may not come. It does come. But it comes only to those who are patient, who are there as if eternity lay before them, so unconcernedly silent and vast. I learn it every day of my life, learn it with pain I am grateful for: patience is everything! {Letter 3}

If you trust in Nature, in what is simple in Nature, in the small things that hardly anyone sees and that can so suddenly become huge, immeasurable; if you have this love for what is humble and try very simply, as someone who serves, to win the confidence of what seems poor: then everything will become easier for you, more coherent and somehow more reconciling, not in your conscious mind perhaps, which stays behind, astonished, but in your innermost awareness, awakeness, and knowledge. {Letter 4}

From “Letters to a Young Poet” - Rainer Maria Rilke (1875 – 1926)