

PRACTICE TECHNIQUES

DR. BRAD MEYER

“Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired.”

~ Martha Graham, Modern American dancer, teacher, and choreographer

INTRODUCTION

Three generic concepts behind preparing a piece:

- 1) memorization (which *IS* optional)
- 2) rhythmic/pitch accuracy
- 3) musicianship

String of Pearls by David Lang

MEMORIZATION

Chronological

Memorize Segment A
Memorize Segment B
Review Segment A
Review Segment B
Put Together Phrase A+B
Memorize Segment C
Memorize Segment D
Review Phrase A+B
Review Segment C
Review Segment D
Put Together Phrase C+D
Review Phrase A+B
Put Together Phrase A+B+C+D
etc.

Difficult-to-Easy

Example: 5, 3, 8, 6, 10, 1, 4, 2, 9, 7
Memorize 1
Memorize 2
Review 1
Review 2
Memorize 3
Review 1
Review 2
Review 3
Memorize 4
Review 1
Review 2
Review 3
Review 4
Memorize 5
etc.
Put Together
5+3+8+6+10+1+4+2+9+7

Away From the Instrument

Mentally running musical phrases in the “mind’s practice room.”

- stickings, notes, mallet intervals, dynamics, and body placement

Hand Separation (Kevin Bobo)

Dividing music into separate parts relating to what each hand plays

ACCURACY

Rhythmic Accuracy

The three main resources to improve rhythmic accuracy:

- 1) advanced metronome practice techniques
- 2) utilizing graph paper to analyze rhythmic groupings
- 3) notational software

Pitch Accuracy

The best ways to develop pitch accuracy:

- 1) relaxation
- 2) slow tempo practice
- 3) pinpoint playing zones.
- 4) efficient movement of the mallets (ie: stickings)/hands/arm/body

MUSICIANSHIP

The key to a virtuosic performance:

- 1) accuracy of the musical content
- 2) mastery of musical phrases and concepts



For more information, please go to:
<http://www.Brad-Meyer.com>

Brad Meyer is a proud endorsee of:
Yamaha Instruments
Evans Drumheads
Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets
Tycoon Percussion



"STRING OF PEARLS"

BY DAVID LANG

Ex: #1 - "mm. 1-21"

Musical notation for Example #1, measures 1-21. The piece is in 2/4 time and features a melodic line with various rhythmic values and accidentals. The notation is divided into five systems, with measure numbers 6, 11, 16, and 21 indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Ex: #2 - "5 over 3"

Musical notation for Example #2, measures 1-15. The piece is in 5/3 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern. The notation is enclosed in a box with a bracket above it labeled "15". Below the staff, the measure numbers 1, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 13 are listed.

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Ex: #3 - "mm. 404-407"

Musical notation for Ex: #3, measures 404-407. The notation is on a single staff in treble clef. It consists of a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with accidentals (flats and naturals). The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Ex: #4 - "mm 404-407 with stickings"

Musical notation for Ex: #4, measures 404-407, with stickings. The notation is on a single staff in treble clef. It includes the same notes as Ex: #3 but with fingerings (1-4) and stickings (1-2) written below the notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Ex: #5 - "mm. 42-67"

Musical notation for Ex: #5, measures 41-67. The notation is on a single staff in treble clef, spanning six lines of music. It consists of a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with accidentals (flats and naturals). The key signature has one flat (B-flat).