

Memorization

It is important to know how to play a piece from memory and often it is a requirement when you play for a jury or an audition. Memorization involves all of your senses and takes conscious practicing. Secure memorization does not just happen by accident! All of the following steps are involved and are interchangeable when memorizing:

1. **Theoretical/Intellectual:** This refers to how the piece is constructed. Formally outline your piece into small sections. Do you recognize any particular patterns/form in your music or are there any repetitions, etc.? Create a map for your piece. Ultimately, you want to be comfortable to jump around between sections or to improvise, in case you have a memory slip.
2. **Visual:** Can you picture how your piece looks on the page without looking at the music or how your hands look on the keyboard while you play?
3. **Kinesthetic – Muscle memory:** This usually happens automatically by playing your piece over and over. However, depending only on muscle memory is not a very secure way of memorizing a piece.
4. **Aural:** Can hear your piece in your head and sing it?

Sight-Reading

Sight-reading means playing a piece you have never played before. Make it a daily habit to sight-read a couple of measures of music. The more you sight-read, the easier it will become and the better performer you will become! Remember every time you read a book, you sight-read 😊

Preview your piece with these steps:

Scan your music for a general impression, notice patterns, make markings, feel the piece.

1. What clefs (treble, bass, other) are used - do they ever change?
2. What is your key signature, notice any accidentals/naturals.
3. What is your time signature – does the meter ever change?
4. Rhythmic note values - is there a pattern?
5. Scan L. H. alone (notes, texture – chords, melody, hand position – any changes?)
6. Scan R. H. alone (notes, texture – chords, melody, hand position – any changes?)
7. Where is the hardest place? – this will determine your tempo.

Preview activities:

1. Mark ups/downs, repeats, skips etc. in your score.
2. Clap, tap and/or play only the rhythm of your piece on a single note. Use l.h. and r.h. accordingly.
3. Finger or ghost play.

While you play, try to:

1. Leave your eyes on the page, not on your fingers. Keep looking ahead.
2. Continue to play; keep going – no matter what and improvise if necessary.
3. Continue to count. Playing the correct rhythm is most important while sight-reading.

→ Now, set a slow steady beat (metronome = 69-100), count one “free” measure and play....

Don't take yourself too seriously – laughing is highly recommended here! Don't worry, even if it does not work out right away! Just by sight-reading you are already progressing.