

DEVELOPING BETTER PERSONAL MUSICIANSHIP

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1. QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- What do you like about music?
- Why did you decide to play your instrument
- Who were or are your musical inspirations?
- What did you decide to seriously study music?
- What does music give to you, your friends, and to others, and what do YOU give to music?
- What do you contribute to the ensembles in which you participate?
- What goals do you have to improve your personal musicianship and what is your plan to reach them?

2. MENTALLY PREPARING TO WARM UP, PRACTICE & PLAY:

- Establish a daily regular warm-up and practice routine at consistent times, and stick to it!
- Take time to relax and feel good about your instrument and your love for playing it.
- Get rid of ALL obstructions to your warm-up and practice time and environment.

3. THE WARM UP & PRACTICE MENTALITY - NO HURRY/NO WORRY:

- This is YOUR time – use it consistently and wisely with no interruptions.
- Do simple exercises to loosen your neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, and hands
- Use a metronome **and rest as much as you play** to allow for time to prepare for more challenges.
- Start in the middle register and work outwardly, resting as much as you play.
- Develop a flexible routine: long tones, slurs, articulations, various scales, chord studies/arpeggios, different keys, range and dexterity drills, technical studies, etudes, solos, and so forth, with “x” time devoted to each.
- **DO NOT RUSH.** *WARMUP IS NOT PRACTICE – IT IS PREPARATION and ASSESSMENT! EFFECTIVE PRACTICE LEADES TO BETTER PERFORMANCE! PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS!!!!*

4. GOALS – Part 1: “Where do we go from here?”

- **Never cheat yourself out of musical enjoyment!**
- Eliminate doubt, guilt, or self-berating about any technical or consistency issues you may have.
- Develop a ‘**time line**’ with specific musical goals – short, medium and long term - and personal assessment.
- Develop an **aggressive sense of patience and purpose**, and celebrate the small victories in your musical journey.
- *“Accuracy is no accident!”* – Harry Herforth, Kent State University
- *“Nothing is Impossible, only very unfamiliar!”* – Harry Herforth, Kent State University
- *“What do want it to sound like?”* – Claude T. Smith, composer, teacher, conductor.
- *“Things take time.”* – once you start, keep going, you are on your own journey to success!
- *“Progress: it’s a scary thing!”* – Mike Parkinson
- *“Goals are not met by accident”* – John Maxwell
- *“Dreams are not achieved by average energy”* – John Maxwell

5. GOALS – Part II: “How do we get there from here?”

- Your primary goal, regardless of the style or setting, is to bring music to life ***‘off the page!’***
- What are your definitive or life-changing musical performances or listening experiences?

- Daily practice should result in devotion to a “crescendo effect,” aiming toward consistency and working toward reaching specific goals. In other words, make an investment, receive a dividend!
- Work on ease of playing scales and harmony/chords in all key, gradually, slowly and patiently, no hurry/no worry.
- Scales and harmonic structures/arpeggios: establish a plan to MASTER various scales and chord types over a period of time, practicing technical materials and applying them in musical settings.

- Scales commonly used by jazz musicians: 5 major, 4 minor, 4 diminished, altered dominant/super locrian, whole tone, major/minor pentatonic scales, and the blues scales.
 - Practice scales across the entire range of your instrument, from the root to the highest comfortable note, to the lowest, back to the root.
 - Single tongue up, slur down at a consistent tempo – no hurry, no worry – with a metronome.
 - Increase tempo, slur up and down, aiming for 16th notes @ 120+ to 140 beats per minute.
 - For a great **FREE** introduction to these materials and much more, visit these sites: <http://www.jazzbooks.com/jazz/fqbk> and <http://www.jazzbooks.com/jazz/free>
 - Play scales and arpeggios melodically and freely to improve your expressive quality in all registers.
 - Regularly check your pitch-intonation on a variety of notes and registers with a reliable tuner.
 - Metronomic practice – patient and consistent – is essential to rhythmic accuracy and breathing.
 - In rehearsals and performances - LISTEN to your pitch quality and balance in the section and the ensemble.
6. **GOALS – Part III: “Expanding horizons in your musical journey, keep on keeping on!”**
- Expand your knowledge and appreciation of the musical, stylistic, historic, and technical elements.
 - Play/sing along with recordings and the radio from a variety of styles: jazz, pop, rock, and funk. This will increase your knowledge of different keys, harmony, rhythm, melody, form and improvisation.
 - Learn the LYRICS to songs and play along with singers for better expression on your instrument.
 - EAR TRAINING: via recordings or radio, transcribe and transpose simple to complex melodic and rhythmic materials and apply them to your playing!
 - TRANSCRIBE and learn simple songs and solos to build your musical vocabulary.
 - Explore the written and sonic history of music beyond your personal comfort zone.
 - Pick one or two masterful performers on your instrument and several ensembles and listen to them repeatedly for a period of time. Decide what makes these artists outstanding.
 - Add the piano to your musical arsenal! It is the basic instrument for all of us and makes harmony, form, scales and melodies come to life!
 - AVOID MUSICAL CHAUVINISM and KEEP YOUR EARS OPEN, form
7. **LISTENING:**
- Listen to and observe MODEL performers regularly without interruptions, 20-30-40=60 minutes at a time. This is as important as daily practice.
 - Listen to music with friends! Discuss what you are hearing – share this experience and learn from it!
 - Avoid listening to music through ear buds or head phones – you can damage your hearing.....
 - What makes a particular musician’s playing or an ensemble’s performance distinctive or appealing to you?
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- FREE or inexpensive recording sources: NAXOS, SPOTIFY, YOUTUBE, school or public library/inter-library loan.
 - PERSONAL library: making an investment in high quality recordings, videos, music and books is essential for your continuing musical growth.

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