

Games to Test your Practice Skills

So you think you know a certain passage in your music? Want to put it to the test? Or maybe you need some way of practicing that phrase to get it "just right." Try the following the games. They'll improve your concentration and give you just the right amount of practice to achieve your goals. Games are taken from "The Practice Revolution" by Philip Johnston.

Seven Stages of Misery

Take a piece of paper and fold it in half, then half again and half again. When you open it up you'll have eight squares which you number 1-7 (write "Home!" on the last square). Put your marker on square 1. Play the passage. Each time you play it correctly, move your marker forward one space; each time you make a mistake, move the marker back one space. The object, of course, is to reach "Home" without spending forever at the piano.

The Great Race

Choose an imaginary opponent. Roll the dice. If you play the passage correctly, you get the points; if you make a mistake, your opponent gets the points. First person to 30 points wins. Play the game as many times as necessary until you win.

Beat that Hand

Deal four cards to your imaginary opponent. Add them up. Face cards are worth ten points, aces twenty, all other cards at face value. The object is to get a hand with more points. Turn over the top card on the deck. If you play the passage correctly, you get the card; if you make a mistake, the card is added to your opponent's hand.

Tic-Tac-Toe

This game is played like regular tic-tac-toe, except you don't take turns. If you play through your target passage correctly, you get to make your mark on the board. If you mess up at all, your opponent gets a move. The better you play, the more turns you get!

The Ledger Game

Divide your scoreboard into two columns: correct and incorrect. If you play through your target passage with no errors, put a check in the "correct" column. The object is to get six more "corrects" than "incorrects." If you are good, you can win in just six play-throughs. Or you can play it one thousand times incorrectly and 1006 times correctly, for a total of 2006 attempts. If you don't want to spend hours practicing, it's in your best interests to concentrate!

Note:

In all games, you can call a "Time Out" if you need to analyze a problem. But remember, you can't move forward until you've officially resumed the game.