

No Stopping: How to Play Through a Mistake in Practice or Performance

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“When the time for performance begins, the time for preparation is over.” Anonymous

What causes a performer to stumble or pause in practice or performance?

1. Nerves
2. Distractions
3. Health issues
4. Lighting
5. Catastrophe on stage
6. Negative comments
7. Insufficient preparation
8. Memory issues
9. Mistakes – honest or careless
10. Wrong octave
11. Take a wrong turn
12. Start in the wrong key
13. Start the wrong piece
14. Play major rather than minor, or vice versa
15. Major memory slip

Phases of Learning:

1. Introductory Phase – prepare
2. Developmental Phase – learn
3. Proficiency Phase – accuracy
4. Mastery Phase – memorize
5. Review Phase – refine

Divide Repertoire into Sections:

1. Small section = a line or phrase
2. Medium section = a few lines or phrases
3. Large section = a bigger chunk! – “A” or “B” or “C”, or entire Exposition, Development, etc.

Practice Plan for Repertoire

1. Perform
2. Practice spots
3. Sections (small, medium, large)
4. Perform

Preparing for a Major Performance

	<u>Day One</u>	<u>Day Two</u>	<u>Day Three</u>
Repertoire #1	small sections	medium sections	large sections
Repertoire #2	medium sections	large sections	small sections
Repertoire #3	large sections	small sections	medium sections

Then practice “performing” at least one of the repertoire pieces each day – for family, friend, or iPhone!

Practice Tips:

1. Practice in sections
2. Practice slowly, and also at various tempos
3. Achieve accuracy
4. Feeling of pulse or steady beat
5. Rhythmic accuracy
6. Listen during practice and during performance
7. Look ahead when reading music.
8. Think ahead when “performing,” but still stay in the moment.
9. Figure out or isolate the problem spot, why you pause, then identify problem note(s).
 - Practice the problem spot first.
 - Practice tip: use post-it notes to cover the measures before and after the problem measure.
 - Then add beats before and after (use post-it notes).
 - Keep adding beats before and after until you practice the entire phrase.

Memory Tips:

1. Mark the sections, or starting places, and practice and memorize in sections:
 - Practice starting at each section.
 - Play the first measure of each section.
 - If you have a memory slip, go to the next section.
 - Practice and memorize from the end of the piece.
2. Practice the sections in any order:
 - Use the app “*random #*” to choose a section, then play that section.
 - Pick a number from a hat, then play that section.
 - Copy music, cut it up by sections, and pull one at a time out of the hat, then play that section.
3. Memorize each section hands alone.
Memorize LH alone in sections for slow lyrical pieces (for added security).
4. Play the RH part with the LH. Play the LH part with the RH. (I also use this for students who injure a hand, wrist, arm, elbow).
5. Play the RH with one finger. Play the LH with one finger (Scott Holden).
6. Practice each section 3x perfect with the music, then 1x perfect from memory.
Practice each section 3x perfect from memory, then 1x perfect with the music.
7. Use a combination of 4 types of memory:
 - Aural memory
 - Visual memory
 - Muscle memory
 - Analytical memory