

PRACTISING THE ORGAN
Monday 28th September 2020
St Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey

OUR AGENDA

A. INTRODUCTION

I recommend *Masterclass* by Roger Fisher (Animus, no date)

1. Why do we need to practise?
2. What is practice?

B. PRINCIPLES

1. 'You are engraving musical patterns upon your mind, and what you engrave will be reproduced, whether right or wrong.' [E. Douglas Tayler, *The Secret of Successful Practice*, p. 6]

'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results' [Einstein].

2. 'To play the piano better, I have to know the music better' [Mieczyslaw Horszowski, quoted in *Masterclass*]

3. Practice is not the same thing as performance

4. Little and often

C. SOME WISE WORDS

1. 'Don't allow yourself to play wrong things' [E. Douglas Tayler]

2. 'Think ten times and play once' [Liszt, quoted in Roger Fisher]

3. 'Do not blame your fingers [or your feet]. It is the mind that makes the mistakes' [E. Douglas Tayler, p. 14].

4. 'An amateur practises to get things right, a professional until they cannot go wrong.' [Simon Lindley interviewed on Youtube]

D. TIME

1. When do we practise?

2. We need time to learn music, for the subconscious to do its work. Avoid last-minute practice.

Does anyone have any experiences that they would like to share of allowing time to do its work?

3. Make the most of your time. Usually practice involves breaking things down

4. Do not despise five minutes.

E. THE TOOL-KIT

1. The piano
2. Slow practice
'If you can play something slowly well, you can play it quicker'
[Madeleine Windsor]
3. Staccato practice
4. Dotted practice
5. Concentration on the left hand.
6. Dotting around
7. Working from the back
8. Practising silently (or partly silently)
9. Swapping hands
10. Singing parts
11. Transposing
12. The metronome
13. Splitting the music into tiny bits and making them overlap

Has anyone had a good experience of any of these tools or of any others?

F. THE DIFFICULT BITS

1. 'Never "bluff" a difficult passage: understand it' [E. Douglas Taylor, p. 9]
2. Make friends with it
3. Memorise it
4. Use your teaching assistants

Has anyone any experience with difficult bits that they can share?

INTERVAL

G. LAURENCE'S CATEGORIES

Laurence lists several different activities that come under the umbrella of 'practice'.

1. Learning something new
2. Reviving a piece unplayed for a while.
3. Preparing a piece for public performance.

H. AN EXERCISE

1. Think of when you played something really well? Why was it like that?
2. Think of a time when you played something really badly. Why was it like that?

Would people like to share their answers?

I. TECHNIQUE

J. THE BICYCLE

Be as forgiving as you are exacting.