

## **REFRAMING**

The piece is ALWAYS easier than it looks!

Go through the piece and identify the following :

- ◆ Repeating sections.
- ◆ Familiar key signatures.
- ◆ Recognizable Patterns
  - Scales, arpeggios, inversions, chromaticism.
- ◆ “Been there, seen that”
  - Things that remind you of other pieces.
- ◆ The ONE technical element you EXCEL at. . .
- ◆ The section where not much is happening.

## **THE LEVEL SYSTEM**

Measure your progress as you learn each line.

Usually a line is 4 measures of music.

- ◆ Level 1 — Can follow score while listening.
- ◆ Level 2 — Can play LEFT hand, slowly.
- ◆ Level 3 - Can play RIGHT hand, slowly.
- ◆ Level 4 - Can play LEFT hand from memory.
- ◆ Level 5 - Can play RIGHT hand / memory.
- ◆ Level 6 — Can play hands TOGETHER, slowly.
- ◆ Level 7 — Hands TOGETHER from memory.

Pencil in the level number you reach for each section  
on the left margin of your score.

## TABLETOP CHALLENGE

Take your score to a nearby table.

Choose a small section for study.

Ask yourself the following:

- ◆ Can I name the pitches?
- ◆ Do the notes move up, down or both?
- ◆ Do the notes move in steps, skips, or larger intervals?
- ◆ What accidentals come into play?
- ◆ Is there a pattern of any sort?
- ◆ Can I hear the notes in my head?
- ◆ What fingering would I use for those notes?
- ◆ Where are the rests?
- ◆ What dynamics are indicated?
- ◆ What articulations are marked?

Pretend to play the passage on the tabletop.

Then, play the passage on the piano,  
entirely from memory.

## FIRST LOOK SCOUTING

Take your score away from the piano, and scout the  
ENTIRE PIECE for the following:

- ◆ Initial Key Signature
- ◆ Key signature changes
- ◆ Time Signature
- ◆ Time Signature Changes
- ◆ Initial tempo
- ◆ Tempo Changes
- ◆ Structure of the piece — Sections, repeats
- ◆ Easily named things — Scales, chords, inversions

# THE SKETCH

Describe in GENERAL terms the following:

- ◆ The BEGINNING of the piece.
- ◆ The MIDDLE of the piece.
- ◆ The ENDING of the piece.

Examples:

“The beginning has lots of scales.”  
“The middle has a lot less notes to it.”  
“The end is like the beginning.”

Now choose ONE section of the piece and “sketch” out loud as many details as you can describe.

Examples:

“The beginning has lots of Ab major scales.”  
“The scales are all the same rhythm.”  
“The higher the scales run, the louder they get.”

# THE GREAT RACE

The Goal: To reach a score of 30 points.

Choose a small section of the piece.

Roll the “dice”.

**Perfect Playthrough -  
YOU get the points.**

**Even one mistake -  
Your OPPONENT gets the points.**

The Trick: The “dice” are imaginary!  
YOU decide the points up for grabs  
for each playthrough.

Variation: Use real Dice!

# THE METRONOME METHOD

Take a small section of the piece, and find the TRUE tempo that allows you to play through the section without hesitation or mistakes.

This is your BASE SPEED.

Only advance the tempo by 2 bpm maximum with each playthrough, until hesitation or mistakes occur, to reach your PERSONAL BEST SPEED.

Write that number at the top of your score in pencil.

Each day, try to increase your personal best speed by SIX BEATS PER MINUTE total.

# SCORE TRAWLING

Trawl through the score, marking the following details:

Dynamics — CIRCLE them.

Tempos — Draw a BOX around them.

Articulations — Draw a TRIANGLE around them.

Or, you could use 3 different colored pencils, or highlight markers you prefer.

## THEORY CHALLENGE

Describe out loud, every passage of the piece in terms of music theory.

### Examples:

“G Major scale, 2 octaves.”

“D minor triad arpeggio.”

“Chromatic scale.”

“A five chord going to a one chord.”

“A secondary dominant chord.”

“Inversions of a C Major triad.”

Try and describe each passage in any way that you can, or in as many ways as you can.

## THE HALF-LIGHT TECHNIQUE

To play very *fast*, you must be very RELAXED.

- ◆ Darken the room so all you see is the piano.
- ◆ Take a full minute of slow, deep breaths.
- ◆ Choose a passage or entire section to play.
- ◆ Begin playing, very slowly.

Take the time to hit every key directly in the center.

How LITTLE energy can you expend and still play the passage?

How small can you make your movements?

# SEVEN STAGES OF MISERY

Draw lines on paper to create 8 squares.  
Label the squares one through seven, and  
HOME.

Grab a token to play with.  
Take a small section of the piece, say 4 bars.

Perfect Playthrough -  
move AHEAD one square.

Even one mistake -  
move BACK one square.

The game is not over until you reach  
HOME.

# THE SCRIBE

The Challenge:

To WRITE OUT every bit of the first 4  
bars of the piece. . . .

. . . . . WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE  
SCORE.

You can play through the 4 bars as many  
times as necessary to get it written down.

Try to include EVERY SINGLE MARKING on  
the original score you can think of.