

Playing from Memory / Playing from music

We need to be playing with freedom when we play from memory or music

The way we use our eyes continuously affects the Primary Control and so our coordination in general

Over-focusing the eyes is poor 'Use' - it's very easy to over focus on the score in front of you

Even when you are sight-reading it is good to get out of the copy and see your colleagues and your environment

It is easy to get stuck in a straightjacket using a single strategy when reading music.

If you are looking at the notes you are playing, while you are playing them, you need a dramatic change of strategy.

If you are habitually reading a bar in front of what you are playing you might consider changing it

Looking forward and backward and up and down and away from the page is healthy

If you are worried about losing your place in the music you will probably over focus and limit your freedom – you will still risk losing your place as your vision affects your emotional state

If you look away from the music you will only get lost if you worry about it

To improve your freedom you can notice the white page behind the notes

You are capable of reading music very quickly; the system of notation is designed to make it easy and very fast

When you are reading music you are playing from your short-term memory

To memorize music it is good to understand it's structure.

Analyze the form of the movement and fill it up with the music

Make connections in as many ways as possible. The brain likes making connections and memory improves if you do, e.g. "the only fortissimo or pianissimo passages have this or that rhythm" - "These are the pitches in the legato tune on the 2nd string"

Work out where the key changes happen – notice how that changes the character

Notice repetition and development of the material

Memorize chunks – give yourself a limited time to memorize the next 16 bars

Memorize the opening then the ending then fill in the middle – being confident about the end of the movement gives you confidence earlier on

Play memorized material into a video recorder - You can see physical habits that get in the way of recalling memorized material

If you have a free neck and you are breathing well you have a chance of easy recall

If your eyes get stuck somewhere you will have trouble recalling memorized music, e.g. on the back wall or the ceiling of the room

If you are thinking, "what comes next?" you are less likely to play well – you are taking yourself out of the 'present'

If you have memorized something, you know you know it!

You can work on freeing up your recall

Are you breathing, are you balanced, are you seeing the room around you?

Fear of a memory slip makes a memory slip very likely

Get involved in making sense of the music

Get involved in ensemble playing

Enjoy your resonant sound

If you do have a memory slip, don't panic – keep breathing and let the music flow on – thinking back to the slip takes you out of the present

When you are putting the memory into your memory bank it will be easier to recall if it goes in with plenty of energy, the grooves will be deeper

If you can keep a free neck throughout the piece you will recall what you have learnt