



Lesson 3: Practicing Repertoire

Featuring: Leo Blanco, Professor at Berklee College of Music

Now that you're sufficiently warmed-up for your practice session, and practiced all of your technique. Let's jump into the next step, your repertoire. Now I'm going to help you select the ideal music to practice for your performance and what tools you have available for this, such as play-alongs. In this video we're going to learn how to leverage our effective practice time.

Build a repertoire; repertoire is a list of songs that you know pretty well that you feel comfortable playing at any time, whether it's an onstage performance or recorded session. Before you sit down to practice your repertoire, you should identify which songs to practice based on your goals. For example, it could be a classical piece you want to learn because it will improve your technique or it could be a jazz standard you'll want to play with your friends. Once you know what pieces to practice, there are a couple things you can do before sitting down. Play-alongs, play-alongs are a great tool to have; it's a great way to simulate playing with other people, and it's like having your own bassist and drummer that can play as slow or as fast as you want. You can practice at slower or faster tempos and develop consistency to improve your techniques. You can make infinite loops to practice as many times as you need to with a consistent rhythm section, you can choose to mute other instruments and focus on the harmony, counterpoint, melody, etc. You could learn a melody on the right hand without having to play the chords or work on chords in the left hand as an accompaniment in the play-along melody. It helps you to improve your skills as an accompanist and help you learn to improvise or solo in various music styles, tempos, and keys. It also prepares you to play with other musicians.

Before you're ready to start using the play-alongs there are other things you'll need to do. Get familiar with the piece of music we're going to study. You should learn the harmony, melody, and the formal structure. I would also recommend listening to many versions of the song we're going to learn, to give you ideas of all the possibilities for this piece. Again set up the long-term goal and do the short term goals, building up the tempo into it, also you can divide it into different sections of the tune. You probably don't play the whole tune right away, but it's better to divide in sections and practice to build into it. Lastly get to know your technology well. You don't want to waste time getting to know the metronome, learning how to switch up the tempo, this way you spend more time practicing than figuring out the technology.

Our first piece of music we're gonna play from the repertoire comes from the Casio concert play. Let's start practicing this piece by using the piano track on it and just practicing the right hand. Alright, so now we can either practice just the left hand separately or just mute the piano track and practice the piano with the orchestra.

Okay, now that we've practiced the right hand separately and the left hand, we are ready to play with the string orchestra so now we mute the piano track. So this is a very useful way to practice a classical piece. Other play-along options are the Berklee PULSE notation mixer, which you can plug into the aux-in of the keyboard. In the notation mixer you have different options, you can play with or without the piano track, with or without the click track and you can also loop certain sections of the song. Okay, so let's look at rhythm changes in the notation mixer, but without the piano track.

There are other play-alongs, but more important than which one you use is to know the value of it. You can change the tempo, you can loop sections of it, and it is a very powerful tool to practice with. Play-alongs will never substitute playing with real people, but it's a great way to prepare us for it. When you're ready to play with people you can take advantage of a great feature on the Casio grand piano, which is the duet mode, which splits the keyboard in two equal parts with the same range, which could be a great tool to use in your piano lesson. We have already talked about technique, and repertoire, and next video we'll talk about the fun part, free time. I'm going to talk about improvisations and one of the approaches I use with my students to help with improvisation.