

## **LEARNING A PIECE BY MEMORY**

### **and also to quickly learn a piece**

### **(from pianist Earl Ricker)**

#### **Notes**

- always memorize a measure through to the downbeat of next measure.
- Use touch, sight and ears. If a pianist or string player, watch the hands and memorize their actions. If a wind player, use a floor mirror to watch finger action while memorizing. Feel when keys are pressed or released. All instrumentalists can and should visualize the score...it is of vital importance to 'see' the score in the mind while playing.
- Start at half tempo or slower. Resist urge to increase speed of new material until after 3-5 days of repeated memorization work on any section.
- Speak (out loud) note names, dynamics and any note patterns for each measure or phrase being learned.
- At any point, player may go back a measure or more to reinforce memorization.

#### **Directions**

1. Put music on piano bench or music stand to the side. Do not put music in front of you.
2. Study first. Observe notes/dynamics/slurs/harmony/patterns. Then play 1st measure with music, SUPER slowly, 3-5 times. If a mistake is made or something is forgotten, start over.
3. Play 1st measure by memory, looking away from music, 3 times.
4. Study, then play 2nd measure reading notes, 3 times.
5. Play 2nd measure by memory, looking away from music, 3 times.
6. Put 1st and 2nd measures together from memory, 3 times. Go back to re-work any
7. Study, then play 3rd measure reading notes 3 times.
8. Play 3rd measure by memory 3 times.
9. Play measures 1,2, and 3 together, by memory 3 times.
10. Study, then play 4th measure reading notes 3 times.
11. Play 4th measure by memory 3 times.
12. Put all four measure together for memory 6 times, or until no errors are made.
13. Using each four measures as a new starting place, proceed as above.

Even if the goal is not actual memorization, using this plan will help students learn much more quickly and **deeply**.