

## Meaningful Memorization: A Holistic Approach to Secure Memory

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### History of Memorization – Hayden Coie

History of Memorization Pedagogy

- Memorization not an accepted practice until mid-nineteenth century
- Researchers and teachers sought to understand and develop methods of memorization
- Some historical documents that trace the journey from stage to studio:
  - 1886: Article published in *The Etude*\*, argued to be one of the first documents for systematic memorization
  - 1899: *Musical Memory and Its Cultivation* by Frederick Shinn\*, an early comprehensive look at memorization. Promotes four modes of memory: aural, visual, kinesthetic, analytical.
  - 1958: *The Pianist's Art* by Powell Everhart\* talks about memory as being a standard part of learning and playing piano.

Memorization Pedagogy Today

- Systematic approach and four memory modes still used in modern scholarship
- Music should be memorized to fully internalize it for performance

\*For full citation, see bibliography

### Science of Memorization – Serenity Fung

Memory Pathways: How your brain collects and stores outside stimuli to create different types of memory. These are not sequential and a combination is often employed to create strong memories.

- Procedural: muscle memory
  - Repeated motion at the keyboard
- Semantic: words on the page and spoken word
  - Score study and instruction from the teacher
- Episodic: context and setting
  - Rehearsing in the performance venue and on actual instrument
- Automatic: conditioned responses
  - Mental rehearsal, practice performing and how to respond to mistakes
- Emotional: strength and type of emotion related to memory
  - Trace emotional relationship to the piece

### Memory Recall: Utilizing Memorized Music – Blake Proehl

Performance cues

- Structural cues: movements, sections, sub-sections, and other boundaries
- Basic cues: technical details requiring attention
- Interpretive cues: conceptual ideas applied to specific spots
- Expressive cues: feeling to be conveyed to the audience

Maintenance

- Detailed Reviewing: keep score details fresh in mind and search for new ideas
- Mental Rehearsal: keep vivid memories and cues
- Practice Performance
- Expanding Rehearsal: short, frequent sessions → long, spread out sessions

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### Focus in Performance

- Pre-performance preparation: mindfulness, breathing techniques, positive thinking, visualization
- Stable intention creates secure concentration – scripting, visualization, audiation
- Always push forward!

### Teaching Strategies – Kristen Neel

Mindful Memorization: creative strategies to engage students' minds to memorize in different ways

Learning Modes – Application to Memorization:

- Visual: Puzzle Game
- Aural: Singing Recall
  - Three part: Phrasing, dynamics, and notes
  - Memorize melody by shorter, then longer segments
- Kinesthetic: Phrase by Phrase Choreography
  - Observing hand movement and direction, meaningful choreography, mental picture
  - First at keyboard, then away (choreography and audiation)
- Analytical: One Finger Exercise
  - Play RH or LH part with one finger
  - Emphasizes intervallic relationships

### Analysis – Clara Boyett

Using analysis can strengthen memory

- Analytical memory
- Analyze form, harmonies, scales, patterns, etc.
- Mark starting places in the score
- Streamlines memorization process and aids in memory recall and retrieval
- Should begin early in musical training
- Helpful for young children to draw the phrase shapes, form, etc. in their pieces

### Sources and Further Reading

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Musical Examples

Early Elementary: *Russian Folk Song*, from Faber Piano Adventures Primer Level (*not shown*)

Early Intermediate: *Arabesque*, Op. 100 No. 2 by Friedrich Burgmüller

**Arabesque**

2. *Allegro scherzando*  $\text{♩} = 152$

*p* *leggiero* *cresc.*

A A minor D minor A minor

a: i iv i

*f* B A minor

*dimin. e poco rall.*

A+ D minor **NEW!!**

*in tempo* *p* *cresc.* *p. dolce* *ten.*

D minor D minor A minor

*cresc.* *risoluto*

Edition Peters 8998

Late Intermediate: Sonatina in G Major, Op. 55 No. 2 by Friedrich Kuhlau

**Expo:** Allegretto

*dolce*

*p*

**G:**

*p* *legato*

*p* *mf*

D scale, start on A

Start on A

Start on D

Start on F#

Start on A

Start on A

Start on G