

# Practice Checklist

Read each of the eight categories of practice habits and then give yourself a grade from 1-5 in each category, with 5 being the best and 1 being the worst. After you have assigned a number, please explain in detail why you choose the specific number

## 1. Proper Environment \_\_\_\_\_

Are you practicing in a space conducive to thoughtful work? Is there good light? Is the temperature appropriate and comfortable? Are there distractions, such as a TV, telephone, or siblings walking in and out?

## 2. Regular Practice \_\_\_\_\_

Have you established a routine for your practicing, much like brushing your teeth, so that if you miss a day you feel “unclean”? Do you practice at the same time every day, in the same place? Are you consistent in this in this and other aspects of your practicing? Are you aware when your best time is to practice?

## 3. Planning: have goals! \_\_\_\_\_

Do you set specific goals? Do you have realistic goals? Do you really know what you are working on at the moment? Is it technique, tone, intonation, phrasing, speed, endurance, memory, performance, sight-reading, etc.

## 4. Disciplined and intelligent practice \_\_\_\_\_

Are you strict with yourself in your practicing? Are you focused and concentrating on what you are doing, or are you wasting precious time? Does your mind wander away from the tasks at hand? Do you practice methodically, or are you “all over the map”?

## 5. Be analytical \_\_\_\_\_

Are you analyzing the technical difficulties in a passage and breaking them down into bite-sized chunks that you are able to solve? Are you questioning your own solutions to the problems – your fingerings, phrasings, intonation, etc.? Are you thinking, or just playing?

## 6. Be musical! \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a story, philosophy or other extra-musical concept for your piece that will help you connect it to something larger? Are you thinking of color, pulse, motion, architecture, energy, and/or expressivity in your playing? Are you practicing mechanically – if so, you will probably play mechanically?

## 7. Relaxed Practice \_\_\_\_\_

Are you in a constant rush while practicing? Are you patient in your practicing? Are you aware of reducing tension in your playing?

## 8. Be your own teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Are you constructively self-critical about your practicing? Do you try to improve your practice techniques? Do you use a tape-recorder regularly in your practicing in order to get an “objective” view of your playing?

**Total Score**\_\_\_\_\_