



**Studio  
of  
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# *Working With Pianists*

## **Your Responsibilities**

1. Be professional at all times.
2. Contact the pianist.
3. Get the piano music to the pianist as soon as possible.
4. Arrange the rehearsals.
5. Pay the pianist.

## **First Contact**

1. **Call the pianist as soon as possible.** If they are able to play for you, it is important to give them as much time to prepare as you can.
2. **Introduce yourself:**
  - a. Give your name. Be willing to spell it, too.
  - b. Say where you got their telephone number. Also you can mention who you study with at this time. If they were recommended to you by someone, this is a perfect time to mention that person's name as well.
  - c. Tell them what instrument you play.
3. **See if they are available and willing to play for you.**
  - a. Give them the date and time of your performance(s). Don't even bother making this call in the first place if you don't know when the performance is. If (such as with an audition) you can't give them an exact time and/or date this far in advance, tell them as much as you do know (month, week, day, morning/afternoon/evening) and reassure them that you will call them back as soon as you know anything more.
  - b. Tell them the location of the performance. Some pianists may not want to travel a great distance if you are the only player that they will accompany at that event.
4. **Ask about price.** Many pianists may want to see the music before they let you know, but they should be able to give you a ballpark figure.
5. **Give them your contact information.** Make sure that they have your complete telephone number, e-mail address (if you have one and check it regularly), and a place to leave messages for you.

## **Delivery of Music**

1. Write the measure numbers in your music and the piano part - *each measure*. In addition to making the rehearsals easier, it is required for Solo & Ensemble Festivals anyway. Make sure that rehearsal marks agree between the piano part and solo part (that letter [A] is m.17 in both parts).
2. Talk to the pianist about how you can get the music to them. Remember, it is your job to see that they get it. Some options include dropping it off at Stu's where they can pick it up at their convenience, mailing it, or leaving it with a mutually convenient teacher or band director. Be sure to get the music to them as soon as possible.
3. Use original music only. Photocopying copyrighted music for a performance is **illegal**.
4. If the music is worth practicing and performing, then it is worth buying.

5. Expecting your pianist to sight-read or play in public without sufficient rehearsal is unwarranted, unprofessional, and unfair.

## Setting Up Rehearsals

1. **It is up to you to set up rehearsals.** Be flexible: your pianist most likely plays for several people. The pianist will usually know of a good place to rehearse outside of lessons.
2. Try to have at least two rehearsals during your lessons so that you can have your teacher coach you and give advice.
3. When setting up rehearsals, respond to all messages immediately. Don't wait a day or two, time is always too short.
4. Write them down! Keep a date book or family calendar.
5. If you must cancel the rehearsal, call your pianist immediately. It is also good to call them at work and leave a message if you do not speak to them directly. If it is short notice (less than 24 hours) then it is also necessary to call ahead to the place you were going to meet and leave message for the pianist there. For example, call and leave a message at Stu's Music Shop if you were going to play for a lesson and have them post a note to the pianist. Your pianist might not get the message at home because they are already at Stu's playing for someone else or out shopping or running errands.

## In The Rehearsal

1. Make sure that you are fully prepared for the rehearsal — don't expect the pianist to "pull you through." Technical passages should have been worked out with a metronome far in advance of the first rehearsal!
2. Be early to all rehearsals.
3. Always have a pencil *or two* in rehearsal.
4. Warm up *before* the rehearsal. Don't waste other people's time with your warm-up.
5. If you are playing a transcription of a song, it is imperative to know the words and provide them (with translations if necessary) to your pianist.
6. Always be polite, talk slowly and clearly, and listen.
7. Most importantly: lead. The pianist is accompanying *you*.
  - a. *You* must set the tempos with a clear preparatory breath and cue. (We'll work on this in lessons.)
  - b. Don't follow the pianist because the pianist should be following you. If you are both following, then the piece tends to slow down and lose excitement.
  - c. Try to know the piano part, not just your own. Listen to recordings whenever possible, write in cues on your own part to remember tricky passages or prep beats, and so on.
  - d. Don't expect to hide. You're the soloist. Don't expect the pianist to "pull you through."

## After the Performance

1. While on stage, bow first. Then with a graceful hand gesture, acknowledge the pianist.
2. Off-stage, thank the pianist verbally.
3. Pay the pianist. Try to do this at the performance, it's much nicer than "I'll mail you the check."
4. A thank-you note in addition to the verbal thank-you would not be out of order.

Following these guidelines will help you in any rehearsal situation, make you easy to work with (very important in the music world), and only improve your performance. **If your parent is the pianist:** you should thank your lucky stars to have such talented folks, but still treat them in the same professional manner and with even more politeness.