

Music At First Sight

Quick Start

A. Equipment: What you need to make this really work:

(Caveat: Newer equipment will do these functions faster, better, but this list is for those of us getting along on older stuff)

1. A sturdy music stand-as wide as possible to lay out the separate sheets of music in the "A" parts. (1-A,2-A,3-A).
2. A tape recorder. (Best is one with a remote control pad).
One with a pitch adjustment is great for tuning together.

Of Prime Importance

3. A good set of earphones that matches YOUR HEARING. Your phones are your entrance to world class music - -select them carefully. You will balance the sound of your own instrument WITH the recording by adjusting the recorded volume. Avoid painfully loud sounds by keeping the volume control knob close to you-easily reached.

a. Cost is not always the best criteria. Go to an electronics superstore with YOUR OWN CD or tape and try them all out with music YOU ALREADY KNOW.

4. Several recordings of the piece whose sheet music you will play. (Several recordings: strongly recommended).

B. Before you mark any of your parts: Photo copy the originals as a clean reference if you change your mind. (Especially the B and C parts. 1-B, 2-B, 1-C, 2-C etc.).

C. Before you begin to PLAY! Take the part: "Melodic Cue" and follow it as you play your recording. Get familiar with the notation, the curves and ups and downs - so you can more easily find your place in your OWN playing part.

D. Tune your instrument to the recorded sound. If the first note in your part sounds good- go with that. Put on your earphones and balance the volume of your recording to the volume of your instrument so you feel as if you are "inside" the group.

E. If you feel unsure of yourself - then follow part 1-A along with the recording without playing. See your own part unfold before you have to play it along with your recorded group. Now go over any difficulties you see ahead, AND prepare to skip over these, counting rests for yourself to easily re-enter the comfortable playing part. When ready, you'll master those problems more musically, and they won't sound labored, harsh, struggling.

F. Put the sheets for File 1-A, the Long Tones part, on your music stand. Play the first few notes of your lower part-and see if you can keep the upper Melodic Cue line in your sight lines - without staring at it. This usually takes a little practice. Give yourself all the time you need to be comfortable. Then prepare your first note, start your recording - and GO !

G. When file 1-A is easy to manage, put up 1-B. Same as 1-A BUT NO Cue music. Fewer pages-but you need to count the measures. Photo copy original BECAUSE you may want to mark your part where other playing ideas occur to you. These marks may later get in the way of new ideas as your concepts mature. A clean copy asks for your freshest ideas.*

H. An Important function of MAFS- is for you to try new and different notes for your part. Go to a photo copy of 1-C and, working from checks and notes you made on 1-B, sketch in pencil your ideas in the enlarged staff - YOURS- which has miniature staves of the Cue and the printed part-as locators.

I. Look over the Blank Manuscript (MS) files and pick a format that best fits your needs. Print it, and then write out your new part on photo copies. **

*** In the conservatory I went to, students borrowed their music from the library- and it always had everybody else marks on it - warnings, eccentric graffiti. When I could afford to, I preferred to buy my own copies...but my own graffiti reminded me of my earliest days with the piece.**

**** Send me a copy of your work, and if it can be included in future editions- you'll get copyright credit, and your choice of the next piece in our catalogue. I'm looking for skilled, resourceful improvising players of all instruments willing to master the software to join this collaborative.**