

Using File It

If you have never been in a situation where a teacher, friend or agent comes to you and asks you if you are able to play somewhere... *in two or three days...* you are lucky... so far! It is almost bound to happen to you at some point in your musical life. Stop the panic when it does. Keep the pieces you can play filed and you can just go to your repertoire file, pull something suitable out, check the people in the audience haven't heard you playing that piece recently and have all the information on the specific difficulties of the piece at your fingertips. The best bit? It doesn't take long! Really!

All you need to do is start a File It sheet when you begin learning a piece. This doesn't have to be every piece... just those you think would be suitable for performing at some time in the future.

Mark in the Title, Composer, Date of composition or musical period (don't know them? You should! Look them up!), the Tempo - great for when you want to flick through and find a fast or slow piece to add to a performance and the date you started the piece. If there are particular phrases or sections you have problems with, mark them in the practice notes section as you go along. These are the bits you need to practice first if you come back to the piece later.

When you finish the piece write in the date completed. If you own the book take a photocopy of the music, including any notes you have made on the score and attach the sheet to it. If it isn't your book write down who owns the book and their contact details. That way if you suddenly want to perform the piece again you can get in touch with the owner of the score and ask to borrow it! Add in dates/venues of any performances you do and any notes... e.g. Who the performance was for, any part that went particularly well... or didn't go particularly well... anything you think would help your next performance.

If you have a filing cabinet or similar you can file by title or composer. I just paperclip the music to the back of the sheet and put it in a clear plastic wallet and keep it ordered by composer in a box! You can download an Index Sheet or keep the index in a database such as Filemaker Pro or spreadsheet program such as Apple Numbers or Microsoft Excel on your computer. Check www.essential-music-practice.com/downloads.html for a database file coming soon! Alternatively Subscribe to the Practice Monthly Newsletter for more practice tips and news on new resources being put up on the [Essential Music Practice](http://www.essential-music-practice.com) site.

For more information on how to make your practice perfect
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