

Scintillating baroque ...

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Early Harps & Continuo
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... Serious fun

HOW TO PRACTISE

- As with any training, practise little and often.
15 minutes, 3 times a week is better than 3 hours once a week.
- 3 minutes concentrated, disciplined work will advance you further than 3 hours of unfocussed playing.
- Unfocussed practising is not only wasted time, it creates bad habits which are hard to get out of later.
- If you are not in the mood for hard-working practice, play through your music for pleasure, but without stopping!

THERE ARE 2 GOOD WAYS TO PRACTISE:

1. Get it right

Play several times through a small section (as small as it needs to be, to be sure of getting it right), at a slow tempo (as slow as it needs to be, to be sure of getting it right).

Get it right! Get it right 10 times consecutively.

Every time you get it right, you create a good memory, a good habit. (And every time you get it wrong, you create a bad memory, a wrong habit – so get it right!) Go slow enough, stay focussed and concentrated so that you get it right.

Get it right!

2. Don't stop

Play through a medium or long section without stopping.

Don't stop! Even if you make a mistake, don't stop.

By continuing, you develop your feeling for steady rhythm, and for a smooth flowing performance. (But if you stop, you develop the habit of stopping, which is hard to break, so don't stop!). Stay focussed and concentrated so that you don't stop.

Don't stop!

THERE IS A BAD WAY TO PRACTISE:

There is one, much-used, bad way to practise:

**~~Start off playing, make a mistake, and stop temporarily~~
~~Now correct the note you are on, and continue until the next mistake~~**

You have just rehearsed “making an error and stopping”. Next time, you are very likely to make the same error, and stop again. You have not properly fixed the error, or practised getting it right.

You have practised “getting it wrong”.

And your practice will probably be “successful”: you will get it wrong next time too!

3. Summary: either “**Get it Right**” or “**Don’t Stop**”.
Know which kind of practice you are doing.

Don’t fool yourself – bad practice does not help you. Actually, it sets you back.

HOW TO START WELL

Many errors come about from starting before you are properly ready.

1. Find the first note, confirm it
2. Find the first bass note, confirm it
3. Focus your concentration
4. Give yourself two (slow, tactus) beats intro before you play the first note.

This makes sure you are really ready, and gets you into the swing of the piece, before it even starts.

Start well, every time, including each time you repeat a section in practising.