

# Fresh Photocopies

Creating your own custom scores, tailored for practicing

**S**imone's score has reached the point where there are **more pencil markings than notes**. There are circles and reminders, and then reminders *with* circles around them...

She's tempted to get out an **eraser**, but is worried about losing months of feedback.

Then suddenly she realizes. "I've been **such a dope**" she thinks. "There's a much **easier way** to handle all this"

What was her **new plan**?



**R**EMINDERS, NOTES and markings are inevitable additions to any score, but managing them can easily get out of hand.

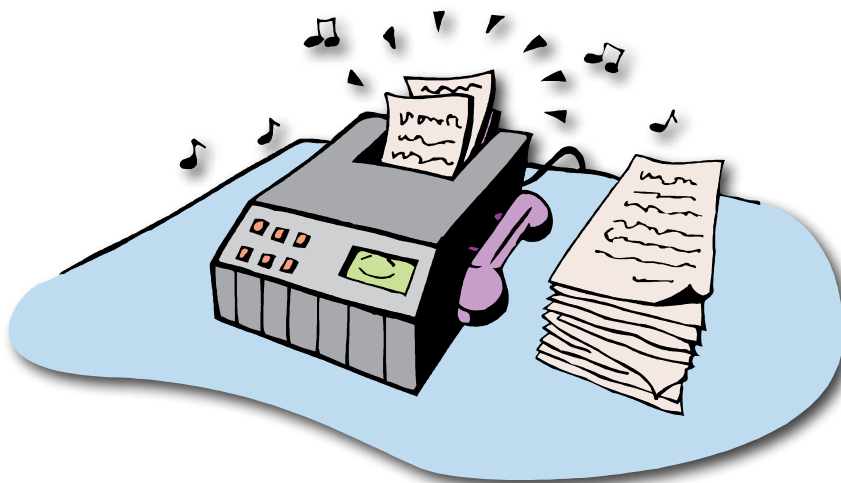
The traditional method is to dump everything on the single copy that you own. So from day one, every correction, suggestion, overlooked dynamic, tempo marking and segment division will all be written on the same document.

While this sounds efficient—after all, every note that has ever been made about this piece is all in one place—it actually causes plenty of problems.

### Why single scores don't work

It may well be that there are a hundred different things that you need to remember in your piece, but having them all yelling at you at the same time is not the way to notice them all.

If all your notes are going on a single copy of the score, that score is going to become horribly cluttered with reminders. Open any page of a piece you've been working on for



a few months, and you'll see what I mean.

**COLOR CODING** 84 is one way to relieve some of this, but even that is going to be limited by the score's scarcest resource—*space*.

The problems don't just stop at clutter though.

### Old news

All of those markings may have been relevant at some stage, but that doesn't mean that they're still relevant *now*.

For example, a circle around a key signature change, with a note saying "Bb Major!" may well have been

useful in the first week you had this piece, but is just **deadweight** information the day before you actually perform the piece. (I'm assuming that by then, the key signature change will be well and truly known to you!)

As a result, not only does your score become cluttered, *it becomes cluttered with information that has a use-by date*. Unfortunately, the markings themselves **don't magically disappear** on that date. (Yes, you can erase them...but do you?..)

So making all your marks on the same score creates both clutter and a backlog of out-of-date information. Sounds bad enough.

But there's worse to come.

### One marking, one vote

With a **single glance** at your cluttered everything-is-circled score, if there is a reminder on page 2, and then another on page 3, *they'll appear to be equally important*. They're both circles. One marking, one vote.

That doesn't always reflect reality though. It may be that the reminder on page 3 is **critical** to all future practice on this piece, while the marking on page 2 was merely a **possibility to try**. However, since they're both clothed exactly the same way—pencil markings on your score—there's nothing that immediately tells you one is more important than the other.

As a result, of the hundred markings on your score, the **Essential** and the **Probably-Can-Forget-This** dine at the same table—along with, as we saw above, the **Not-Relevant-Any-More**—and they're very hard to tell apart.

The end result is that while your score will be covered with advice and information, all you'll see is “blah blah blah”. Doodles, scribbles

and concentric ellipses that you'll quickly learn not to notice.

### The solution...

...is surprisingly simple. Instead of trying to cram every note ever made into the same score, you're going to **distribute** all these notes through **lots of copies** of that score.

That gives you the opportunity not only to have fewer markings on each score, but to **group** markings according to type.

To prepare the way for all this, whenever you get a new piece, the very first thing you should do is make yourself a **stack of photocopies** of that piece. Not to pirate the

piece, but so you now have a dozen or so **fresh working copies**.

You then keep those copies handy when you're practicing, and will **choose** your copy based on the type of work you're about to do.

This now enables a small but very **powerful change**:

*Writing notes on one copy will still leave the other copies clear.*

So no matter how much you write on copy#4, it won't make the tiniest bit of difference to copy #7.

As we'll see, that's going to open up a huge range of new possibilities in your practice room.

### Uses for Fresh Photocopies

So apart from helping to minimize clutter on the page, what are these photocopies *for*? Try these ideas for starters:

#### Notelearning Copy

This is the copy you would use for your **initial work** with a new piece.



Anything you discover as part of **SCOUTING** 299 you'll mark on here, together with anything that will help you learn the piece faster (such as actually **writing** in the letter names of multi-ledger-line notes, or the **counting** under any complicated rhythms)

This is also where your **teacher** will mark any wrong notes, fingering errors, clef changes—the “oops, you missed this” mistakes that are typical of the early stages of a new piece.

Why would you want a special photocopy for this? *Because most of this information will only be relevant when you're first learning the piece.*

That's ok—none of your other photocopied scores will feature these particular reminders. As a result, you can feel free to make as many notes as you need.

### Planning copy

You'll use this copy to help you plan out your practice for the week.

You're not writing reminders

**No matter how much you write on copy#4, it won't make the tiniest bit of difference to copy #7.**

**As we'll see, that's going to open up a huge range of new possibilities in your practice room.**

of any sort on here, or corrections—instead, you're labelling **what** you intend to cover, and on **which day** of the week you'll be covering it. That way, instead of having your plan in a separate notebook, you can actually have it right there on the music that you'll be working from.

So, after reading your practice instructions for the week, you might label the opening 12 measures as being for **Monday**, and write “Memorize” above them.

**Tuesday** might be marked above the development section, and the instruction might be “Double

check accidentals”. **Tuesday** might also be marked above the final page, with the instructions “Bring up to 120 BPM” and “Detail trawl” (See **DETAILS TRAWL** 110)

You'll do the same for the other days of the week, taking care to match all of this to the outcomes your teacher needed from the week.

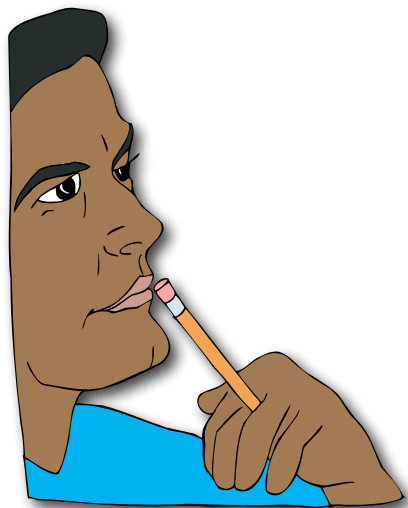
In this way you end up with a **clear blueprint** for the week ahead—you keep it handy to help you answer the question “what did I have to get done today?” (See **SESSION AGENDA** 305)

Of course, the instant the week is over, the plan becomes **obsolete**. But that's ok—the beauty of using copies is that you can use another fresh copy for the *next* week.

### Issues from Last Lesson copy

Corrections and notes from your most recent lesson are *always* going to be current and relevant—it makes sense to have them all in **one place**, readily **accessible** and **quarantined** from your other notes.

Instead of allowing such notes to **get lost** amongst months of old notes on your one-and-only-score, bring a fresh photocopy to each lesson, and as your teacher makes



points, *mark them on the score*.

The score then acts as a highlights reel of that lesson, making it much easier to conduct a **LESSON REVIEW** ➔ 178.

This photocopy is **reusable**. Next lesson, you would erase any points that are no longer issues (because you had fixed them), while any that are still lingering will still be part of *next* week's list.

### Interpretation copy

This is quite unlike any of the photocopy scores so far, and acts more as film-director's notes. Instead of being concerned with what to play, it's where you sort out *how* to play.

You're not writing corrections of any sort on here, but instead **recording ideas** for **interpreting** the piece.

You'll mark in dynamics, rubato or articulation details that you are considering—and then, after you've run **EXPERIMENTS** ➔ 135 to find out whether they'll work, you'll either **erase** that idea, or mark it in **ink**.

This copy is all about helping you answer the question “I wonder what if...”, and then being able to record the results of such wondering.

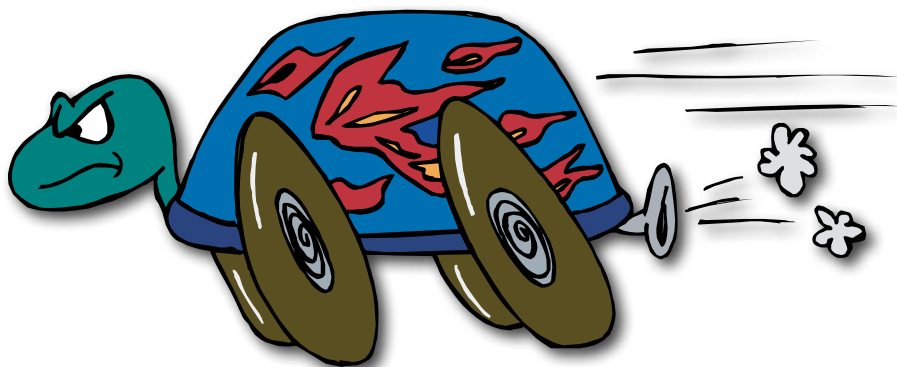
Over time, it will become a comprehensive description of exactly **how** you plan to deliver the piece—the end result of hours of trying different possibilities, and then noting what worked and what didn't.

### Alternative version Copy

Sometimes choosing between different interpretation possibilities can be agony—especially if you like all of them.

In such cases, you can use fresh photocopies to create **several different** interpretation takes on the same piece—similar to a director filming several different endings to a movie.

These directors will sometimes choose between those endings by **screen-testing** them with focus groups. You can choose between *your* different versions by bringing the interpretation copies with you to your lesson—your teacher can take it from there.



### Acceleration Copy

This copy won't help you at all with interpretation, but it can help you track progress in the development of another important skill.

You'll often have practice campaigns based around **speeding up** passages—you would use this copy of the score to record the results of techniques such as **METRONOME METHOD** ➔195

Typically, this type of fresh copy will be **covered with numbers**, reflecting the tempo each section is currently up to—a bit like a **scoreboard** that shows your progress towards getting the piece up to speed.

Keep it handy, get it out whenever speeding up is one of your Tasks For The Day.

### “Ready” list Copy

You **don't have time** to practice everything all the time—as you work it's going to be important to start building a list of sections that **don't need** further practice. (See **CLOSURE** ➔80)

This copy allows you to mark what will be a **growing collection** of passages that no longer need attention from you, and it's a great feeling whenever you are able to add something to this score. It's almost as if the passage you are marking has “graduated”—the simplest way is usually to highlight the passage in green.

The aim is that by **concert day**, the **entire piece** would be highlighted like this. It's then a great way to get a snapshot of the health of a piece—if most of it is already marked on your “Ready” list score, then it's in great shape.

### Stripped Copy

This is a **special photocopy** of the score that has had all the dynamics, articulations, tempo markings and other details **removed**. You can do this by using whiteout on a copy, and then photocopying that copy—the whiteout shouldn't be visible.

This copy is a great way to **test your knowledge** of the details in the score. Your job would be to **write in** as many as you can from memory—or, armed with a list of all the details, place them in the correct locations. See **DETAILS TRAWL** ➔110 for more on this.

### Lesson Agenda Copy

During the practice week, you'll come up with questions and issues that you'll want to **take up with your teacher** at the next lesson. (See **LESSON AGENDA** ➔171). Instead of adding such notes to

an already cluttered score, you can **reserve** one of your photocopies to help you remember all these things—whenever a question occurs to you during the week, simply mark it on the score.

You can then take the score with you to the lesson.

Like the *Issues from Last Lesson*, this is a photocopy that you can **reuse**—simply erase the notes at the lesson as you cover them with your teacher.

Anything that was not erased, you can cover next lesson. (You won't always get through everything... your teacher has their own agenda to get through too.)

### Thematic Copy

Intended for use with **THEMATIC PRACTICE** ➔ 330, any markings you make on this score will be confined to addressing a **single issue**.

So you'd have one score dedicated to dynamics, another to legato playing, another to projection and so on. Keep them **in a file**, and then every time you were focusing on a particular theme, you would

use the score dedicated to that theme.

If you were working on rubato, for example, then you'd get out your rubato photocopy—on there would be all the notes you had ever made about rubato, and space to record results from today's work on that issue.

### Restoration Copy

If you're **returning to an old piece** after an extended absence, it can be hard to break the old habits (see **RESTORATION** ➔ 289).

One way to help things feel fresh is to ensure that you're not working with the **Same Old Copy** with all the **Same Old Pencil Markings** that you used to use. You'll quickly end up playing it the **Same Old Way**.

Work instead with a fresh copy, stripped of all previous reminders. It forces you to work out things like fingerings and dynamics from scratch—since you're now older and wiser than last time you played this, you should come up with better solutions.

### A copy for every occasion

Unless you want to look like the picture below, you're probably not going to use **all** these ideas every time you practice.

But even having just a couple of fresh photocopies in the loop can help you **focus** your practice—which is really the point.

Choose the issues that are most important, and then create copies for the practice techniques that will target those issues. So if you're speeding up a piece, then it makes sense to have a copy for Metronome Method. If you need to run a details trawl, make sure you have a Stripped Copy.

Like this **whole Practiceopia**, use what's useful, leave what's not.



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