



## Be passionately **PATIENT**.

It's not always easy to be patient with ourselves! So do something more basic: show patience to your fingers and wrists, your neck and shoulders, your spine and lungs. Your body is **brilliant**, but it doesn't learn the same way your mind does: it needs to build *muscle memory*, and nothing can take the place of that. When doing technical exercises or drilling tricky passages under tempo, don't feel like you're going "slow": feel like you're right at tempo but in *slow motion*. What we often need to do in our practicing is to play a gnarly bit over and over, but an element your body will surprisingly benefit from in this process is **variety**. Creatively alternating speed, rhythm and style in your repetitions keeps things fresh & focused and can surprisingly enhance your muscle memory. That's a passionately patient partnership of mind & body.

## Work the **TRANSITIONS**.

Did you hear a note that wasn't quite right? What you heard was not the error. The error occurred in the *transition* from the prior note to that note. That's why same-note do-overs don't do real **fixing**. When you make a mistake, step back *before* that note and carefully redo the transition to it. All the times you've done just a same-note do-over, you've been setting yourself up to make the same mistake the next time around. **Transition** work is the fix that *really* fixes!

# MYSTIC DRAGON PRACTICE TACTICS

## Analyze OR synthesize.

Isolate specific figures (analyze) **OR** run whole passages (synthesize). Use both approaches a lot, but never at the same time. Neither is as profitable when interrupted by the other.

## Enhance your feeling of **PULSE**.

All music has two kinds of pulse: a steady metric pattern at an indicated tempo; and **melodic** pulse. Melodic pulse is not always regular or metronomic: it depends on the shape of the musical line, rhythmic nuance, and harmonic structure. It's almost always **broad**er and **simp**ler than the rhythmic pulse. Pursue melodic pulse, and you'll transform your musicianship! Try **singing** a passage to feel phrasing and flow. When working with a metronome, pretend to steadily lead *it*. Imagine you're not playing the music: the music's playing *you*!

## Practice **PERFORMANCE**.

Play for a friend or family member from time to time, and record & listen to yourself on a regular basis. You'll notice aspects that you might otherwise have missed - including **good** things! You also need to become used to that touch of self-consciousness, the feeling of being on the spot, that says *It's showtime!* Don't just practice notes on a page; practice *performance*. "Practice makes perfect," the old saying goes ... sure, ok, but occupy yourself with **precision** more than perfection. Your ultimate goal is simply to *make music*.

## Tend to your **TO**NE.

EVERYTHING is affected by your **tone**: your intonation (heh, yes, in-**tone**-ation), articulation, dynamic range, and yes, vibrato! The magic word is "**let**": *LET* your shoulders and upper arm relax. *LET* your fingers be naturally curved. *LET* the bow initiate and sustain contact with the string. Natural weight - not forced pressure - creates your finest tone, which endows you with everything else.

## **EASY** does it.

**Facility** - *ease of action* - is the essence of technique on any musical instrument. As great composers have spoken of *silence* as the basis of the art, let **ease** be the basis of your technique. Hone your skills with ease of action. For all creative artists: **perspective, focus & ease** are your wallet, phone & keys!