

Tips Tricks and Traps

Greg Presley for WSMTA Conference 2023

Sun Mountain Lodge

“the art of accompaniment”.....teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other“

Pope Francis

Priorities for successful collaboration.

1. Rhythmic support and harmonic support.
2. Understanding which part is most important when
3. Learning to read and interpret body language, gesture, breathing, bowing, conducting, etc
4. Setting tempos, and figuring out who is responsible
5. Learning to mark up your score – breath marks, tempo changes, fermatas, accidentals, etc
6. Figuring out what can be left out, if necessary. The goal is not correctness, the goal is success.
7. Understanding balance – in piano accompaniment, it is often very different from solo playing
8. Looking and listening, being flexible, being willing to “unlearn” some of what you have practiced
9. Practicing communicating encouragement and trust
10. Developing a sense of humor and self-forgiveness – because things WILL go wrong

“The pianist in vocal chamber music must have all the deposit of human feelings, an inexhaustible source of poetry, fire and romanticism, that is a heart. In other words: it is necessary, but not sufficient, to have a good instrumental technique; we need to hear the poetic value of musical art. “
Gerald Moore – the Unashamed Accompanist