

Teaching Tip: Creating SmartMusic Practice Etudes to Prepare Students to Play Their Parts



Subject Area: Instrumental Music

Grade Range: Middle School through College

Materials Needed: Finale 2005 or later, SmartMusic 8.5 or later

Goal: Students will be able to develop the specific techniques to play their performance music.

Beginning with a Finale score, you can create custom exercises. With Finale version 2005 or later, you can save the exercises as custom SmartMusic files. Those files can be distributed to students and used for practice with computers equipped with an active copy of SmartMusic.

Note: Finale 2005 or later can convert scores created in Encore, Rhadody, MidiScan, Score and SmartScore. Sibelius scores can be saved as an XML file and imported into Finale 2006. The Sibelius 4 user would have to use the Dolet 3 plug-in. The Sibelius 2.1 or 3.1 user would use the Dolet 1 plug-in. Both products are available through the Recordare Online Store at www.store.recordare.com.

Step 1: Create the Practice Etude in Finale.

- A. From the Launch Window, open the SET UP WIZARD. Go through the prompts to create a document for the right instrument, title, key, time signature, etc.
- B. Open your score or part from which you plan to create your practice etude.
- C. With the MASS EDIT, highlight a passage of music that you wish the student to practice.
- D. COPY the passage (*Windows Control C, Macintosh Command C*).
- E. In your new, blank score, with the Mass Edit Tool, select the measures where you'd like to insert the copied notes and insert them in by selecting INSERT from the EDIT menu.
- F. Continue this process of including the more challenging passages of the music in your solo.
- G. It's now time for a little creativity. Use your preferred method of note entry (Simple, Speedy, Hyperscribe, etc.) to create a musical beginning and ending as well as transitions.

Step 2: Create the SmartMusic Practice File. These etudes are without accompaniment and will only include solo line. For that reason, it is recommended that you create one of these two types of Solo Files. You must choose one of three types of SmartMusic Solo Files.

- A. Solo Accompaniment On Screen. Allows student to see the part on-screen. Directions in Appendix.
- B. Solo with Assessment On Screen. Take advantage of all the advantages assessment feature.

Step 3: Distribute the files to students.

Suggested ways include:

- Burning them to a CD and mass copying the CD for each part.
- You may save them to a website such as the one for your school, department, or program. The files should be located in such a way that the files are easily accessed by students.
- Send them by email, grouping your address book groups by like voice part (example: email clarinet 1 parts to all first clarinet players from one email).

Step 4: Have the students practice with the files by opening them in SmartMusic. If the student has an activated copy of SmartMusic on the computer, after saving the file to the computer, click on the file and it will open in SmartMusic. Students can then use all of the features to practice, including variable tempos, the tuner, the recording feature, and assessment (with Assessment On Screen files only).

Step 5: Assessment.

You have many options with assessment:

1. Who assesses? Director, other staff, student leader.
2. How is assessment communicated? Email, copied to CD or other means.
3. What criteria and result is used? Certain assessment percentage could qualify the student for a spot on the field, certain grade, reward, etc.

Using this technology, you can now create practice files that not only prepare students to perform their music but help them develop technique. This technology also has the potential to encourage, challenge and motivate large numbers of students in situations where teacher-student one-on-one opportunities are limited.

Appendix: Steps to creating SmartMusic Solo Files with a Single line.

1. SM Solo with Accompaniment – SOLO NOTATION ON SCREEN

1. Open your solo or etude
2. Go to **FILE Menu/SAVE SPECIAL/SAVE AS SMARTMUSIC ACCOMPANIMENT**
(Options window opens)
3. In OPTIONS Window:
 - a. Choose ENSEMBLE (this will allow you to bypass the accompaniment option)
 - b. Solo Staff: Select INSTRUMENT
 - c. Corresponding Instrument: Select INSTRUMENT
 - d. Accompaniment: Highlight ALL THE OTHER INSTRUMENTS IN THE SCORE
 - e. Under **SELECT FILE FOR DISPLAY** IN SMARTMUSIC (onscreen):
 - Click SELECT Button
 - Select *NAME INSTRUMENT* Solo (File name shows up under SELECT Button)
 - f. Click OK.
4. NAME your file (TITLE INSTRUMENT Solo ON SCREEN) and SAVE in same folder
2. Open your newly created SmartMusic File

2. SM Solo with ASSESSMENT ON SCREEN

1. Open Finale LAUNCH WINDOW
2. Click SMARTMUSIC WIZARD Button
3. Select 3rd OPTION: **“Create or Open a Finale File or Exercise That Can Be ASSESSED and Graded by SmartMusic”**
 - a. Click NEXT
4. Assessment Wizard Window opens (Page 1):
 - a. Select OPEN AN EXISTING DOCUMENT
 - b. Under SOLO INSTRUMENT, select INSTRUMENT
 - c. Click NEXT
 - d. Open *TITLE INSTRUMENT SOLO* (Assess. Wizard Page 4 appears)
 - e. Click FINISH (INSTRUMENT part opens)

NOTE: If there is a problem with your assessment file, Finale will tell you what won't assess. Correct the notes and try again.
5. Go to **FILE Menu/SAVE SPECIAL/SAVE AS SMARTMUSIC ACCOMPANIMENT:**
 - a. Click SELECT ACCOMPANIMENT FILE Button
 - b. Select *PARTS TO BE IN THE ACCOMPANIMENT* (file name appears under button)
 - c. Click SAVE
 - d. NAME (Title Instrument Solo ASSESSMT) and SAVE File
6. Open your newly created SmartMusic Assessment file