



Ready for an Accompanist?

Here's what YOU need to know

1. **HIRING CHOICE.** Keep in mind the age-old saying, “You get what you pay for.” Securing a professional-level accompanist may be more costly than having a “friend pianist” play, but you will have greater odds of your event/audition being successful with professionals who bring talent and skills developed through years of experience. They are dependable and can handle unexpected situations with far more control and poise.
2. **FEES.** Be sure to ask what your pianist’s fees are at the first contact and when and how they expect to be paid. Some may ask to be paid ahead of the event, others at or immediately following.
3. **SCORE (PIANO PART).** Always provide well ahead of time the physical sheet music of the piano part, often called “score.” Do not assume the pianist will have your exact edition.
 - Write in the measure numbers at the beginning of each line if not present. Rehearsal markings such as rehearsal letters, tempo and dynamic markings should match your score.
 - Ask your pianist how they want to receive the score - original book, copy (single or double-sided), taped together or not, sheet protector or not. They might want a digital version (PDF) whether it is purchased, acquired from imslp or scanned by you. Some PDF versions are different from the version you learned. It is your responsibility to check. Here are some tips for scanning:
 - Use a scanning app. There are many free apps for your phone or tablet. Or you can use a desktop computer and printer/scanner.
 - No photographs
 - All pages in one file (not separate files)
 - Black & white - not color
 - Clear and complete (dark lines/notes, no smudges or missing or wavy lines)
4. **REHEARSALS.** Successful performances depend on proper rehearsing as an ensemble. Be prepared to pay for at least one rehearsal. Most accompanists pro-rate for rehearsals less than one hour. No piece is too “simple” to not be rehearsed! Judges are looking for good ensemble which is how well you played together. Listen to a recording of your piece so you know how the piano part fits with the solo part. If you practice on your own with a recording of the piano part, you will be used to following that recording. When you play with a living, breathing pianist, they are following you. It is a totally different experience. Learn how to cue.
5. **SCHEDULING.** Plan ahead. Many events such as Solo & Ensemble festivals require traveling. It might be a short audition for you but for the pianist it is not. This includes dress, travel, early arrival (15 minutes or whatever you agree on) as well as actually playing. Pianists assume there can be delays beyond their control therefore they seldom agree to another engagement too close unless they have many at the same venue.
6. **RESPECT.** General respectful behavior such as arriving on time and being prepared shows that you appreciate your pianist. Confirm dates/times/locations with your pianist. Keep them posted on any changes, especially last minute ones. They welcome any questions you have about your piece and can offer feedback. They can also help make necessary cuts. They are your friend and mentor and truly want you to have a good performance.