



eLESSONS *Musings on Learning Music*

LANDMARKS

Landmarks? What do you mean?

I'm sure you've had the experience of driving along in your car, thinking about something else, and even though you have driven this route many times, you suddenly don't recognize where you are! Panic? Maybe, but then you start looking for landmarks. "OH! There is that rundown building at the corner! I know where I am now!"

We all get lost when playing music, too. Knowing your landmarks can help you come back in after you get lost. (Notice I didn't say, "if you get lost." Everyone loses his/her place sometimes!) I like to use the term "landmarks" in a piece of music, even though they are aural, not visual, just because we know the word.

Examples of Landmarks in your music

Many different things can be landmarks; the only requirement is that you remember what it sounds like and you can visually identify the section in your music. It could be:

- ♪ A spot where everyone in the band plays loud, accented notes together
- ♪ A sudden change of tempo to faster or slower
- ♪ A hold (fermata), ritard, or accelerando (any change of tempo)
- ♪ A change of dynamic or style or any other kind of change
- ♪ The trumpets (or some other instrument) enter after not playing
- ♪ There is a rhythm pattern or melodic pattern that frequently ends a section
- ♪ A new musical idea

When you spend time with the soundfile of a piece, try to get to where you can hear the new sections. Generally, each section is marked with a new rehearsal number or rehearsal letter. If you can hear when an idea is ending and you are approaching a new section (rehearsal number/letter), you will be much better able to find your place!

Mark things to listen for in your music. It could be as simple as an asterisk or arrow pointing to a spot to be listening for, or you could write words, "Trumpets enter" or just "trumpets." Then practice hearing the landmarks as you listen to the recording.