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Cover image:
Tanja Roos





Editorial

Learning is, of course, a life long pursuit: What musician ever knows everything about playing (or teaching) their instrument?

However we often muddle along (be it in performance or in the classroom) using the skills and techniques we have always used. Sometimes this is absolutely fine, but every now and then something takes us out of our comfort zone and it's then that the ability and the will to learn new skills becomes important.

In 2023 that was bought home to me in a playing context when I decided to make my next solo album a collection of specially commissioned pieces from seven different composers. Learning and recording new music in a variety of styles stretched both my technique and my musicality in very positive ways - but ways that also took time and effort to master.

But the end result was something I'm proud of - and that makes all the effort worthwhile! You can find out more about the new album *Cuckoo**, if you'd like to, by visiting music.stevebingham.co.uk.

In terms of teaching this idea of continued learning has followed me through 2024 so far as I've been writing one of the modules for the

ESTA Education MA course: In some ways this has proved to have steeper learning curves than recording the album, not least because everything for the module has to be in both English and Chinese! However I have found the process of creating online webinars covering the use and creation of studies and exercises absolutely fascinating, and it has had me remembering and analysing a lot of the things taught to me by various eminent teachers over the years.

And what have these two learning experiences done for me? Well I definitely feel that these things have a positive effect on my ability to perform, teach and coach, as they serve in some way to both renew and extend my enthusiasm for music.

And having begun my seventh decade in July last year (work it out - the mental maths is good for you!) perhaps I also hope that continued professional development will help me get through the next 30 years or so!

Steve

**A name which I like to think describes not only something about the title track of the album, but also something about my personality!!*

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From the Chair

Nicole Wilson
Chair of Council

After a somewhat meteorologically confused winter I'm glad to be able to look forward to our Summer School, especially as we'll be hosted this year by the picturesque Dean Close School in Cheltenham.

It promises to be a fabulous five days of CPD and, as always, plenty of socialising! Will we see you there? Don't forget that ESTA UK members can apply for help with the fees through the bursary funds and student members also get a reduced rate. So don't let financial concerns stop you applying.

We've been working away furiously behind the scenes during the winter months putting together online resources in collaboration with our ever supportive corporate member Hidersine. Watch this space for more information on this in the coming months. For those of you wanting some extra support teaching beginners, why not pop along to Thomas Gregory's special teacher training day at the Royal Academy of Music based on his spectacularly popular Vamoosh string series? ESTA members get a lovely discount. Head to the events page on estastrings.org.uk to find out more.

Our ESTA Education MA, a partially online course, is up and running with Andrew Somerville at the head. This MA adds to our provision of qualifications available at a discount to ESTA UK members, including the existing PGCert and CME. I had a Zoom-y chat with Andrew Somerville, who runs the MA, and Helen Dromey, head of the PGCert qualifications, the other day which you can watch here: tinyurl.com/dbxkyvwa This will give you a better understanding of how these

qualifications can help you in your teaching practice and career.

At the time of writing this I'm envious of new Council member and Professor of Teaching and Learning at Chichester University Laura Ritchie, our super-creative Vice Chair Jo Green and the ever unstoppable CEO Philip Aird, as they prepare to sample the local beverages at the ESTA International Conference in beautiful Porto. Laura is our nominee for the Central Board and we hope she will be voted on at the delegates meeting.

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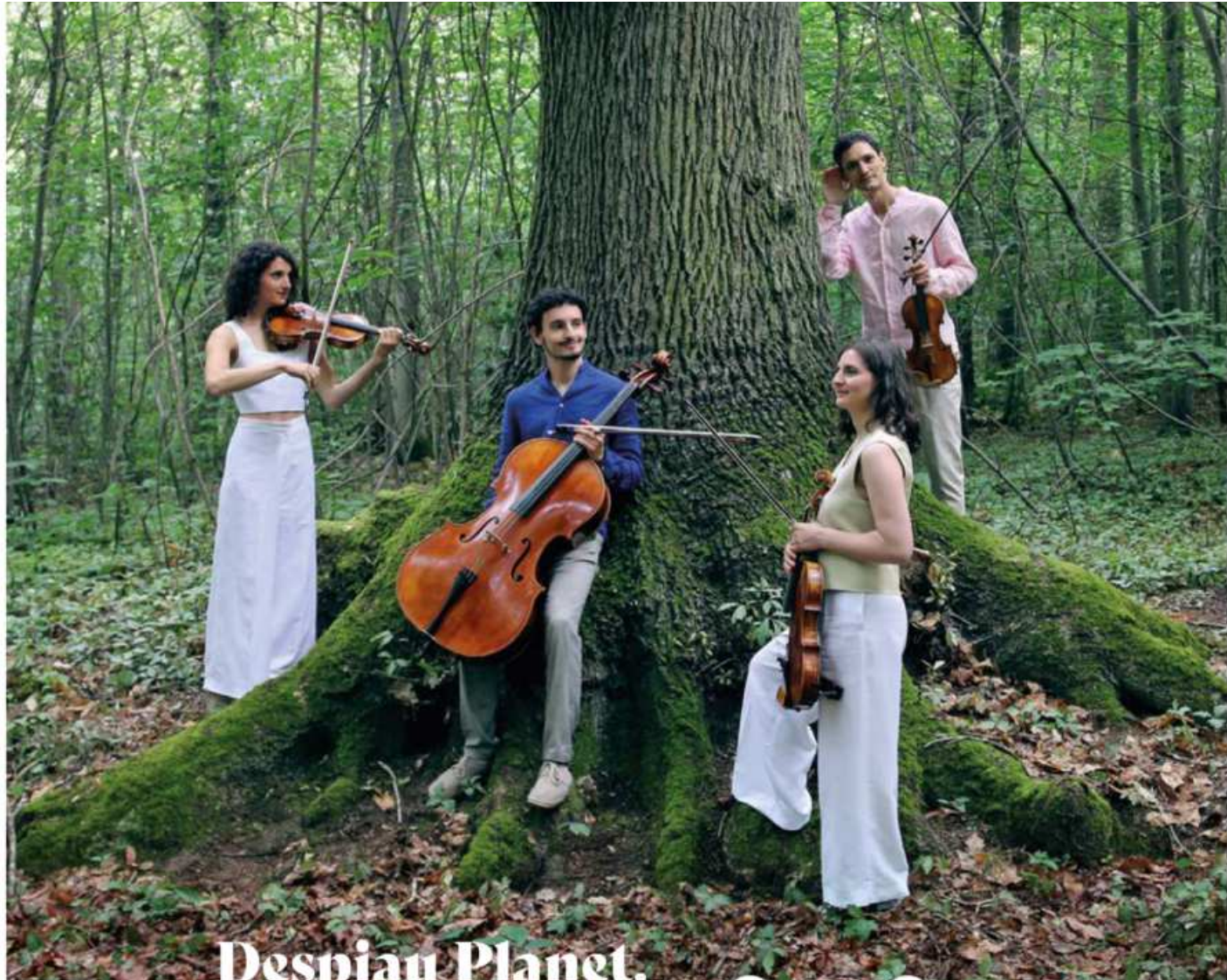
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Sounding Out

a 21st Century solution to the UK musical education crisis?

by Nicole Wilson



Back in the glorious 1980s (and I'm not talking in the fashion sense here) I was lucky enough to experience free violin lessons and the school and youth orchestras of the South Glamorgan music services. We enjoyed trips to London to play in the National Festival of Music for Youth and regular residential music courses.

I learnt a huge amount about working as a team, making friends (with people who I am still in close contact today) as well as being exposed to repertoire which I would go on to play again with the London Symphony Orchestra as a professional violinist 10 years later. I had no idea how lucky I was. I took for granted that Thursday nights and Saturday mornings would be my escape from a school environment

where I most certainly did not fit in, opening a whole fantastic world of music which would consume my adult life. The teachers who made all this happen were unsung heroes of the local music community, giving up their evenings and holidays to enable us all to have these brilliant inspirational experiences.

Nowadays it's a different story for children growing up in Britain. With funding cuts and changes in curriculum over the last 30 years, the music provision has been chipped away until all that is left is an embarrassed, poor relation of the magnificent machine of the 1980s. Music is, once again, the preserve of the upper and middle classes. It is interesting that the independent schools still have the highest regard for co-curricular activities such as music, with Eton

College for example providing over 1800 hours of music lessons a week for their students. Not with a view to producing world class musicians but with an understanding of the value of learning to play an instrument and the skills it brings with it - teamwork, multitasking, awareness of others and brain development being just a few.

So, imagine my delight when Will Bersey, Director of Music at The King's School in Canterbury, reached out to me to let ESTA UK know about Sounding Out, a new programme at King's which could well be part of the solution of rebuilding our depleted music provision for children from the state sector. Will admits he'd learnt from initiatives in his previous job, by not doing his local research on what other schools and hubs in the area were doing first.

'It struck me' he says 'that there was good music in Canterbury and so we should pull everyone together. So, we set up a children's orchestra. We were so pleased we'd done this, but then local schools came to see me en masse and pleaded with me to stop what we were doing. We were jeopardising something which was already thriving in the city. The kids were leaving their pre-existing orchestras to join ours and it was weakening groups they had worked so hard to put together.

I now look at everything I do first to see where there are gaps. There's no need for schools like King's to put on kids' concerts for instance as they're happening in Canterbury already. What we needed to do is put instruments in the hands of children.' His first step was to sit down with the local music hubs. 'We had to find out what was already going on and didn't want to tread on toes or put all this energy into something which wasn't needed and wouldn't thrive.

We discovered that Kent Music was already providing instrumental lessons but was mostly successful on modern instruments like ukuleles, drum kits and electric guitars. So we decided, especially because of the musical reputation that King's already had, that we would provide something which was unashamedly classical

.....

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music based because it would not conflict with what was already being provided by the hubs.'

Will then went to the Headmaster of King's and suggested that they should give free music lessons to children. 'Thankfully he was right behind me' grins Will. 'There was a political angle here of course too as if there's a Labour government then schools are going to have to justify far better their charitable status.

So it's for the greater good but also might help with the future of the school. The school was extremely supportive and immediately said yes' he explains. 'They provided funds to appoint one member of staff to fundraise one day a week and help run the programme on Saturdays. When we appointed the project leader internally, she was anxious with the thought of asking for money but when she began, the money just kept rolling in.

Some people have given very substantial donations, others have given smaller amounts. It turns out that so many people had a such a great experience with music in our school when they were students, they want to give something back. We also have an option on the school box office - when you book a ticket for a school event, you're invited to donate to Sounding Out. We're really lucky that King's has a good reputation for music already, so people trust if we're behind it, it'll be a good thing.'

The next step was to visit all the primary schools in the area and using workshops, hand-pick four children from each school to join the

.....

It struck me, he says, that there was good music in Canterbury and so we should pull everyone together. So, we set up a children's orchestra.

programme. I asked him if it was easy to pick the children. 'We went into the local schools in year four with a view to them starting in year five. We took our King's students to play their instruments to them and showed them a string quartet. We looked for around four kids from each school - ones who were interested, showed some musical ability, and fundamentally needed our help. We weren't looking for the ones with parents who were already able to pay for lessons. So that required discretion on the primary school's part, and they told us which kids were the most in need and we gave them priority.'

Will's plan included using their own music school on Saturdays when it was not being used so much by their own students. 'We have a good-sized music school which stands almost empty on Saturdays because our teachers are working professionally at the weekend. The building has nine empty rooms. So we were providing the space, expertise and a colleague to lead the project. As a Director of Music, I'm just too busy to be able to add this in to my schedule. Not every school would be able to do this, this is an expensive thing. Initially the school was paying this person's salary but as it got going the fundraising took over the cost.'

After the programme was up and running, Will approached the school and argued that it was fundamentally wrong that they were raising money for the children to have lessons but then spending it on a member of staff. They absolutely agreed and took over the cost of the fund-raiser's salary. 'I've been so lucky that the school recognises the good in the project and supports it so comprehensively' says Will. 'Now it is up and running, our fund-raiser retired and it's staffed now from within our normal teaching

staff as an extra bit of their responsibilities.'

How hard had it been recruiting the right kind of teaching staff for such a particular kind of project I wondered? 'We asked our current visiting music teachers if any were interested in teaching in this project at the same rate of pay' explains Will 'but they were all working elsewhere at the weekends, so we appointed two new music teachers. It was the right thing to do because they had the perfect expertise to teach absolute beginners and they're just fantastic. They teach in primary schools in the week then come to us at the weekends.'

Obviously starting up a programme like this was never going to have all the orchestral instruments immediately so I wondered how they had decided which instruments would be the first to be offered. 'We had to buy them from the fundraising money so we thought it would be wise to contain it' admits Will. 'We decided to start with violins, as there's always lots of places for them in orchestras, and at the time, we as a school were short of brass players so trumpets were the first brass instrument. We launched with these two first, then decided in the second year we would add in clarinets and cellos and build it up adding in two more every year until we had a full orchestral offering.'

We started with the first year as planned, violins and trumpets, then had to close down because of Covid. We then relaunched with the same instruments last year. We then wanted to add in clarinets and cellos this year but we didn't have enough space in the department to double the size of the project, so we decided to add half as much again. We had sixteen starts in year one, then we added eight more in year two simply because we didn't have enough space to double the number of students. Now we're facing a decision about moving premises to a local primary school next year, then we can multiply like crazy!

What do these Saturdays look like for the children? 'In the first year we had two lots of group lessons happening at the same time with

four children in a group, 45 mins long each. The children then go into a big room and have Saturday Jam. This involves rhythm and pitch work and improvisation. We started with Samba in the first year but is now more Kodaly-based singing. As they finish their Jam session, the next two schools arrive and do the same thing.' Sounding Out now offers free music lessons to children from all the primary schools in Canterbury at the cost of £3 a week. They don't yet offer them to the local village schools but hope they may be able to launch that next September.

As a two-year long programme for each child, the question arises about what will happen to them when they leave primary school. 'When they go to high school in year seven, they'll then decide if they'll continue. We hope that maybe on a weekday evening we will be able to provide the really keen ones with 1:1 lessons. We hope we would be able to heavily subsidise these, maybe around the £10 a week mark. My dream is that in the future someone, after four years of tuition with us, turns up in year eight to audition for a music scholarship audition... But even those who don't carry on formally learning might end up playing in an orchestra for fun.'

Naturally I'm in awe of the organised but relatively simple way Will and King's have used their resources and talents to create such a scalable model and Will is keen that other independent schools with these kinds of resources consider how they might be able to create similar programmes to help local children access more comprehensive music education. So what would a school need to set up a programme like this I ask him. 'There are a few basics you need' he tells me. A suitable building. No piano is needed apart from the Jam session (group lessons are done with a speaker and backing track) so they could be done in any classroom in your school.

A designated organiser working 1 day a week Fundraising - this would depend on the school but can include easy things like the add-on at the school box office

.....

Now we're facing a decision about moving premises, to a local primary school next year, then we can multiply like crazy!

Whenever there is a school concert, the Head of Music needs to give a rousing speech to parents about how he had music lessons in primary school and didn't realise how lucky they were. Keeping it in the conversation is critical so that parents can see how the school is helping the community.

Find out where there are charities who support music making. This will depend on the area but there are local and national charities who have funds specifically to help this kind of project.

Asking wealthy donors who want to help support this. This will often be ex-students of the school who enjoyed music in their time there or who understand the importance of giving to the next generation.

As a nation we need to re-evaluate how we provide music education for children. Our current music hubs are filled with fantastically dedicated people but it's not enough. Not by half.

Perhaps this kind of 'super-hub' could be a model that is rolled out across the country with independent schools giving back to their local communities in one of the most valuable soft-power ways possible.

If you want help setting up your own Sounding Out programme, please do email Will for guidance and advice

at wmb@kings-school.co.uk



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Vibrato in Baroque and Classical music

Time for a rethink?

by David Chernaik

I have always considered vibrato to be an integral part of sound, important both for its expressive qualities and for its role in bringing out the resonance of a string instrument.

One of the life-changing live performances I attended as a teenage cellist was Itzhak Perlman playing the complete Bach Sonatas and Partitas. I sat spellbound by his deep musical understanding and the beauty of the sound. As a conductor I ask string players to use vibrato in music by Bach, Handel, Mozart and Haydn, as I do in my own cello playing, inspired by listening to Perlman, David Oistrakh, Jacqueline du Pré and other great performers. Tastes change, and I know that there are many performers and listeners who love the sound of Baroque and Classical music played with little or no vibrato. There is a clarity that can be very effective and exciting, and this style of performance is clearly here to stay. But should it be the only way, and is it as historically informed as we are led to believe?

There is an assumption among string players that if they are playing a Haydn Symphony on modern instruments they will play without vibrato. This can extend to Beethoven and even Schumann, and almost always Bach and

Handel. Many solo cellists are now playing Bach Suites without vibrato. What historical information is used when deciding whether or not to use vibrato? Are students shown all of the source material so that they can make their own decisions, or are they being presented with definitive statements that discourage further investigation?

In preparing this article I have looked at all of the available primary sources, including treatises on violin playing and books on aesthetics, and many secondary sources, books, articles and PhD theses, to determine whether the prevailing non-vibrato style is based on a thorough reading of the available sources, or whether vibrato was used far more widely than the current style would suggest.

Bärenreiter's scholarly edition of Bach's Cello Suites states that 'non-vibrato was the norm in the eighteenth century'. Interestingly, this statement follows directly after a quote from Geminiani (1752) describing how to produce vibrato: 'To perform it, you must press the finger strongly on the string of the instrument and move the wrist in and out slowly and equally', going on to list the different ways it can be used to express different emotions (Majesty, Dignity, Affliction, Fear), and ending 'and when it is

made on short notes, it only contributes to make their sound more agreeable and for this reason it should be made use of as often as possible'. How do we reconcile these two apparently contradictory statements?

The argument for vibrato

Several authorities are often quoted to make the case for avoiding vibrato, including Leopold Mozart and later authorities including Louis Spohr, Leopold Auer, Joseph Joachim and Carl Flesch. The fact that the writers of these passages cautioned against the overuse of vibrato doesn't mean that it didn't exist, simply that they didn't like the way it was used at the time. In fact all of them also encouraged the use of vibrato and stressed its importance.

Proponents of playing without vibrato often quote this passage by Leopold Mozart from his *Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* (1756): 'Now because the tremolo is not purely on one note but sounds undulating, so would it be an error if every note were played with the tremolo. Performers there are who tremble consistently on each note as if they had the palsy. The tremolo must only be used at places where nature herself would produce it...'

But in the preceding passage Leopold Mozart writes this: 'The tremolo is an ornamentation which arises from nature herself and which can be used charmingly on a long note, not only by good instrumentalists but also by clever singers. Nature herself is the instructress thereof. For if we strike a slack string of a bell sharply, we hear after the stroke a certain wave-like undulation of the struck note...Take pains to imitate this natural quivering on the violin, when the finger is pressed down strongly on the string, and one makes a small movement with the whole hand; which however must not move sideways but forwards toward the bridge and backwards toward the scroll'.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart also linked vibrato to nature, cautioning against its overuse while stressing its beauty: 'The human voice vibrates by itself, but in a way and to a degree

that is beautiful – this is the nature of the voice, and one imitates it not only on wind instruments, but also on strings, and even on the clavichord, but as soon as one carries it too far it ceases to be beautiful, because it is unnatural.'

Early mentions of vibrato

The earliest description of vibrato comes in a viola da gamba treatise by Sylvestro Ganassi, written in 1543, describing a trembling of the hand appropriate for sad music.

An early mention of violin vibrato occurs in 1636, with Marin Mersenne, the French scientist and mathematician, writing in *Harmonie Universelle* that "the tone of the violin is the most ravishing, as those who play perfectly...sweeten it as they wish and make it inimitable by certain tremblings which delight the mind."

The musicologist Frederick Neumann cites three eminent viol authorities in *The Vibrato Controversy* (1991): Jean Rousseau (1687) recommends two kinds of finger vibrato as a way of imitating the singing voice: 'These are never specified for the voice because it does them naturally, but must be specified for the instrument, because otherwise they would never be precised.' Le Sieur Danoville wrote in his 1687 viola da gamba treatise that vibrato 'has tenderness and fills the ear with a sad and languishing sweetness.' Marin Marais wrote that 'one might introduce the vibrato any place where the length of the note permits it, and that it is continued for the full length of the tone'.

Vocal vibrato and string vibrato

The link between vocal vibrato and string vibrato is important, as there are relatively few violin treatises, while there are more sources relating to the use of the voice.

The German composer Michael Praetorius wrote in 1619 about '...those who are endowed by God and nature with an especially lovely quivering, wavering or trembling voice.' Daniel Friderici wrote in 1649 about young singers: 'From the beginning, the boys should form the voice in a naturally beautiful manner and, where

possible, with a delicate trembling, wavering or quivering in the throat.’

Many writers link vocal vibrato and instrumental vibrato, including Quantz (1752): ‘Each instrumentalist must strive to execute that which is cantabile as a good singer executes it,’ and Carl Friedrich Cremer (1783): ‘in such passages where the singer would apply vibrato, the instrumentalist not only may make use of it, but must.’

Johann Georg Sulzer, an influential German writer on Aesthetics, wrote this passage about vibrato in *Allgemeine Theorie der schonen Künste*, (1771):

‘Because of the gentle vibrato it gives all sustained notes, the human voice has an obvious advantage over all other instruments. A fundamental part of good singing and playing requires holding out every note with such vibrato. It is easiest in singing, because Nature herself has constructed the vocal instrument so that it does not remain on any sustained tone with the same rigid tension. But on instruments, vibrato requires more effort. On the violin it is most easily obtained by rolling the finger rapidly back and forth on the string’.

Sulzer also describes one of the most important aspects of a good vibrato, that any variation of pitch must not be clearly discernible. but should ‘alternate so rapidly that the alternation itself is not clear; this makes the tone gentle and wave-like’. He continues, ‘The trembling tone is as different from the one that continues with the greatest precision at the same pitch and strength as a soft outline in a painting is from a hard one drawn with a ruler or a compass. Just as in painting such outlines give the whole image a hardness, but gentle and seemingly uncertain outlines make everything soft and natural, so it is also in song. Every sustained tone becomes rigid and hard unless given a gentler nature by vibrating. This is one of the reasons why a melody can never be played as gently on a piano...as on the violin or flute, which can give the notes vibration’.

Vibrato was clearly in use in the 18th century, although how and when it was used is a matter of interpretation. A common theme in the many references to vibrato during the 18th century is that overuse of vibrato, or a poor use of vibrato resulting in a distortion of the tone, was to be guarded against. The consistent view was that music should imitate nature and strive for beauty, and that the way to achieve this was through well-judged use of vibrato in string playing and singing.

Vibrato has always been a matter of taste, and one listener’s perfectly-judged vibrato might be too much for another listener and not enough for a third. All of the writers commonly cited as opposing the use of vibrato were in fact cautioning against its overuse or misuse, while they were in favour of its use within the bounds of good taste, whether imitating the natural vibrato of singers or sounds from nature, all in the service of making music more beautiful. The American musicologist Beverly Jerold suggested that there was a distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ vibrato, and that a light vibrato might have been the norm during this period, rather than no vibrato at all. This appears to be a convincing explanation of the apparent contradictions in the writings of Leopold Mozart and others.

Was vibrato only used as an ornament?

Vibrato was often listed in early sources as an ornament. Robert Donington suggests in *A Performer’s Guide to Baroque Music* (1973), that this referred to a special intensifying of vibrato for expressive purposes, not to the basic sound. Everything I have read leads me to believe that vibrato was always present in string playing as part of tone production, as it was in singing, and that using non-vibrato as the norm is not what any of the early writers and musicians described. They all cautioned against overuse of vibrato, but contrasted this with vibrato used correctly to make a more beautiful sound.

The material I have examined makes a very strong case for challenging current assumptions about the use of vibrato in the Baroque and

Classical periods. The following statements are clearly supported by the evidence:

Natural vibrato was encouraged in singing as part of the basic sound. String players were urged to emulate this through vibrato, described in a way clearly recognisable as the same vibrato we teach today. Excessive vibrato was discouraged. All of the writers who discouraged excessive use of vibrato also encouraged its use when applied with taste to create a more beautiful tone.

Joachim and Kreisler

Joseph Joachim is often described as playing without vibrato, and this is then used to make the case for vibrato being a 19th century invention. But Joachim himself wrote that 'next to the portamento the most important means of expression within the power of the left hand is the vibrato', while Carl Flesch wrote that 'Joachim's medium of expression consisted of a very quick and close tremolo'.

Flesch wrote about vibrato in *The Art of Violin Playing* (1924), advising that violinists should 'avoid, however, its frequent use or in improper places.' But he also said that the quality of the vibrato was second only to purity of intonation in importance for the left hand, 'if only because it is essential for the individuality of the sound', adding that 'theoretically the pure tone is also possible without vibrato; however, for the listener it will sound poor and expressionless'. Robert Donington described attending Flesch's master classes in the late 1930s: 'Neither he nor his pupils dispensed with the more or less continuous vibrato habitual among violinists, as I imagine, of any period; we learnt its use primarily as a more or less continuous but not excessive left hand colouring of the tone, which brings the sound to life without degrading it; and secondarily as an intermittent intensification (needing musical justification) of certain notes requiring broader expression than the majority.'

Fritz Kreisler is often cited as the father of continuous vibrato, quoting Carl Flesch. However this is a misreading of what Flesch

wrote, which was that Kreisler introduced vibrato during passage-work, not that he introduced continuous vibrato in general playing. The commonly-held view that vibrato was a 19th century invention is not supported by the evidence.

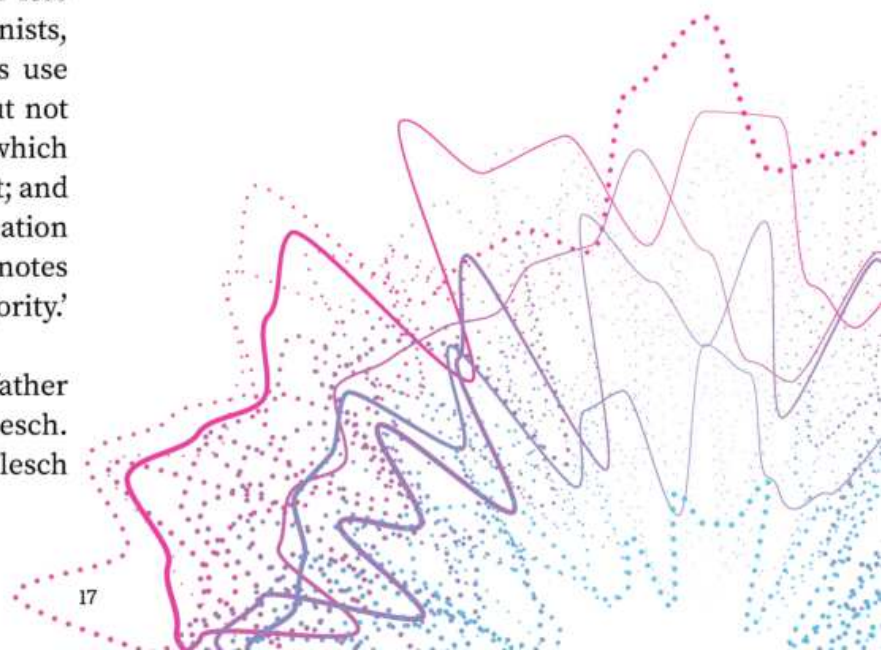
Conclusion

I hope that this article will encourage musicians to use vibrato in Baroque and Classical music without feeling that they are doing something wrong, and that students, teachers and performers will start to question statements such as 'Music in this period was played without vibrato', which the available evidence suggests was not the case.

I encourage all students, teachers and performers to read Leopold Mozart, Robert Donington, Frederick Neumann, Beverly Jerold and the other sources I have quoted, and come to their own informed opinion. Most of the material I have quoted is available online, and I will be publishing a list of sources and links at <https://www.apollomusicprojects.org/reports-resources>.


David Chernaik

David Chernaik is a cellist and conductor, and is CEO & Programme Director of music education charity Apollo Music Projects, which inspires children and supports children's wellbeing through a series of string quartet, woodwind and brass quartet workshops, chamber orchestra workshops and symphony orchestra concerts.



Access all areas

Clifton Harrison interviewed by Nicole Wilson



Friday 13th February 2015 should have been a lovely day for viola player Clifton Harrison, as he travelled through the glorious, green Cornish countryside to Truro to perform two shows with Rambert Dance Company playing Stravinsky's Dumbarton Oaks and Bach's Brandenburg Concerto no 3.

He had checked into his Bed and Breakfast the night but when it was time to leave the room, he found he couldn't open the large oak Georgian garden door. Somehow it had been locked from the outside and, try as he might, he could not open it. After ringing the main desk multiple times and trying to raise colleagues and the tour manager on the phone, he became more and more anxious as the time of the matinee performance drew nearer.

He was playing a solo viola part, and the performance would be in jeopardy without him. With an immense sense of professionalism, he decided he was going to have to take the matters into his own hands. He climbed over the tall stone wall and jumped down to the street

outside. However, in a 'Sliding Doors' moment, as he landed, his left ankle became trapped in a little drainage trough and was crushed with the full weight of his body toppling over on to it. 'I broke my tibia and fibula in multiple places, crushed my ankle and tore ligaments and tendons' Clifton explains with a wry smile. 'My ankle was dangling.'

After being whizzed to hospital, Clifton was told that he would need an operation in the morning. I have to say at this point I would have breathed in the laughing gas and lain back, feeling extremely sorry for myself. Probably I'd have googled all the worst-case scenarios for my ankle and got a bit teary. Not Clifton though. As I came to understand, talking to him from his home in North London, he is the kind of person who it's almost impossible to derail. 'I had missed the matinee' he told me, 'then when I realised I wouldn't have the operation until the next day, I decided to play the evening concert.'

I assumed I would be having 6 weeks off work but didn't realise quite how serious it was.' Rambert Dance Company and the orchestra rallied round in support of their much loved and talented colleague.

'The wonderful Nic Pendlebury picked me up and drove me to the concert. They couldn't get another viola to deputise for me, because they were 5 hours from London.' 'But surely they could have covered your part, Clifton?' I asked, agog at the pain he must have been in. 'Well, one of the guys could play both viola parts for the Stravinsky at the same time' (I raise an eyebrow at this point!) 'No, it's not so bad for that piece, as both parts are on the same page. But for the Brandenburg, with everyone on individual parts, my colleague did his best to play as much as he could but it was no substitute for being one viola down. It was important I was there at the concert if I could be.' After a successful, but presumably rather drugged-up evening concert, Clifton returned to the hospital and the next morning had the operation. After three days he was shipped back to London, spent another month in hospital, followed by confinement to a wheelchair for many months.

Since that fateful day, Clifton has had eight operations. What he really needs is an ankle replacement. 'They said in 10 years they'll have worked out how to do it. But there are so many bones in the ankle, it's much more complicated than other joints. Some patients in the US and now UK have had total ankle replacements but it's not perfected yet. I think I'll wait until they've done it a few more times before I let them try it on me!' he laughs.

'I presume that you received a large pay-out from the B and B?' I ask him. 'It turns out they didn't have the proper insurance so that was that' is Clifton's laconic response. 'But Rambert and my colleagues have been wonderful and looked after me hugely. I must give an enormous shout out also to Help Musicians UK and the Royal Society of Musicians who both stepped up to help me along with BAPAM. RSM and HMUK both came to my house after a friend told them

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I'm struck by his incredible resilience and wonderful sense of humour, discussing the devastating situation in which he finds himself, so relatively early on in his professional life.

what happened. A guy came to my house on a bike, asked what I needed, took a few details of my earnings and wrote a cheque there and then on the spot. It was amazing. I can't thank them enough for being there when I was in such need. It was an issue getting to the bank to pay the cheque in though' he laughs.

I wonder what life is like for him now. 'I live with a lot of pain and limited range of motion, and I can only be on my leg for a very limited period of time. It's odd because I can dash to the front door if I need to, but I can't go past the end of the driveway without being in a huge amount of pain. Specialists have looked at it and said it was the same as if I'd been in a car crash and my ankle had been crushed. Mind you if I'd been in a car crash it would have been both ankles so I'm lucky it wasn't that!' he laughs.

I'm struck by his incredible resilience and wonderful sense of humour, discussing the devastating situation in which he finds himself, so relatively early on in his professional life. 'I walk with a pronounced limp, and I can't stand whilst playing for a very long time. Initially when I returned to work, I was a guest artist leading the viola section for Dvořák 7 and tears were pouring down my face as I played. The conductor was mouthing at me during the performance 'are you ok?'. I explained afterwards I just had to get through it – it hurt whether I was sitting or standing, but I had to keep going. Now it hurts less as I sit, and I am now used to the constant pain as I have a pain management team who help me greatly' he tells me.

I can't help wondering if I would have the

strength of character and body to carry on performing, giving my all, in the face of such adversity. My next question has to be ‘what should we all be doing to help you, as fellow musicians?’ ‘It’s not the musicians who I need help from actually’ he explains. ‘It’s mainly the venue and the organisation you’re working for who can be the problem. Some of them go above and beyond, trying to make sure everything can work for me. But some don’t realise how passive and nonchalant they are about certain requirements. In this gig community we don’t want to kick up a fuss too much in case we don’t get hired again. You must weigh up how much it’s worth making a fuss and when not to. Sometimes it’s just impossible. ‘One well known recording venue took ages to give me access to the disabled toilet. It was there, but it was locked and to get into it you had to go upstairs to get the key which obviously I couldn’t do. They should have had the universal RADAR key to unlock it. I asked for this, but they told me that they didn’t have one. It took one of the fixers to kick up a big fuss to get it sorted. The studio said they didn’t want everyone using the toilet, so they decided it was better to have no one use it rather than have everyone be able to go in...

‘In another studio I have been able to use their service lift for years to get up to the studio on the top floor. One day I got there an hour early for the session. We weren’t allowed to go in as we had to wait for the previous session to finish before we could go up. I waited by the reception for an hour until we could go up- just 10 mins before our session was due to start. It was only at that point they told me I could no longer use the lift as humans were not allowed in it, due to a change in their insurance policy! They had failed to mention this to the fixer, and it was not mentioned anywhere on their site or the contracts. I physically couldn’t get up the stairs to the studio. The composer and fixer came downstairs, and they were mortified that I was not being allowed up. It was a very small ensemble – three violas and a couple of other instruments, everyone on single parts and they couldn’t start without me. I was getting more and more embarrassed and after half an hour of arguing and phone calls, the studio finally gave me special dispensation to use

the lift. I’m going back there next week for the first time since that happened, and I will arrive two hours in advance to make sure I can get up there.’ I can only imagine the embarrassment Clifton must feel in situations like this. No one wants that kind of attention.

When I think of the logistics of touring for an able-bodied person, I can’t shudder to think of the obstacles he must face. ‘I get booked into hotels where you must go upstairs to get to the disabled access rooms. I am only minorly impaired compared to lots of people, but for instance, when I’m wet, I can’t get out of a bathtub so I can’t use a shower over a bath. I need a walk-in shower and sometimes the fixers just forget to check this for me. When traveling, I have been put in the vestibule on the Eurostar - so just a fold away seat. It’s no good for someone who can’t balance well. Once I got left behind on tour. We were all walking to the coach from the train and I couldn’t keep up and no one checked when they got on the bus and so they left without me.’

‘Getting on and off stage is also a problem,’ he admits. ‘The stage at the Barbican is a real problem – they offer to hoist you up but it’s ridiculous. It makes you feel awful. At the Concertgebouw, I was playing with an orchestra who walk on together to the stage. I asked the management if we could not do it just for that concert, as there were so many stairs. The orchestra members even agreed, but they said no. I had to go up onto the stage before everyone else and sit there for 15 mins on my own with the whole audience watching. Then the orchestra stomped on together without me. It made me feel alienated and not part of the group. As the backstage lift and accessible dressing room weren’t available, I had to use a cupboard and sit in there between rehearsal and concert as well. The Concertgebouw managing director and his team were really lovely and were mortified when they realised what was going on. They apologised unreservedly and put me in a cab, but it was just so humiliating. This happened due to failed communication between the tour manager and venue. I had performed many times at the Concertgebouw and I never had a problem.’

‘I have spent so long hoping and dreaming that someone would appreciate and understand my access needs, but now I realise that I have to look after myself’ he admits. ‘Now when I go on tour, I always make my own travel and accommodation arrangements.’

I can’t bear the thought of him struggling so uncomplainingly through these situations. ‘If we are working with you (apart from checking you’re on the bus!), what can we do to make your day easier?’ I ask. ‘I am so grateful to so many well-meaning people who try to help me, but there’s a fine line’ Clifton tells me. ‘If I say ‘no thank you’ then please leave it at that. Sometimes people ask, ‘can I carry your bags for you?’ I say ‘no thanks’ but they take it anyway, walk off with it, I don’t know where it is, and I can’t run to find them. What they don’t understand is that I have worked out a solution for me and my instruments. The best thing you can do is ask what someone needs, not assume that they need help. Some people insist on grabbing your instrument. What they don’t realise is that certain things need to be put on me in a certain order. My shoulder bag goes around my body, then my instrument on my back, then my crutch. If you pick up one of my bags, then hand it to me at the wrong moment, I don’t know how to carry it. If someone says, ‘no thank you’, please listen. I know it’s with good intentions but please take a no as a no! I find the people who are most aware are the ones who have been in crutches for a short time, and they understand much more what I might need.’

I wonder how much less work he can do because of the length of time it takes him to get around. ‘I haven’t done the maths because it’s too scary’ Clifton says with a small smile. ‘Three hours of playing in orchestra a day is all I can do. If it’s a 10am start it’s hard for me to get there, depending on where it is. And sometimes I must decline a project because logistically I can’t get there.’

‘Do you have to drive to many places’ I ask? Imagining a blue badge sorting out his logistical travel issues. ‘I don’t have a car because I usually can’t rely on being able to park where I work’ he

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tells me to my surprise. ‘I must ring every day to check there’s room and often there’s not, so I have to take Ubers everywhere and I can’t afford a car and take taxis. In London, the pick-up points for hire cars are nowhere near the venues. Zip cars are only for 60 miles a day. If I’m traveling any further than that, it’s cost prohibitive.’

Do organisations pay you extra for travel expenses? ‘I must say that a good portion of my work understands and appreciates my needs and covers all my travel costs. I count myself lucky for that. With other work, there is no official portage arranged for disabled people. There is for basses and cellos but not for us. In America there’s a \$28 health and wellbeing fee for recording sessions - whether for physio or wellbeing, psychiatric help - whatever you need. It’s part of the fee. Different countries have different tax breaks and benefits. Here the cost of my taxis are tax deductible for me. I spend £700 a month on Ubers on average. The MU have an action committee on disability who are looking at that now. We’re hoping we won’t need a petition; we hope that people will use their common sense.’

Knowing how far less serious injuries which I’ve had in my career have changed my technique, I wonder how this accident has changed how he plays. ‘I’m totally lopsided now. Imagine being almost completely limp on your left side. Everything goes down to the left, so there’s no contrary motion. My feet cannot be firmly planted on the ground. I look normal but I have no weight on my left side, and I’ve learnt to play with all that tension in my right side and back. I shift my weight to the right side and to the back. This has helped me with my teaching though. If someone’s posture is bad or they need more sound, I can

see it in their posture. If they're not using their full weight and they're not planted properly, their knees aren't planted properly and their hips, knees and neck aren't released, it affects their sound. I learnt this years ago with Karen Tuttle, internalised it and then forgot about it. Now when I'm teaching, I think about the whole practice of it.'

Are there any go-to devices he uses? 'I pick chairs which work, I bring my SitFit with me everywhere, it is my saviour. It's a little round inflatable cushion which works for me where a wedge wouldn't as I'd just fall forward. The Wigmore Hall has different height chairs, they have green, red and yellow stripes on the side which tell you the different heights. The Wigmore are great' he grins. 'It's a 19th century music hall so they can't help the higgledy-piggledy nature of the building, but they help me up the steps, then once I'm in the lower platform at the back, I can hang out there and just walk straight on to the stage when I'm ready, with everyone else. They put a chair there for me or not if it's a quick change. They're really helpful. Southbank Centre are also wonderful. Barbican try but there's a real problem there as they can't get round those steps. They have so many different lift levels but not the one I need. Itzakh Perlman told me in the 1990s when I studied with him, that this is a problem for him.' I asked how he gets around. He answered that his fee is 'all in'. The large fee he commands covers his entourage, his travel, his accessible accommodation, everything to enable him to travel easily and safely and arrive fresh to play the concert. When other artists found out how much he was charging though, they decided to charge the same... of course they weren't using most of the fee for accessibility needs. He was prioritising comfort and feeling independent over earning as much money as possible.

'Is there any repertoire you can't face performing now' I ask?

'Long sonatas' he grins. 'Actually, I've just commissioned two! I'm hoping I can build up to them as I've avoided them until now. It's the length that's the problem and they're relentless. But for a sonata I want to stand. It feels wrong if

I'm sitting so I want to stand for solo things. If I play a concert at the Wigmore with lots of other people, it's fine because I play my heart out for 15 mins then have a rest while others play and then when I come back, I feel refreshed. I miss playing Brahms sonatas, long Bach sonatas or new contemporary pieces. When my accident happened, I was scheduled to play a great piece for solo viola, sextet and very large orchestra and it requires you to be on stage for an hour. Sadly, I had to back out. Thank goodness I did, as I ended up having to have multiple operations. I did play a couple of large scale works after my accident, as solo viola, sitting down, but it just didn't feel right.'

I ask him if this misalignment has changed his sound. 'I noticed in quartet recordings that my sound diminished' he admits. 'You lose a lot of sound as your body changes as you get older anyway, but you learn to compensate. But for me it was sudden and extreme, so I didn't know what to do with that. I was playing on a Landolfi, but I suddenly sounded like a buzzing saw! I went to Jane Rogers, a specialist in early music, and I sat against the wall to see what the alignment problem was. Specialist physios also looked at me and explained my hips were off and we all assessed it, I was mindful of it, and we worked it out gradually like that. I needed someone to say to me something's awry. At first, I just thought if I fixed my foot, it would be alright but then I realised my hips, knees, back and shoulders and neck were out and that whole line was out. I thought if I fixed my ankle everything else would fall back into place but now, I realise my body has changed - it's been too long. A total ankle replacement would give me the ability to walk properly and lessen the pain though. My body has corrected as much as it can, but as my nephew tells me, I walk like a penguin now!'

'At work I've hurt myself a few times trying to get about, so I find myself staying where I am in the lunch breaks. Once I went to a session and as I arrived my crutch slipped on the wet leaves outside (wet leaves are my nemesis!). I had to ring the fixer from outside of the studio and say, 'I'm so sorry I have to go to hospital'. I'm very careful

at work and I don't take any chances. You'll find me stuck in the studio once I'm up there for the day. No one wants to be waited on hand foot but sometimes I have no choice.'

Despite this horrific situation and with all the odds against him to make a career as a freelance musician in London, Clifton is one of the most in demand viola players in the UK. We constantly see his name on the bill for concerts with leading Baroque orchestras such as the Dunedin Consort, Academy of Ancient Music and London Handel Players but also in the modern world with the LSO, as well as being a major session musician for the grande dame of the London session scene, Isobel Griffiths. As well as being the viola player of the famous Kreutzer Quartet, he has also commissioned viola works, adding to the canon of viola repertoire. 'I've commissioned a work for viola and voice by Errollyn Wallen and a piano and viola sonata by Eleanor Alberga which I plan to pair with the George Walker viola sonata in concerts the year after next.'

I'm starting to wonder if this situation is stopping this super charged viola ninja from doing anything. 'I've cut out touring mostly' he admits. 'I only do if I really want to. I go to Paris sometimes and guest in Europe and Ireland, but I'll stay for week and that's different from touring. And of course, I insist on booking everything myself.'

And what is next for this remarkable man who finds his way around the most surprising obstacles the world has thrown in his way? 'I'm lecturing a lot more now' he tells me. 'I have a series about responsible programming. In America we wanted to expand repertoire from underrepresented composers and women composers and the tide is now turning on that a bit. Now I want people to think creatively and think about the audience and themselves and the context of what they're doing. Is it appropriate to do a one-off concert, or make a global change in programming for a whole organisation, or start kids off on these works? Which level is appropriate for the intended purpose? I'm trying to explain to orchestras, that tokenism doesn't

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work. It doesn't work to highlight quickly; say you've done it, then forget. For some orchestras in the middle of nowhere, a one-off concert might kickstart a whole community. In a large place like London it might create a small buzz, even be written about in the paper, but is not fit for purpose. I want everyone to think responsibly about this. The main point I want to make though is there's nothing off limits to anyone. I have no problem playing Grieg... so why would you have problem playing music of a 1950's black composer or commissioning a woman? People think it's appropriation, but for the most part if it's done properly, it's not!'

Does he feel bitter about what happened I wonder. 'I feel that I have it a lot better than many other people who are differently abled' he tells me. 'This fight is for everyone. If you're blind AND have a mobile disability what then? If I'm having trouble like this, how is everyone else managing? I have a colleague with a degenerative condition and it's dire in this country for her because there are so many old buildings. All new builds must comply here, but the old ones can't - they're listed. I don't blame the UK for this, it is what it is - London is a 2000-year-old city. Georgian plus is the problem, the higgeldy-piggeldy back end of theatres. I'm happy and I relish a challenge, but I just want some relief and understanding. And I have to say there are so many people out there who go out of their way to help me.'

Was he tempted when this happened, to give up playing? Did it just seem too hard? I can't help wondering if in his situation, I would have just sat on my behind and felt rightfully sorry for myself. Clifton pauses and grins at me. 'I'm not done yet. There are too many things I want to do. I can't let this stop me.'

What a superman...

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Jo's Journal Busting

Rewards Systems
are they useful in the instrumental classroom?

by Joanna Petrie

A small voice pipes up at the end of a lesson. 'Can I have a sticker'? This request prompts my much younger self to rummage feverishly in the bottom of a bag for a sheet of stickers that happened to have been attached to the back of a free supermarket magazine, and to reflect hastily on which other children in the room might also deserve one. I realise that if I'm going to include using tangible rewards in my long-term encouragement strategies, I will need to find a more organised and consistent way of doing it.

There has been much debate over the years about the merit of using rewards in teaching, resulting in conflicting theories outlining both the advantages and disadvantages of doing so. The research has not led to a clear conclusion on whether their use is ultimately a positive or a negative thing, but we live in a culture in which many children are used to playing digital games in which they are spurred on to the next level by earning virtual badges and currencies and rewarded with new tasks and worlds to explore. This may lead us, as instrumental teachers, to weigh up the benefits of using reward systems in our own practice and to use our experience to judge what works best for each of us.

In the 1960s, Behaviourist ideas became widely adopted in education. Based on the Reinforcement Theory of American psychologist Burrhus Frederic Skinner, they followed the premise that behaviour was affected by consequences - behaviour that was reinforced (i.e., rewarded) would be repeated, and behaviour that was punished would occur less frequently. This is also known as operant conditioning. The measurement of the success of these methods was based on the response of the more passive pupil of the day and the strict classroom practices implied are now widely regarded as incompatible with what we know about the independent and enquiring nature of our young people. As the study of psychology developed, more was discovered first about cognition - how we process what happens around us, and then about meta-cognition - how we react to what has happened through self-regulation and self-motivation.

Scientists began describing the brain's reward system in the 1950s. When a rewarding stimulus is encountered (be it an external occurrence or an internal thought), dopamine is released, acting as a neural transmitter between the different structures of the brain along the reward pathway. In this way, reward processing connects the stimulus with the parts of the brain that govern behaviour and memory. The release of dopamine causes feelings of pleasure, and the brain makes connections between the activity and these feelings, making it likely that the behaviour will be repeated.

Motivation is critical to the learning of music, and yet the system of human motivation is highly complex. It is influenced by a mixture of internal and external factors and its development is the result of the interaction between an individual and their environment. Extrinsic motivation occurs when a person completes a task because it leads to an external consequence. Internal motivation, however, does not need external rewards - an activity is performed for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself - because it is enjoyable and meaningful. The environment that affects us includes the time and place we are in, societal demands, cultural context, interactions with family, friends, and peers, and of course our educational or work environment. Social context has been identified as being particularly influential in music education. As human beings, we are naturally predisposed to seek social approval, enhanced self-esteem and general feelings of well-being as well as having a desire for achievement and mastery.

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Researchers have identified multiple positive effects that can ensue from the considered and regulated use of rewards.

Our perception of the environment around us is informed by our own self-concept. Modern theories of motivation emphasise the importance of cognition i.e., the effect of our own personal perception of events on our eventual behaviour. The extent to which individuals feel they have control over situations - the strength of their own self-efficacy - is crucial. A person with strong self-efficacy can identify the goal they wish to reach and believes that they have the knowledge and cognitive skills to achieve it. When a reward is perceived by the brain, decisions are made about how to react and what goals to form for the future. Our own picture of ourselves has an important influence on what these will be. The reward confirms that a task was completed successfully, self-esteem is boosted, and motivation is increased to repeat that task. In short, if the environment satisfies personal needs and goals, motivation is increased.

In the classroom or the instrumental lesson, we can provide our pupils with both tangible and intangible rewards – either things with physical substance like a pencil or a certificate or non-physical rewards such as verbal praise or a phone-call home. They can be used to target either motivation, behaviour or musical learning and achievement. Rewards are often used to encourage appropriate behaviour in primary school where pupils are still developing control over their emotions and reactions. As pupils grow older, they are seeking independence and looking for new ideas and tend to engage well with rewards for progress in their learning. It is hoped that pupils at the upper end of secondary school will have developed good critical thinking and the ability to evaluate the consequences of their actions. They may be more intrinsically motivated and

feel less need to engage with tangible reward systems.

Researchers have identified multiple positive effects that can ensue from the considered and regulated use of rewards. Rewards provide pupils with continuous and immediate feedback and have been shown to increase appropriate behaviour and habits, participation and attention, feelings of fulfilment and self-esteem, achievement of goals and completion of homework, and can establish a positive learning atmosphere and reduce absenteeism. Rewards can give games and activities a more powerful outcome and are a transaction between the pupil and the teacher – a task is completed and something valuable is received in return. This links back into the neurological reward system where a release of dopamine leads to feelings of satisfaction and happiness.

On the other hand, if not used carefully, rewarding can affect pupils negatively. If a reward is given for completing a task, pupils may race through their work quickly without fully understanding the process. Motivation can be impaired when they feel pressure to keep achieving at the same level or to live up to praise, or if rewards are focussed solely on high-achieving pupils and an individual's performance compares negatively to other members of the group. The line between rewards and bribes could be perceived as a fine one and a pupil may feel that the way in which rewards are being managed has become manipulative, resulting in them feeling undermined and losing their sense of autonomy and drive to be creative.

The main concerns expressed by researchers, however, are in relation to overuse of rewards or use where they are not needed. This can result in their devaluation (loss of effect), or even in addiction when pupils are unwilling to perform a task without the stimulus that they associate with it (whether tangible or intangible) and the reward cannot be withdrawn without loss of the desired behaviour. Another

possible outcome that is much discussed is the 'over-justification effect'. If a pupil is rewarded for something they already have intrinsic motivation for, it is thought that that motivation can be diminished as they gradually focus on the external consequence and lose their ability to self-motivate, forgetting their original reason for enjoying an activity. Conversely, some educators believe that a task initially driven by external motivation, could develop into one for which a pupil feels intrinsic motivation.

What is the alternative to rewards systems in the classroom? Most rewards given are extrinsic motivators, however it is widely believed that students will learn more when driven by intrinsic motivation. They show curiosity and find significance and value in their activities resulting in a sense of flow and a feeling of social confidence and of being in control of their own learning. Intrinsic motivation is governed by personal choice and satisfies the psychological need to be autonomous and competent.

The formation of musical identity in young people was discussed in the Autumn 2023 edition of Arco (vol. 49 no. 3). This is a key factor in fostering intrinsic motivation to learn music. In a supportive learning environment where the teacher shows appreciation and respect, develops a meaningful connection with their pupils, celebrates their successes and shows real life modelling, the self-concept of the pupil as a musician is boosted and they are better able to weather the critical feedback and competition that they are likely to experience as they progress as a musician. This environment, teamed with careful selection of tasks that challenge the pupil at the appropriate level, encourage exploration, give opportunities for co-operative learning and allow choice, lead to sustained engagement and a pursuit of knowledge and mastery as the primary driving force.

Perhaps a combination of approaches is the way forward. If rewarding is used with care, avoiding the pitfalls of overuse and peer comparison, used in tandem with teaching

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personal goal setting to your pupils, and only as an adjunct to the wonders of exploring the rich subject that we teach, it can be a useful tool for encouraging good behaviour and learning. To be effective, a rewards system should be carefully designed as part of your larger classroom/lesson management plan. It is often desirable to mirror some aspects of the system already in use in the educational environment that you are in. It is, of course, difficult to design a system that motivates everyone in the room, and the details will vary for different ages and stages.

Here are a few things which might be considered when setting up a rewards system:

1. Define the goals – in what are you trying to encourage improvement? Is it in respectful behaviour in the lesson, or quality of practice at home, or a specific learning point like showing a good bow-hold or engaging in sight-reading?
2. Choose the rewards – these must be something that the pupils value and it is worth asking them what that might be (within reason)! Tangible rewards might include (budget allowing) stickers, items of stationery or small toys, book tokens, hand stamps, badges, instrument accessories, edible treats (allergies and dietary requirements permitting and if your institution allows), and praise cards. I have recently discovered reward watches and wristbands and mean to try them out. They can both be printed out on thin cardboard and coloured in by the pupils and can bear legends like 'I have shown friendship', or 'I have shown a good bow-hold' etc. The Times Educational Supplement carries

a list of thousands of resources, many of them free, at <https://www.tes.com/resources> - search for 'rewards'. Intangible rewards could include choosing the next piece or game, listening to music, helping the teacher, drawing on the board, sitting next to a friend, being the leader, doing a dance or looking after the class mascot. In research, responses from pupils suggested refreshingly that the two things they valued most were verbal praise from the teacher and a phone-call home to share the praise with their parents or carers. Rewards can be layered in a way that collecting tokens, tickets or stamps can lead to a bigger reward. There are many ways of keeping a record of tokens from wall-charts to physical jars to digital platforms like ClassDojo. I am keen to try the idea of novelty shape punch cards or starting a paper chain that eventually reaches the floor when enough links have been added. Whole class rewards are a driver for pupils to work together and encourage each other to show helpful behaviour. The incentive of a school reward trip (or perhaps a party or movie) has been shown to be very effective, if that is something that is within the teacher's influence.

3. Explain the criteria – what will the pupils get a reward for? The criteria must be challenging but achievable, and clearly defined.
4. Communicate the parameters – do the pupils understand the goals, rewards, and criteria above?
5. Track progress – either physically or digitally. Do you want the pupils to see how their peers are doing, or will it only be you who has that information?
6. Celebrate achievement – can it be taken to another level? Perhaps achievements can be celebrated in a school assembly, newsletter or on social media or in a special ceremony or concert. Maybe the principal of the school could write a congratulatory note.
7. Keep evaluating – is the system working? Are the goals at the right level and are the

pupils valuing the rewards?

8. Be consistent – the learners will not get on board with the system unless they perceive it to be fair.

From a personal point of view, I still have a lot of work to do to get this right. For me, rewards could not replace the value of forming a musical identity through a love of music in all its styles and of creating something amazing with other people. Good relationships, a supportive environment, and interesting and correctly paced challenges are the key, but in fact many of these things could be and are considered as rewards in themselves. I'm quite happy to throw in some smiley treble clef badges and a piano pencil or two on the way.

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ESTA UK Summer School

by Robert Simmons

It's fast approaching ESTA UK Summer School time! After a fallow year to make room for the ESTA International Conference in 2023, we're back with a change of venue and a great lineup of dynamic and engaging presenters.

Robert Simmons caught up with Summer School regular Kate Skeet to shed some light on the ESTA experience in her own words...

My first ESTA Summer School was in 2017. I'd just completed a postgraduate music teaching qualification (sadly just before the ESTA Education course was launched). I'd found that I had really enjoyed learning more about my teaching, but didn't really enjoy writing academic essays on the subject, so I was on the lookout for good CPD courses - as well as some time out for myself. I've been back every Summer School since then! My first year was such a happy experience, with inspirational teachers such as Bojan Cvetežnik on technique, Dalcroze sessions with Sian Ford and of course the ESTA regulars such as Steve Bingham with all his electric gear, and Sheila Holdsworth's astonishing party entertainments.

The main bonus of attending the Summer School is just spending time with other string teachers. In most of our teaching life, we are either (usually) on our own as the sole VMT in a school, or at best in a department with teachers of other instruments, so it can feel quite isolated. It's not often we get the chance to compare vibrato teaching techniques, or sympathise about the amazing shapes our pupils can bend themselves into when trying to reach a 4th finger note - so it's lovely to hear that other people have the same issues and it's 'not just me!'

There are familiar faces. Certainly in my second Summer School I was delighted to see friends from my first year come through the door. Some excellent, long lasting friendships (complete with WhatsApp groups) have formed over an evening drink at Sheila's bar. I do enjoy a variety of sessions - and am always keen to see what each year's 'physical' activity will be. Some have been better than others, but I always look forward to seeing Dalcroze or Alexander Technique on the menu. The return of the best speakers and sessions from previous years is also lovely.

I look forward to immersing myself in 'me time' for a week, and eating lots of food which someone else has prepared! The food has always been excellent too - especially the puddings. Hopefully Dean Close will be just as good on that front! Food, drink and chat amongst colleagues from around the world is hugely valuable. Sometimes this can be really useful in clarifying points from the visiting speakers and sharing our own understanding or ideas.

This year I'm especially looking forward to the sessions by Glyn Oxley and Michelle Falcon. I'm lucky enough to work with Glyn, and know that his way of working (in turn inspired by Caroline Lumsden) with children from the very



youngest pre-schoolers to the teens and beyond gets amazing results, so I'm looking forward to more people getting into the Dalcroze & Kodaly inspired fun that he achieves every Saturday for the pre-instrumental stage. I'm intrigued by Michelle Falcon's Mind Your Language Please session, as I'm sure this is an area that I don't think about enough and perhaps I can get a better rapport with some of my pupils by thinking more about my use of language. Michelle is a regular Summer School delegate so I'm confident that she'll know just how to pitch her session to this audience.

I often sit in the evening concerts at ESTA UK Summer School and feel that these alone would make the week worthwhile. David le Page was a stand out performer one year, as was the young quartet last time.

Not sure about attending? I'd say give it a try. There have been teachers of all ages & stages on the Summer Schools I've attended so far, and you're bound to find someone who ends up being a friend for life - or at least someone to bounce ideas off over coffee. The regular ESTA UK team do a wonderful job of making sure everyone feels welcome and included. If

you're undecided because of the cost (as I was the first time around) don't forget that there are bursaries available for ESTA members which can really help, especially if you're having to take time away from the family holiday.

Find out more about the ESTA UK Summer School at estastrings.org.uk/summer-school-2024

To get a reduction of £25 on the fees you can also use the following discount code until 30 April: sb24ss25.

The code will take £25 off either the full member, non-member or student rate for the 2024 ESTA UK Summer School. If you are initially paying the deposit amount of £100 (or £50 for students) then the coupon will reduce this by £25 and before the start of the Summer School you will be invoiced for the remaining fees minus the full deposit amount. If you have any issues or problems using the code please contact Steve - editor@estastrings.org.uk

So, who ARE Clifton Edition?

by Mark Goddard

Mark and Pat Goddard at the launch of Clifton Edition, April 2023



Clifton Edition was formed to rescue previously published music by Spartan Press following that company's sad demise last year. Hundreds of composers and arrangers were left 'orphaned' when the government saw fit to dissolve the hapless Spartan. And with it, potentially, would go hundreds of successful copyrights originally published by Spartan, Phylloscopus, EMA and Jot-a-Note. What a disaster!

Going back a few years...

Sat on a park bench on holiday one summer, my loving wife came out with this: 'What d'you want to happen to Spartan Press when you snuff it?' The two of us met at the RAM in the 1970s, married, and taught music in Oxford for a decade before founding Spartan Press in 1989. Spartan gradually evolved over the next 30 years into a thriving multi-faceted organisation that published, distributed, typeset and printed educational music from a Victorian shooting lodge in the Highlands of Scotland. Here, we brought up our three children and later also ran

the legendary specialist string retailers 'Fuller Music' which we purchased from Mark Dicken on his retirement.

'Has it all been an efficient way to feed your family that will die when you do, or do you want it to live on and continue to grow, like, say, a mini Oxford University Press?' Pat's questions were pertinent and I thought seriously. If the company was to blossom long after we are dead and gone, big things needed to happen soon, and in the right order.

- We had to relocate the company into a sensible business premises, separate from the family.
- We had to find a suitable buyer for the company.
- We had to sell the rambling old shooting lodge which would then be mostly empty.
- We had to retire properly!

All these things were eventually achieved over a period of a few years. We were lucky to find an 8,000 sq.ft. industrial unit for sale,



one we spoke to said the same thing: ‘Mark — you need to start from scratch. Sign up all those talented composers once again, rescue all those copyrights and rise from the ashes like a musical Phoenix...!’ This is not what we’d planned for our retirement of course, but we simply couldn’t resist.

We have since been humbled by overwhelming encouragement from a wide range of music industry stalwarts; music teachers, performers, dealers, publishers and distributors alike. Nearly all the composers and arrangers

down the road in Kingussie. We managed to sell ‘Strathmashie House’ to a lively family who owned ‘Daffy’s Gin’: a family run distillery business — the locals loved them! We retired to the centre of Glasgow as an antidote to living in the Cairngorms — [civilisation at last!]. We eventually migrated even further south to Clifton in Bristol.

All was well... until the phone started ringing...

‘I know you’re nothing to do with it these days Mark, but what’s happening at Spartan? They’re not returning my calls’. These sorts of calls became increasingly regular and progressively more alarming in nature throughout 2022.

Witnessing the gradual decline and final demise of one’s life’s work was painful to witness. The reasons why? That’s another, longer (and rather boring) story for another day. Despite being supposedly retired, on a hunch Pat and I visited the Music and Drama Education Expo in Islington last year. Always a good place to air one’s thoughts and compare notes about the music profession. I’m so glad we made the effort, because it was there that we experienced a kind of ‘Epiphany’... a sort of ‘business vision’ if you will. Virtually every

from the old Spartan empire who I telephoned said ‘Yes, I’ll re-assign my copyrights to Clifton Edition. Lets GO!’ Household names like Alan Bullard, Mark Tanner, Bryan Kelly, Julian Lloyd Webber, Paul Harris and many others signed up promptly. The wonderful Stainer and Bell were quick to offer worldwide distribution — they’ve been brilliant to work with.

The various exam boards were totally supportive and the MPA provided ISMN numbers and barcodes. Specialist music printers Caligraving offered valuable advice. We had to re-typeset all the music and took the opportunity to develop a fresh looking ‘Clifton House Style’. We’ve benefitted from generous offers of free help with typesetting and proofing chores. All the covers have been completely redesigned and all in all, we feel that each new edition is a positive improvement over its corresponding original.

A new website cliftonedition.com presents the growing catalogue as it unfolds.

Rome wasn’t built in a day and it’ll take some time (and continued pillaging of our pension fund!), but we feel excited to be ‘back in the game’ again after our five year ‘hoax retirement’. We’re enjoying every minute.



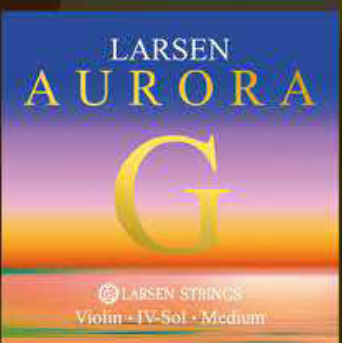
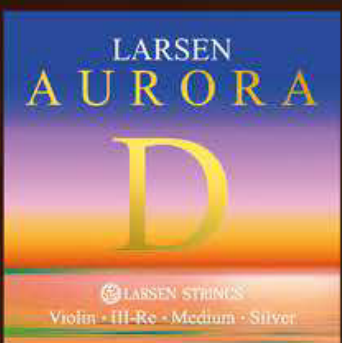
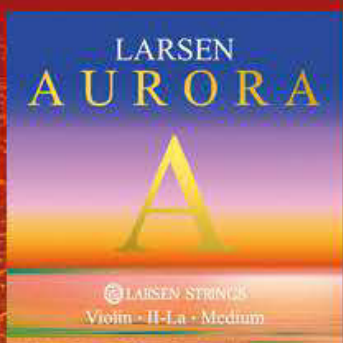
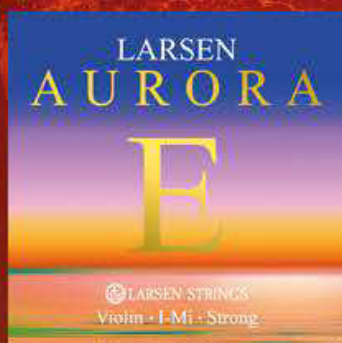
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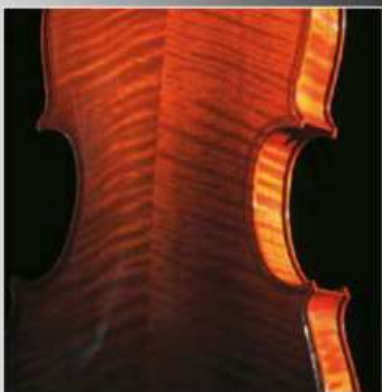
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Guiding the Musical Journey: A Tale of Technique and Transformation

by Alex Mew



Each musical journey is an ever-evolving adventure, and as a teacher, you are the guide. The one who has trodden this path many times and seen both the pitfalls and the bountiful fruits too. The Hidersine Company are proud to collaborate with ESTA to offer resources to aid this exciting musical expedition.

Imagine: Your new student has just picked up their first stringed instrument, whether small or large, and their eyes are sparkling with potential, hopefully. They want to play a tune. Something they can show their parents or friends. Something of which they can be proud. You, as the seasoned expert, can see and empathise with their desire to progress quickly, but just as you would not allow a child to run off on an adventure entirely directionless, you know that you can't just hand them an instrument and

show them a few notes. Rather, you must craft a roadmap – a purposeful journey from their first squeaky notes to the ultimate symphonic masterpieces – they may not even yet realise – they dream of playing.

In this shared adventure, Hidersine and ESTA are your companions, proud to provide you with extra resources and stops along the way to help you be the best musical guide for your students. The ESTA / Hidersine Technique Video Archive is available both on the ESTA and Hidersine YouTube channels, and this catalogue of techniques taught by David Le Page (Violin), Steven Doane (Cello) and Cathy Elliot (Double Bass) are free to use and share at will. The archive covers all manner of topics from simply 'How to hold the bow' and 'How to apply Rosin' through to advanced techniques such as Martele and Ricochet.

The business of technique:

Momentarily taking a pitstop on our journey to delve into the business world, there is an established sales mantra that has been used for decades: *emphasize not the features of a product, but its benefits*. This philosophy resonates far beyond the simple sales pitch, finding a melodic counterpart in the realm of stringed instrument techniques. While sales professionals emphasize the benefits of a product beyond its features, we as musicians, unfold emotional narratives through the benefits of various techniques.

Consider **Vibrato**, a technique that involves oscillating the pitch by rocking the finger on the string. In the world of sales, this rocking motion would be the feature, akin to a characteristic of a product. However, in the musical universe, the true magic lies in the benefit – the warmth and emotional resonance that vibrato imparts to the music. It's not just a technicality; it's a conduit for expression that forges a profound connection with the listener.

Consider also **Spiccato**: that playful bouncing of the bow is another musical feature that extends beyond its technical description. Beyond being a mere bowing technique, spiccato infuses vitality and rhythm into a performance, transforming it into a lively masterpiece. The benefit here is the palpable energy it brings, captivating the audience and transcending the realm of technique into a shared emotional experience.

Or perhaps **Ponticello / Sul Pont**: playing where the strings meet the bridge. The inspirational benefit is found in the atmospheric quality it lends to the music. It immerses listeners in a sonic landscape, evoking emotions and sparking the imagination. The technique becomes a vehicle for an emotional journey, offering a benefit that goes beyond technical proficiency.

Whereas in the business world, the aim is to connect customers emotionally to a product, musical techniques serve as tools for creating emotional bonds between the musician and the audience. Each well-executed technique

becomes a vessel for expression, turning notes into a captivating narrative that can universally resonate.

Understanding and communicating the benefits of techniques in music transcend the mere mastery of technical skills. It's about utilizing these features as vehicles for emotional expression, transforming the act of playing into a conversation that goes beyond technicalities. By thinking of this 'features and benefits' model, all musicians – but most importantly, your students - can learn to craft a lasting connection, turning each note into a compelling story that speaks to the hearts of their audience.

The Future of Technique:

So, we're delighted that 2024 will see the release of a whole new generation of resources focussing on techniques, tips and tricks. Working side by side, ESTA and Hidersine are really excited about the extended range of techniques and tips that will be offered in a new, modernised video format. The all-new suite of video resources will feature some of the finest educators and players from across the bowed instrument world, encompassing specific content for Violin, Cello and Double Bass, and we're delighted to say, a whole new specialist focus on Viola too: an area that is overlooked far too often.

More information will follow over the coming months, but work is already underway creating the most comprehensive technique resource the ESTA has ever offered.

Here's to the transformative power of good technique and the magical moments it creates in the hands of your musical apprentices.

Alex Mew

The Hidersine Company

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Q&A with violinist and psychologist, Tanja Roos

by Emma Baird



Tanja Roos began playing the violin at the age of three, and subsequently pursued musical trainings at the Yehudi Menuhin School, in Vienna and at the New England Conservatory, studying under the tutelage of Natasha Boyarsky, Boris Kuschnir and Miriam Fried.

Tanja has established a highly successful career as a concert violinist, leading to performances at Verbier Festival, Ravinia Stearns Music Institute and Kronberg Academy to name a few, and she has been a prizewinner at numerous international violin competitions. Following a switch of career path and further university studies, Tanja now works as an Assistant Psychologist for the NHS and, alongside continuing to teach the violin and play regular concerts, she aspires to become a Clinical Psychologist.

‘As soon as I am qualified, I would love to work with musicians. It feels like the natural next step.’

Emma: Why did you decide to switch career path?

Tanja: ‘Many things prompted the switch. I do believe my change to clinical psychology was due in large part to the mental health stigma that exists in the classical music industry. In my experience, I received very little to no education on how to manage the mental challenges of being a musician over decades of training. There was the odd workshop, but these events often provide blanket advice without getting down to the ‘nitty gritty’ of it all.’

Emma: Please could you elaborate on your experiences of musical training within music schools, conservatories and competitions?

Tanja: ‘My musical training has been a huge part of my life. Whilst the training I received in my early life was really outstanding, I look back and realise that some of it was quite one dimensional and definitely altered my approach

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I was always surrounded by incredibly talented and influential musicians who helped me to gain unique perspectives on life.

to music. Much of what I took from it could be summarised in two main principles. Firstly, ‘technical mastery and solo playing is of utmost importance’. Secondly, ‘fear is a powerful tool in motivating success’. I do believe this mentality did inform my later approaches to competitions and high stake musical environments.

For some people, the all encompassing drive to perfectionism in competitions really can work, but it didn’t for me. I definitely believed that some level of being scared would make me play better, and that if something was not executed perfectly, my world would crumble and everything that was important to me would cease to exist! But at the same time, there were many wonderful things. I was always surrounded by incredibly talented and influential musicians who helped me to gain unique perspectives on life. I was trained to a high level and developed a great work ethic, stamina, creativity, and so many things of which I am proud.’

Emma: Are there any specific things that you learned in your scientific degree that you wish you had known as a violinist?

Tanja: ‘There are so many things! Firstly, knowledge of psychological theory. It could absolutely be applied to the daily lives of musicians. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), for example, is a popular evidence-based therapy. The idea of it is essentially that our thoughts affect our emotions, which affect our behaviours, and our physiology. They all connect and influence one another. It’s a simple concept with a very profound effect. Eventually what can happen, is that we become caught in something called a maintenance cycle. For example, you may be about to perform a particular piece on stage but pre-occupied by the thought that

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One thing that we can do for ourselves, is to improve our psychological flexibility within the realm of uncertainty.

‘someone important is in the audience’. The associated feelings could be uncertainty, dread or anxiety. The behaviour that this anxiety might drive could be to practice relentlessly or to engage in destructive coping strategies like drinking alcohol to calm nerves. The more we engage in these short term relief behaviours, the more we believe we need them to succeed, and they are repeated and reinforced. Understanding processes like this is vital.’

Another big takeaway for me, from doing a science degree, was trying to use critical thinking skills a lot more in my everyday life. The emphasis here is on examining evidence. When interpreting studies and clinical trials, this was really hammered into us. We would have to ask ourselves, for example, what is the evidence that a particular drug worked for depression? Could there be other factors that were influencing those results? Musicians and conservatoires could integrate this type of thinking a lot more. For example, musicians could be encouraged to ask themselves questions like ‘what is the evidence that the way I am practising is bringing benefits?’ or ‘was I the only one who noticed my out of tune note in that concert?’ There is so much in this industry that we cannot control, so having a way to manage some of the uncertainties and/or extreme emotions is really important. It is a way of remaining stable, but flexible with emotions and behaviour because it welcomes new possibilities, explanations and ways of thinking.’

Emma: Based on your work, what do you believe could improve the lives of classical musicians?

Tanja: ‘I think the music world is very uncertain, in terms of work patterns, finances, career

paths. One thing that we can do for ourselves, is to improve our psychological flexibility within the realm of uncertainty. For example, during the pandemic, many artists had the experience of their regular busy schedules being wiped out overnight.

It was an extraordinary time which demanded a lot of resilience from people. Flexibility was crucial, and needed to be nurtured and developed within many individuals. A couple of years ago, I conducted a study investigating performing artists’ mental health during COVID. And much to my surprise, many of the artists in the study described uncertainty as something valuable – it was a way to think about themselves in a different light and to improve their own coping strategies and methods of resilience.

Emma: What has been the most challenging aspect of pivoting in another direction?

Tanja: ‘The biggest challenge was to start something all over again from the beginning. To go from that familiar world where you have bettered so much of yourself whilst pursuing a specialty, to a complete novice in a whole new area.

But, I have grown in many unexpected ways. I have discovered a whole new community of non musicians. In that life where one grows up in a very specialised musical environment and dedicates so many hours towards a goal, it can create barriers of communication with others. This so-called idea of ‘Musicians vs normal people’. It’s the same with other specialties within the arts, sports and science. We get stuck in a box, and become insular, in the pursuit of excellence, and it’s isolating. When I entered this new world, it shattered that illusion. People are people, whatever their profession. And as a result, my ability to interact with others has improved.

I think my understanding of music is also better, now that I am doing something else. Saying ‘I am a violinist’ versus ‘I play the violin’ has changed a lot. Separating myself from

the instrument has in fact brought us closer. I found myself away from the instrument so I can communicate and connect better whenever I am playing and practising.'

Emma: What are your specific goals in terms of connecting your psychology studies with the musical world?

Tanja: 'There are so many avenues that one could go down, but the research route is an interesting one for me. I have done some recent studies surrounding performing artists' mental health and the use of beta blockers. And I would like to pursue that, because there is very limited research on this topic.'

Much of the feedback in recent studies has been that mental health professionals don't fully understand the lifestyle of a musician. I believe that more research could assist in helping more general clinicians to understand the very specific lives and struggles of artists. The other options would be forming a mental health charity for musicians, creating workshops, and working one to one with clients.'

Emma: Are you interested in linking the conversation of mental well-being between different fields within the arts?

Tanja: 'Yes! I just attended a performing arts medical conference in New York. They had doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists, physios who all helped the performing arts in some way.'

It felt like such an amazing opportunity for these connected worlds to collide. Those who were primarily working in the dance world were learning about the music or acting world and vice versa. So, there is an opportunity to grow a community of interacting, complementary clinicians, who can more often talk about the arts as one. Because there are so many similarities and comparisons.

What I am also interested in is including people from all the different fields of the arts

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I believe that more research could assist in helping more general clinicians to understand the very specific lives and struggles of artists.

- dancers, actors - in a conversation that could probably help general mental health treatment as well. Surely that can only be a good thing. If properly funded, and imaginatively presented, the arts could play a critical role in society's wellness and it might even relieve some of the pressure on the NHS.'

Emma: How would you describe your teaching approach to young violin students?

Tanja: 'I like to take the best of what I have learned from all of my previous violin teachers, so hopefully that's not new. Also, my current work within the NHS is focused on people with autism, who we know have some difficulties with social communication. From this work, I have learned to communicate in better ways, which has certainly translated into my teaching.'

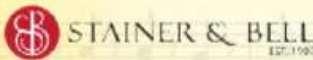
Teaching violin is incredibly abstract and complex. So, approaching the communication from all possible angles is so important. Using not only your language, but movement, visuals and objects. My clinical studies have also helped me with empathetic skills. It is important to sense when something is not working, and when a student is perhaps shutting off or not understanding. Knowing when to switch the approach and try something new when teaching is vital. The common alternative is to drill something over and over again in the same way and blame the student for not understanding, rather than the teacher for not presenting the information in a way that they are able to connect with.'



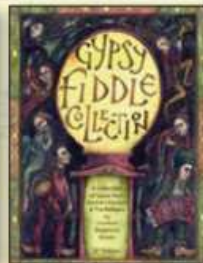
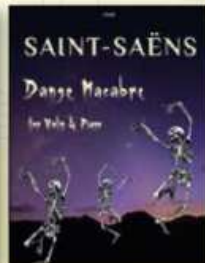
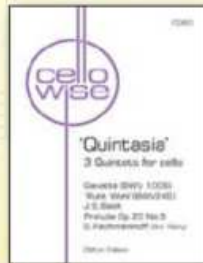
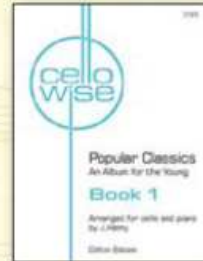
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If you want to develop and broaden your teaching skills then you could benefit from a NJNF bursary. The purpose of the Nannie Jamieson Nutshell Fund is to award bursaries enabling ESTA (UK) members to invigorate their teaching through either attending short courses on string teaching or having a limited number of one-to-one private lessons in the 'Play Better, Teach Better' programme. For detailed information on whether you qualify and how you should apply, please visit

[Nannie Jamieson Nutshell Fund](#)

The Sheila Nelson Stringwise Fund (SNSF)

The purpose of the Sheila Nelson Stringwise Fund is to promote and disseminate the art of teaching as practised by Sheila Nelson through the creation of an archive of her work which will support string teachers. Bursaries may also be awarded to members of ESTA (UK) teaching in the UK and wishing to further their knowledge of the methodologies of Sheila Nelson and Paul Rolland, and those with a special interest in group teaching. For detailed information on who qualifies and how they should apply, please visit

[Sheila Nelson Stringwise Fund SNSF](#)

Joan Dickson Chamber Music Fund (JDCMF)

If you have pupils who are keen on chamber music, then they or you could benefit from a JDCMF bursary. The purpose of the Joan Dickson Chamber Music Fund is to award bursaries enabling pupils of ESTA (UK) members to attend chamber music courses or to award bursaries to ESTA (UK) members to help in the setting up of chamber music projects for their pupils.

For detailed information on who qualifies and how they should apply, please visit

[Joan Dickson Chamber Music Fund](#)

The ESTA Tertis Viola Fund

Late in 2023, ESTA UK was approached by one of the trustees of the Tertis Foundation, a charity set up by Lillian Tertis, widow of the acclaimed twentieth century viola player and teacher, Lionel Tertis. The Tertis Foundation was considering moving funds to other charities that could further the aims of the Foundation. With regard to promoting the viola amongst young players and supporting teachers and projects for young viola players the Tertis Foundation turned to ESTA UK. Using the funds kindly donated, the trustees of ESTA UK decided to add a fourth bursary fund to the three already managed by the ESTA Bursary Committee and set up the ESTA Tertis Viola Fund. The aims of the ESTA Tertis Viola Fund are to continue to promote viola playing and teaching and keep alive the memory of Lionel Tertis.

The ESTA Bursary Committee will be making awards for courses from the summer of 2024 and the deadline for applications is 10th May 2024. For full criteria and information on how to apply for an award, please see the bursary pages on the ESTA website.

www.estastrings.org.uk/bursaries/



The Nannie Jamieson Nutshell Fund needs you!

I wonder if you have heard of the Nannie Jamieson Nutshell Fund?

This is a superb resource for ESTA UK Full Professional, Young Professional, Overseas Professional or Student members if you are looking to develop and broaden your teaching skills.

In recent years we have noticed a decline in the number of applications for the NJNF bursaries and we are constantly looking for new ways to raise awareness of the fund and encourage applications for our bursaries. There are many courses running that might take your fancy, perhaps attending the ESTA 2024 Summer School, the Suzuki teacher training Courses or the residential Colourstrings course in the summer of 2024, to name a few. Additionally, you might have identified a course locally,

online or overseas, and we'd love to hear from you if the course fees feel a bit out of reach and a bursary would help you to attend.

We've also been delighted to open bursary applications for teachers who are looking for paid mentorship or would like to pay for a lesson or lessons from a recognised professional in support of teaching a specific technique.

Please do check our bursary webpage on the ESTA UK website and contact myself or one of the other ESTA Bursary Committee members if you'd like to discuss making an application; or just complete the online application form so that we can consider it. Please ensure you meet the criteria before applying and I look forward to hearing from you.

Becky Webb, Bursary Officer NJNF

ESTA UK would like to thank the following companies for their generous support of the bursary funds.

Click on the images to visit their website

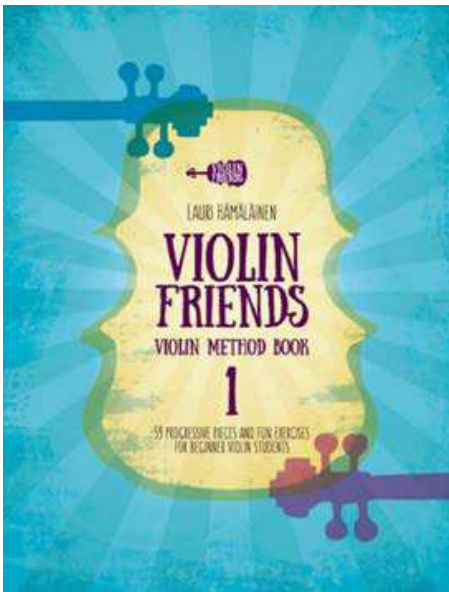
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REVIEWS & RECOMMENDATIONS



Violin Friends

Lauri Hämäläinen

violinfriends.com

Violin Friends is a collection of exercises and pieces that comes in 3 volumes.

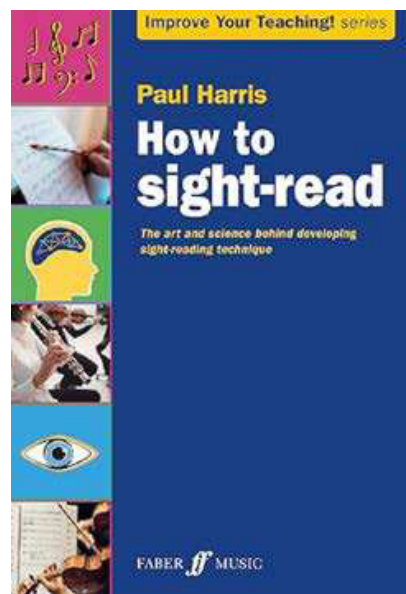
These books are aimed at younger players, some colourful drawings spread throughout to add to their appeal. There are warm up exercises here and there, and a few quizzes to encourage revision of ideas already learned. It has a multimedia approach; as well as separate volumes with piano accompaniments, there are many duos and trios, to enable ensemble skills to develop early on, and backing tracks can be downloaded and streamed... Terrifying concepts at my age, but second nature to younger folk!

I particularly like the idea of colours being introduced at the same time as dynamics, the two go hand in hand for me. There are many other nice ideas, such as using different fruits to introduce basic rhythms.

I don't think this book works as a 'stand alone' tutorial as I don't see a step by step process that I would expect (low second fingers appear before high second fingers, for example), but I don't think it's intended as such and, as a supplement,

I believe these books have much to offer. I would suggest volume one caters for beginners to around grade 2. The subsequent volumes add more complex rhythms, more advanced bowing techniques and continue to develop ensemble and performance ideas.. I especially like the 'magic game' where you can mix up dynamics and tempo marks to produce your own magical musical creation. It's hard to quantify these books at a specific grade... 3rd position appears briefly in the middle of volume three, and then disappears. Top Cs are later introduced without suggested fingerings and then finally there are a couple of exercises going up to 7th position... So that aspect is a bit random... But as a collection of fun additions to the standard repertoire I do think these volumes are worth consideration.

Reviewed by Philip Heyman



How to sight-read

Paul Harris

Published by Faber Music Ltd 2023

After attending the webinar launch of this book hosted by the Curious Piano Teachers, I was keen to get hold of a copy of the book and was delighted to be given the opportunity to review it for ESTA UK.

At only 78 pages, the book is very concise, information filled, yet easy to read. Paul Harris has a real talent in conveying complex

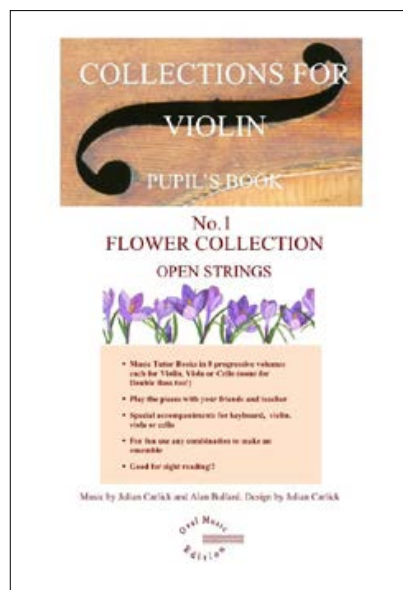
information in a very accessible way. The book is laid out into four parts: setting the scene, aspects of knowledge, developing sightreading technique and practical matters.

Each part is subdivided into several short chapters, making the content easy to digest and dip into again easily for future reference. The book also has an accompanying app, which I have yet to try out. The book is aimed at all who want to develop their sight-reading skills, teachers, students and parents, to encourage the ability to sight-read with confidence. As part of the research for the book Paul Harris had surveyed 150 respondents (players, teachers and students) and consulted with an optometrist and ophthalmic optician. This research is highlighted in some interesting chapters on brain processing speed and pattern recognition, peripheral vision and looking ahead. There is also a chapter on piano-specific techniques, whereas the whole book is of more general use for all instruments and singers.

Paul Harris seeks to dispel the myth that you can either sight-read or not and that it is something that can be taught. One important element he suggests is to have a positive mindset and the book takes you through the skills that need to be developed to become a confident sight-reader. There are lots of practical suggestions to try, which he breaks down into quite a lot of detail. I particularly liked his 'walking the course' analogy. His chapter on how to use his 'Improve your Sight-Reading' series was insightful, particularly as I use this book series a lot with my own pupils. The preparing for exam sight-reading chapter, with a detailed journey plan, gives a good series of prompts and activities you could use with your students.

To conclude a really handy book, with lots of guidance on how to develop sight-reading skills!

Reviewed by Helen Lewis



Collections

Julian Carlick

ovalmusicedition.bandzoogle.com

Having used 'Collections' with young beginner cellists successfully for many years, I can thoroughly recommend these books as they encourage musical creativity and the ability for pupils to express themselves.

Julian's clear step by step approach gives the perfect chance for the basics of musical language to be learnt quickly and easily. The 'Do you know this?' information at the beginning of each of the 8 progressive Volumes have the new items included in the following pieces which of course reaffirm the child's memory processes. Separate accompaniment books are available which include both piano and instrument parts. I've always accompanied pupils by playing the cello part as it helps them to breathe and move naturally - imitation often being the way that children learn - but it's good for them to get the feeling of being accompanied by a piano as well.

An excellent article in the February Strad underlining that Fun is an important part of learning amused me as Julian has made Fun paramount throughout in many delightful ways since these books were first published in 1992.

REVIEWS & RECOMMENDATIONS

For instance, following the very first opening four bar piece are the words: 'Sdrawkcah siht gniyalp yrt won' and it is fascinating how children react to this. It definitely helps them to realise that they also can be creative, when they see Julian having his own bit of fun! After all, Haydn had his with 'The Joke' quartet and there are so many other works that can get a laugh from an audience if played as the composer intended - suitably good timing in music being as important as it is when one gets a message across well when speaking.

The Scale Collection with its grid of finger placing couldn't be clearer and children who haven't started with piano lessons often find it very useful when not fully understanding the basic concepts of scales.

The two Overview sections - 'The Notes at a Glance' and 'Do you know this?' - with a final alphabetical Glossary, are all very useful for the quick revision of facts!

Julian's consideration for pupils' thoughts and feelings is always present in abundance, the list of questions 'Pupils might ask' being an excellent starter for the less thoughtful and enquiring child. At the end of each Volume, as well as the lists of question boxes to fill in, there are boxes for the teacher to add dates and signatures and enough room for comments, making happy feelings of achievement almost tangible.

'Collections' are available for all string instruments, including the Double Bass, and therefore ensemble playing with any or all combinations is easily organisable - the fun of playing with one's friends being the perfect way forwards to a life of fulfilment and enjoyment.

As with all cottage industries, not only being the writer but also the composer, artist and publisher, Julian's 'Collections' continue to evolve, the latest being a website: ovalmusicedition.bandzoogle.com

In the early days, a few compositions by Alan Bullard were added and then for the front covers

of the revised edition Julian's wife, Ilfra, supplied colourful and thought-provoking paintings for the front covers.

Sensibly the very important subject of technique has been left entirely to individual teachers, there being so very many differing methods. What has been produced is the perfect book to start all young string players. Learning to express and project music from the beginning, even if only plucking open strings!, will mean that the present fashion of playing everything as fast as possible, presumably to show off flashy techniques, will (ever hopefully!) be forgotten and what composers composed in their minds and on to manuscript paper will thankfully become of prime importance again!

Reviewed by Nicola Anderson

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Available to buy from 1st January 2024, Cathy Elliott's new arrangement of Florence Price's well loved, Adoration, is suitable for a confident Grade 7 player and will be available as a printed edition and a download. The piano accompaniment is printed as a three page spread, greatly assisting the pianist and avoiding the need to use sellotape.

In her notes, which are usefully found on both the piano part and the double bass part, Elliott sets out the fascinating letter that Price wrote to the famous Double Bass composer and conductor, Serge Koussevitzky, in 1943, detailing her struggle as an African-American female composer. We are very lucky that since that letter, Price's compositions have been discovered and that Elliott has arranged one of her most well known pieces for the Double Bass.

Whilst Elliott utilises the mid register of the double bass in her arrangement, there are also opportunities for the soloist to go into low thumb position using the tenor clef, a useful learning point for the intermediate to advanced bass player. The piano part is simple, supportive

and comfortably playable by a teacher with less advanced piano skills. The music is clearly notated with simple bowings, as well as articulations, dynamics and tempo markings. Fingerings are left bare, allowing plenty of space for the player to mark their own in.

All in all, this is a very welcome addition to the repertoire for intermediate/advanced players and perfect for a student looking to improve their quality of tone, vibrato and confidence in reading tenor clef, whilst giving space for their own musicianship and expressiveness to shine through.

Reviewed by Eloise Riddell

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