



The Scroll!

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The Monster Within!

One of the most wonderful aspects of making music is that it is an activity which encompasses all age groups. Music can be learned from an early age until well into adulthood. Even people over the age of 80 can learn an instrument!

It is then with great disappointment that many adult students begin to doubt and question their ability. Mostly this is the creation of Monsters at Work. This 'Monster' is called 'Nerves'!

Children, being natural show offs, do not seem to suffer nearly to the extent that adults do. Sometimes it appears at a later stage, and the catchcry then becomes 'it's too hard!' Children just play. As long as it "sounds right", as far as they are concerned, it is right. (This sometimes makes for some very interesting lessons!!!)

Adults are more discerning.

They already have acquired quite a high level of aural skills. They are listeners of good quality recordings and regularly attend performances. They know how a piece of music should go and how it should sound. What an eye opener it is that what they hear at a concert, or on a recording, they are unable to imitate on their own instrument.

The first things adult music students must learn is patience, patience and then find some more patience. You cannot play like Yehudi Menuhin or Nigel Kennedy after two years of playing an instrument. It takes many years to master the art and acquire the finesse required to play like the professionals or the sound you imagine in your own mind.

Once the elementary stage has been mastered it is a good idea to join a group. There is safety in numbers

and much learning about rhythm, timing and sound. Constant repetition helps in gaining confidence when playing tricky rhythms and fingerings, long passages and all the other variables that make up music.

Many adults reach a certain stage in learning music and all of a sudden come to a full stop and many say "I can't do this," "This is all wrong" and other statements of that kind. Some, especially in string playing, find their bows have a mind of their own and start on a road to involuntary tremolo, i.e. The shaky bow. This can be most un-nerving of all, as the sound produced when playing with a shaky bow can be quite unnerving. However, it can be cured by keeping on playing, and not allowing the "Monster" to take over.

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Care of the bow!

- Don't over tension the bow. You should be able to fit a pencil between the hair and the middle of the stick.
- Use long strokes when applying rosin.
- Don't forget to loosen the bow after playing.
- Avoid undue stress—do not use the bow for sword fights or as a light saber!

Take care of your violin, cello or viola

It's important to take care of your violin, cello or viola.

1. Make sure the bridge is always straight and upright.
2. Check strings regularly for signs of wear. Change every 12 months for optimum performance, depending on how often you

play. Always keep spares in your case.

3. Don't subject your instrument to extremes of temperature changes. This can cause it to go out of tune or worse, crack. Avoid leaving it in the car or near air conditioners or heaters.

4. Clean with a soft dry cloth after playing. Build up of dirt, oils and rosin will damage the varnish. This build up also reduces the life of the strings.



All Things New!

The Diamond Valley & Eltham Community Orchestra on this their 30th anniversary would like to thank the:

Diamond Valley Singers and Surrey Hills Chamber Orchestra

For their support and friendship over the years.

We look forward to many more years of fun, friendship and music making.



Congratulations to the following musicians on their success in the AMEB exams:

- ◆ Grade 4:
Meredith Collins - Senior Strings
- ◆ Grade 2:
Rosie Hingston - Beginner Strings and Senior Strings
- ◆ Grade 1:
Emma Khaw - Beginner Strings
- ◆ Preliminary Grade:
Christopher Costas - Beginner Strings—With Honours

Well done!

And, there's a new baby in the pit!
Congratulations to Julie and Ben on the birth of:

OSCAR DAVID GEDDES

19 July, 2005 at 9.55 p.m.

grandchild number 2 for Mary and
Derek Wright



Waiting for his cue in
the Green Room—

Erik Pool

The 'Green Room'

The reception room for performers is called the "green room". The origins of the term are a mystery. The term may originally have referred to an off-stage room in a theatre where actors rested while waiting for their cues, signaled, incidentally by the use of green flags.

One suggestion was that the room was painted green to rest actors' eyes after exposure to bright stage lighting, but in the early 1700s, when

lighting was by candles, this could hardly have been a problem.

Another suggestion is that nearly all villages had a public open space, known as the Green, where entertainment and fairs would be held. A Troupe would arrive at the village green, and set up a stage from the back of the horse & cart. They'd partition an area off for the players to relax between performances, out of public view. The floor was just the green

grass, hence the Green Room or Room on the Green. This was as important a facility for the performers as is a dressing room of today!

Actual theatres grew out of the bear, bull and cock fight pits. The first was commissioned, on the burnt out ruins of a cockpit venue, after the fire of London, the Phoenix Theatre. The theatre included a common room, which the players came to regard as the green room they were used to!



From the Podium

The Orchestra experienced a busy time during June-July with rehearsals and performances of Oklahoma. Words of praise are still coming in!

This has been the most successful show the Orchestra has performed with the Diamond Valley Singers, both in spontaneity and audience attendance. The show was a colourful representation of

the lives and times of farmers and cowboys set in the late 1890s.

What a great thrill to be able to conduct a production that has everything going for it: Great songs; great dances; great dialogue; great sets, especially the house which converted from a farm house into Judd's smoke house in a

flash; great performances on stage and in the pit. This is my favourite show and I have been involved in a production of Oklahoma 5 times. The first four as a violinist and this one as a conductor.

It is a privilege to be able to have been involved in both capacities as a player and conductor.

What's the Score: Schubert

Last issue we talked about Schumann. Now it's time to look at the other "Schu", Schubert, that is.

The orchestra is now getting ready for its end of year performance season of Schubert's 'Great Symphony'. This concert will be in conjunction with Surrey Hills Chamber Orchestra and over the past 4 years this has proven to be very successful.

By combining with another orchestra for these large works, the overall sound is greater due to the larger number of musicians, as well as having the advantage of a

double performance. Most community orchestras only perform their works once after working hard on them for several weeks. We get to perform this programme twice in different areas. Phillip Island will also be revisited where a concert of light music will be performed, as well as an overture and at least one or two movements from the Symphony.

Schubert embodied the ideal romantic vision of the poor wandering minstrel. He is reputed to have been somewhat of a bohemian, although he had the discipline to rise early each day and compose

all morning. Even his ultimate demise is the stuff of romance and tragedy.

While Schubert's love life is largely a mystery, he allegedly contracted syphilis from a servant girl one balmy summer evening and the recurrence of his symptoms led a doctor to recommend that he go and stay with his brother in the new suburbs of Vienna.

Schubert, unfortunately, followed the good doctor's advice and ironically the lack of good plumbing in these new suburbs led to his contraction of typhus, and hence his death.



Following the only public concert of his work, shortly before his death, Schubert used the proceeds to buy tickets for his friends to see the great Paganini.

Our Instruments: The French Horn

The modern orchestral brass French horn was an invention based on early hunting horns.

Horns were first used as musical instruments during 16th century operas. During the 17th century, modifications to the bell end of the horn were made and the cor de chasse, or French horn as the English called it, was born.

The first horns were monotone instruments. In 1753, a German musician called Hampe invented the means of

applying movable slides (crooks) of various length that changed the key of the horn.

In 1760, it was discovered rather than invented that placing a hand over the bell of the French Horn lowered the tone—called stopping. Devices for stopping were later invented. The French Horn is reputedly the hardest of all the orchestral instruments to play. The French Horn is a transposing instrument. Cellists or flautists

who see a C written in their parts will play a note that others recognize as C. This may seem obvious! French Horn players who see a C on the page will play a note that does *not* sound like C. The music for transposing instruments is not written or read at concert pitch. Horn players, seeing C on the "F horn" part, will play a note that sounds like F. The players have to do this in their head for every note, unless the piece has been transposed for them.



Meet the Musicians: Katharine Shade

Katharine's first instrument was violin, however, her principal instrument was trombone, which she played for 11 years, performing on it during her B.Ed. in music and also achieving her A.Mus.A.

While at university, Katharine had a dream about playing the violin again. She decided her subconscious was trying to tell her something! She went back to her original

teacher—Grandmother Beattie Shade—for lessons, and shortly after moved over to viola, enjoying its deeper sonority.

Katharine's string playing was interrupted, with serious back problems causing an eight year break from music playing. After an operation returned a lot of her strength and stamina, she returned to the violin (easier on the back

than the heavier viola). At the beginning of last year she was delighted to be able to return to orchestral playing, joining her mum Libby and Aunt Jenny Grierson at the DV&ECO. Katharine loves the friendly atmosphere of the orchestra, the challenge of playing first violin, and most of all, getting back to one of the most important things in her life—classical music.

Katharine and Libby Shade dressed to kill at Oklahoma!



Diamond Valley and Eltham Community Orchestra

Contributions for the "The Scroll!" are welcome from all orchestra members. Articles can be given directly, or emailed, to:
The DVECO Secretary

*Jenny Grierson
14 Meruka Drive
Eltham
jsgrierson@dodo.com.au*

Check out our webpage:
www.vicnet.net.au/~dveco

Webpages for Musicians:

French Horn:
www.hornplanet.com

Preston Symphony Orchestra:
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~psorch/>

Dandenong Ranges Music Council:
<http://www.drmc.org.au>

Sheet Music:
www.virtualsheetmusic.com

Music - Play for Life:
www.mca.org.au/music.playforlife.htm

DVECO Performance Schedule:

- ◆ DVECO and Surrey Hills Orchestras: 28 August at the Eltham Community Centre
- ◆ DVECO and Surrey Hills Orchestras: 6 November at the Phillip Island Community Centre

Listen, Look and Learn:

- ◆ The Lion King: 28 July - January 2006 at the Regent Theatre
- ◆ South Melbourne SO: 11 September, 2005 at South Melbourne Town Hall
- ◆ Whitehorse Orchestra Children's Concert: 21 August, 2005
- ◆ Preston Symphony Orchestra — Youth Concerto Competition: 28 August, 2005
- ◆ MSO—Casting a Spell: 26 August, 2005 — with National Boys and Australian Girls Choirs.
- ◆ If you come across an event that orchestra members may be interested in, let us know and we'll add it in here.



Geoff enjoying a few bars rest and the chance to take in the action of the show at Oklahoma!

The Monster Within: cont.

Breathing is an aspect quite often overlooked when learning a string instrument, unlike woodwind and brass instruments which rely entirely on breathing. However, breathing at the correct time and place, even when playing a stringed instrument is essential. It allows for phrasing and a steady intake of air is essential in keeping the body functioning in peak condition, as well as in helping to eliminate the shaky bow. Long intake of breaths and a down bow on breathing out, especially before a long slow bow will help to stop the bow from shaking.

Many students, and this not only pertains to adults, but children as well, are too worried about playing the right note. Often this causes dis-

placement in rhythm and when a student plays for the first time in an ensemble the piece "doesn't sound right", therefore losing confidence, because "it's all wrong". Rhythmic exercises focussing on the pieces being played will help timing which builds confidence and in a relatively short time you hear "it's not so hard after all", and from the frowns, come smiles. Out of time playing is more of a problem than wrong notes. A note played correctly, but out of time will still be wrong. Once correct timing has been achieved the notes will follow, even if the notes are incorrect at first.

A good strategy is to take small bits. Rather than practising a whole piece at a time divide the piece into manage-

able bits. Work on rhythm first, then on notes. Play the piece at a speed suitable to your level, rather than too fast, and gradually increase the speed if it is an allegro or presto. Set the metronome at a comfortable speed, then go through all the speeds remaining from the start to the end speed. E.g. If your piece is MM120 and you start at MM80, play through 80, then 84, 88, 92 etc. all the way to MM120, without leaving any out, even if you think "Oh, this is easy". Remember the quickest way to play fast is to go slow!

One final piece of advice comes from a little saying: "Children should play to learn and Adults should learn to play".

Author: Mary Wright