

Photo: Bojan Stepančić

Bojan Cvetrežnik

Upper Strings Basics

In my daily upper string basics class I will share little tricks that work instantly and present different approaches that require long term work and sometimes even a change of life style. I would like to point out that my 'relaxed performing' is not my original personality. Most people wouldn't believe that as a student I was known as a technically good player, but not very musically expressive.

Before the age of 20 I didn't imagine that I would ever feel comfortable on stage. I did not recognize the basic 6 diatonic chords at jam sessions before the age of 30 when I entered the world of improvised music. I wasn't able to improvise whilst following the chord structure before the age of 40. Oops, how old am I? Not too old not to continue my constant research of approaches that I am not so familiar with, but they result in music that I really like. Today we focus a lot on the "top" of the music

pyramid and sometimes we leave too many unfixed issues at the "lower" levels. Many skills that have disappeared from classical music after a massive score reproduction were known to every good musician in times of early music. After I studied and performed with famous players I still learn from autodidacts or even from little children at our school in how to approach it differently to get good results. I came to situations to ask myself concrete questions about my musical skills. Once I tried to play the Max Reger viola sonata with piano. I wanted to play from random key signatures - so the use of note names was disabled. I was shocked by how bad I was in finding notes by ear. This was a piece of music that I performed successfully at concerts many times. Is it possible for professional musicians to cross a border and relearn the basic perception of the music? I believe we will have a great time together and I hope we will learn from each other in all directions.

In the daily upper strings basics sessions I will present:

1. The concept of working with beginners. Presentation of the picturesque associations and imaginary stories behind them (as their extended context). They lead the students firstly to successfully recognise body positions and to then self-evaluate.
2. How to control home practicing. My experiment with regular video (online) evaluation of home practicing pointed at a gap between my expectations and student's perception of my instructions.
3. How to tune an instrument from the very beginning.
4. Finger patterns in diatonic scales (modes). My system helps in practicing all scales without written music, in sight reading fast orchestral passages and in jazz improvisation.
5. A concept of physioviolin to prevent injuries. We developed a chin rest for beginners that prevents the head from moving out of the natural position too much and too often. We will discuss whether children should hold the violin also with the inner side of the index finger or not. I hope we will be able to find a meaningful (and useful) intersection of conflicting opinions.

Bojan Cvetrežnik Biography

I am a performer, educator and composer. I have initiated many projects that reflect the equality of different music styles. In the classical world I have performed solo, chamber music, contemporary projects and worked as a principal viola player in the Slovenian National Opera. My love of European violin folk traditions is expressed through constant learning of new violin styles. I am the original member of the BBC awarded group Terrafolk and I also worked as a violinist-soloist in the famous Canadian theatre 'Cirque du Soleil'. I worked as a teacher of classical viola and chamber music in the Conservatory of Music in Maribor and as a mentor for jazz improvisation at the Music Academy in Ljubljana. I founded the international Symbolic Orchestra that stresses the variety of expression in string instrument performance. I initiated the educational platform 'Godalkanje' and 'Special Courses' where I work with innovative didactic approaches to understanding music theory without the 5-lines staff and a methodology of teaching bowed string instrument at all levels. I cooperate with many bowed string instrument experts in certain music styles from all over Europe. I run workshops and teacher training at festivals, schools and ESTA Slovenia events. I am also teaching the violin in the classroom of Waldorf primary school in Ljubljana. I work with more than twenty 10 year old children to perform after 17 group school hours. I used to lead projects with the Jena Philharmonic Orchestra and the Slovenian National Radio Symphony Orchestra. I have also written scores of original music for those orchestras as well for the Symbolic Orchestra and smaller line-ups.

I learned from:

Mile Kosi, Kim Kashkashian, Diemut Poppen, Tabea Zimmermann, Laszlo Barshony, Mathias Buchholz, Carol Rodland, Hartmud Rhode, Vlado Batista, Saša Olenjuk, Christian Howes, Darol Anger, Jean Christophe Gairard, Marcel Ramba, Tcha Limberger, Dobrica Vasić, Zoltán Lantos, Ida Meidell Blylod

I worked on creative projects with:

Terrafolk, Symbolic Orchestra, European Symbolic Orchestra, Funtango, Transylvanian Folk Eaters, Terra Mystica, All Capone Štrajh Trio, Amnesty Trio, Midnight Sun Trio, Full Cool Orchestra, Danijel Černe, Boštjan Gombač, Klemen Bračko, Matija Krečič, Marko Hatlak, Izidor Leitinger, Sašo Vollmaier, Gregor Strniša, Barja Drnovšek, Ida Meidell Blylod, Vasilij Meljnikov, Igor Mitrović, Dejan Lapanja, JAMirko, Marko Črnčec, Arvid Engegard, Knud Lundquist, Susanne Lundeng, Janez Dovč, Aldo Kumar, Matej Hotko, Duo Aritmija, Kate Hosking, Milko Lazar, Jean Christophe Gairard, Una Palliser.

I have also performed or recorded with (as soloist or chamber musician):

Vlatko Stefanovski, The Cat Empire, Matija Solce, Vinko Globokar, Miloš Mlejnik, Simone Zanchini, Acı Bertonecelj, Boštjan Lipovšek, Tommy Emanuel, Tilen Stepišnik, Kristijan Krajncan, Neil Innes, Catch Pop String Strong, Miloš Simić, Mahesh Vinayakram.

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AUGUST 6-11 DAILY 9:30 - 11AM