



# The Menuhin Foundation

Newsletter  
Summer 2021



## Braving the challenge

It has been a challenging year, with ever-changing norms due to the pandemic. None of us at Menuhin dreamed we would be teaching online for so long, and we would like to commend our students and their parents for being so diligent and adaptable. Between lockdowns we were able to have some productive orchestra rehearsals, and we look forward to seeing our students shine in performance when we resume the Saturday Centre in the autumn term. ABRSM exams were also affected. Several students were enrolled for exams in November 2020, only to have exams postponed until February and then again until July. ABRSM has now put in a whole new virtual exam system which you'll find more about in this newsletter.

Despite these challenges we were happy to see our students continuing and thriving. All of us became much more computer savvy! We are working hard to ensure an in-person location for teaching and we anticipate a return to normality in the autumn term. Scheduling will happen near the end of August; we'll keep you updated as things progress. We look forward to being back—there's nothing like the happy chaos of orchestra day!

## Menuhin students entertain in busy streets of Hamilton

If you visit any major city in the world, you will see an abundance of musical and acting talent on the streets in the form of buskers. On a hot and humid Saturday afternoon and Wednesday morning at the end of June, some Menuhin students experienced busking for the first time in

Hamilton. They all played brilliantly and their performances were enjoyed by families and friends, passers-by and Ms. Johnstone. A big well done to cellists Victoria Soares, Tessa Kearns, Bram Wiseman and Camryn Maule, bassist Nate Wiseman and violinist Zoe Wiseman.



Camryn Maule out busking

## Menuhin 2021–22 private programme

### TERM 1 2021

(14 weeks)

Tuesday September 7 to  
Saturday December 18  
(Half term Tuesday October  
26–30; Remembrance Day  
Thursday November 11)

### TERM 2 2022

(11 weeks )

Tuesday January 4 to  
Saturday March 26 (Half  
term Tuesday February 8–12)

### TERM 3 2022

(11 weeks )

Tuesday April 12 to  
Saturday June 25

Make up week Tuesday  
June 28 to Saturday July 2

### Menuhin Holidays

—Friday April 15  
Good Friday  
—Friday April 22  
Bermuda Agricultural  
Exhibition (provisional )  
—Friday May 27  
Bermuda Day  
—Tuesday June 21  
National Heroes Day  
(in lieu of June 20)



## Interview

# So many advantages to learning a musical instrument

**Karen Carlington, Former Menuhin student,  
Head of Music, Saltus Grammar School**

*At what age did you begin learning an instrument?*

I began violin lessons at the age of 9.

*Who was your teacher?*

Diane Hamilton.

*Do you play any other instruments?*

Yes, I play the piano and many string instruments.

*Did you play in any Menuhin Foundation orchestras?*

I participated for many years in the Menuhin Foundation Youth Orchestra.

*What is your favourite memory from learning with the Menuhin Foundation?*

When the Youth Orchestra went to the UK to perform with a UK youth orchestra. We were given host families and participated in rehearsals and performances.

*What do you feel are the benefits of learning*

*a musical instrument?*

Several: an increase in confidence, developing teamwork when performing with others, gaining self-discipline through practice, an outlet for self-expression and creativity, developing memory and coordination skills, and enhanced overall academic achievements.

*What advice would you give to current Menuhin Foundation students?*

Enjoy the moment! Continue to practice and aim for your goals. You will see your accomplishments.

*Which type of music do you enjoy listening to?*

I enjoy a variety of music. A few of my favourite styles include classical, Latin, Afrobeat, R&B, acoustic and jazz.

*Do you still perform or play for pleasure?*

I often play for pleasure because I find this to be very relaxing.



*We're looking forward to a return to normality soon, when we can practice together again*

## ABRSM sets up online graded practical exam

The pandemic has made it difficult for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music to reliably schedule in-person exams. In response it now offers a new online graded practical exam called Performance Assessment that is a parallel grading system to the standard in-person exam.

This was formerly offered to higher grades only but is now available for grades 1–8. The student is evaluated solely on performances of pieces and general presentation; the exam does not have a scale, sight reading or aural component. Four pieces are required instead of three and a performance video is recorded under strict conditions of each candidate and sent to ABRSM for evaluation.

There is a monthly opportunity to take one of these exams. Parents are able to register their children online, as is their teacher.

Menuhin teachers are happy to discuss details and the relative advantages of each type of exam with students and their parents.

To take part in theory exams, candidates must have a computer and download a program to sit an exam. These will be the only theory exams available for now. However, the ABRSM hopes to return to regular in-person practical exams as soon as conditions allow.



# Departing friends

*This time of year brings with it a nostalgic note as we say goodbye to colleagues, students and board members who are moving on to new chapters in their lives. We thank Jonathan Kightley and Toni Daniels for their service and we applaud our departing students for their achievements and wish them the very best with their future endeavours!*



**Jonathan Kightley**



**Chiara Mackay**



**Emily Davis**



**An Mei Daniels**



**Tomasina Pearman**



**Marcoliver Philip**

## **Jonathan Kightley** viola/violin teacher

Jonathan taught with Menuhin from 2010–14, and rejoined us at the beginning of the 2019 school year. During his time here he was very active in the community, not only teaching with Menuhin but also performing with the Bermuda Philharmonic and in the Bermuda Festival. He will be returning to the UK at the end of term. We know his students will miss him and we send Jonathan warm wishes and the very best of luck for the future.

## **Chiara Mackay, violin**

The Menuhin Foundation has been a part of my life for the past nine years. During these years I was able to be a member of all three orchestras. Violin helped me find my love and passion for music. It allowed me to gain more confidence and the lessons learned were invaluable.

I have gained a comprehensive understanding of the principles of music and am currently playing at a Grade 6

level. As I move into the next chapter of my life, the skills I have learned will be transferred in numerous ways. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Ms. Haslam from the beginning of my violin journey. Her dedication and commitment were crucial to enabling me to become the violinist I am today.

## **Emily Davis, cello**

Menuhin was an amazing experience where I had the opportunity to learn about the structures and expectations for an orchestra. It has paved the way for me to join my first full chamber orchestra.

## **An Mei Daniels, violin**

I've been with the Menuhin Foundation for almost my entire life. I started violin with Charles Knights just before I turned three, and started the First Orchestra when I turned five. Now I'm 16, hoping to get my Grade 8 violin with Jonathan Kightley and I've been part of the Youth Orchestra for years. Music has become such an important part of my

life and I can't imagine what I would've been without it. Learning to play the violin and being part of the orchestra has helped me to grow, my playing becoming more confident as I learned to be more certain in myself as a person. Now that I'm graduating, I plan to continue playing in orchestras at university and long after.

## **Tomasina Pearman, cello**

My experience with the Menuhin Foundation has always been a pleasant one. I have been playing the cello with them for around nine years and I have been supported in my growth throughout the process. Ms. Johnstone has been an incredible teacher, knowing the balance between fun and hard work. I am so thankful to have had the chance to learn with Menuhin.

## **Marcoliver Philip, violin**

I've been in the Menuhin Foundation for about eight years and those were filled with experiences I plan on never forgetting, from my first performance as a beginner to

my first performance in an orchestra to my first solo, and all of the moments in between and afterwards.

These were moments of my music career that built for me a great foundation to grow on in the future, giving me knowledge, contacts and most importantly an appreciation and passion for music as a whole. My experience with the orchestra programmes also taught me a lot about group playing and gaining an affinity with an entire orchestra.

I can't give enough thanks to my personal tutor and friend Alison Black, who has given me this opportunity and supported me through my entire experience not only through violin as a main instrument but through music as a concept. I also give thanks to all the teachers and staff at the Foundation and also the students and friends I made along the way.

I may not be with the Foundation any more but thanks to it and the amount of support I gained along the way I will continue to learn and grow as a musician as music is now my passion.

## Toni Daniels

# Our touch on young lives cannot be understated

It is difficult to believe that I have been a Trustee with the Menuhin Foundation for a decade. Not unlike the shockingly bittersweet realisation of the growing up of one's children, the time has sped by. Initially, I became involved with Menuhin as my daughter began taking violin lessons with them and she soon progressed to participating and performing with their orchestras. It wasn't long before I was inspired by the Menuhin mission for teaching music to Bermuda's children and I decided to become more substantively involved in supporting that aim.

I have always been philanthropically engaged and when I am asked about my long tenure supporting the Menuhin Board of Trustees it is easy for me to explain the deep affection for this organisation because of its hugely transformational impact on children. To bear witness to the growth, development and confidence of children learning music and performing really is awe-inspiring and frankly, heart-swelling. Particularly, because learning bowed instruments is incredibly technical, affected by mere millimeters that dictate one's mastering.

That the Menuhin facilitates musical exposure and instruction to our public school students—a demographic that would unlikely otherwise be extended this exposure—is significant. It is well known that education in the arts is enriching and improves self-confidence and self-expression but equally vital is the positive impact on cognitive functions. Specifically, music improves verbal memory, reading ability and executive functions.

However, with limited fiscal resources, the arts are ever-underappreciated and are often not prioritized, particularly within a public school curriculum. Moreover, many parents cannot afford private music lessons and the required instruments. So, since 1976, the Menuhin Foundation has mitigated this gap and provided hundreds of students with a foundation for learning music for at least a year or two. Our touch on these young lives cannot be understated and it is my hope that the Foundation will



*Toni Daniels and daughter An Mei*

continue to find support and finance to not only continue its mandate but to grow our outreach so that students can receive music lessons for their entire time at primary school and perhaps even through secondary school. If your family has benefited from the Menuhin programme or you are inspired by supporting music education I hope that you might consider contributing to our work of 45 years so that it can continue!

## Mihong Yoon, adult cello student

**The pandemic is having a wide-reaching adverse effect on all of us but the forced slow time, or lock-down time, also brought some unexpected benefits. I had never played cello before and last January I decided to give it a try after I saw Alison and her students playing**

**Christmas music at Washington Mall in 2019.**

**I started to enjoy a few weeks' lessons before the epidemic began. I was not sure whether we were able to continue with the lessons or not but Alison Johnstone and I have continued via Zoom since last March**

**and those 30 minutes of weekly cello lessons have provided me with joy, hope and sanity during the uncertain and difficult Covid period. This is to say thank you to my dedicated teacher and the Menuhin Foundation and also to encourage others to join as well.**

## Lessons

# How to practice with your young child

By Alison Black

I'm reminded of the line from that Kenny Rogers song: "You've got to know when to hold 'em. Know when to fold 'em. Know when to walk away. And know when to run."

Wondering how to navigate practice times with a child starting lessons can be stressful. As a parent with a certain amount of musical knowledge, it's often difficult to know how involved to be in a child's practice and what to say to them. As teachers we work to instill the correct understanding of how to play and how best to practice, but the real work happens during the week between lessons. As parents you carry the main responsibility for this, particularly with young students who are learning basics and practice habits. We thought we would offer some helpful hints in this department.



*Preparation is important. If in doubt, ask the teacher!*

**Attend lessons** Be there if you can and be involved in your child's practice; there is no substitute for the hands-on involvement of a parent. We always welcome parents to lessons, though we understand attending can be difficult. The chances of a young student retaining what is learned during a half-hour lesson without help at home is very low. Plus, they will enjoy your presence as a part of their experience. A notebook at the lesson is always a great idea—that way the teacher can make notes for the week.

**Be consistent with practice times** Regular habits become instinctive much more quickly. We know that sometimes things get hectic, but as much as possible try to hold to a schedule. Have your child practice as often during the week as possible. Many short practices are much more effective than one or two long ones.

**Be positive** We know that string instruments can sound less than sonorous when first being learned, but remember that it's a difficult skill, especially for little hands. Children are very good at picking up the feelings of those around them, so always be encouraging.

**Keep it fun** Don't give up on a point, but always be kind and upbeat. You know your child's tolerance and when they've used up their focus. Let them know you expect them to try their best, but that you understand that sometimes it's hard. Most of all, let them know that you believe in them and that they can do it!

**Follow the teacher's guidance** We will have specifics for what they want you to focus on each week with regard to technique and parts of the piece. If you have a concern or a question, always ask.

**One thing at a time** This can be particularly tough. There may be several things needing correction in the moment—bow hold, hand position, intonation and so on. You want your child to do well and it can be very hard not to jump on things when they arise, but children can be easily overwhelmed and frustrated if they feel like they can't measure up to what's being asked. Work on what is assigned by the teacher, taking one thing at a time.

**Preparation** Maintaining a good bow hold, keeping a straight bow and keeping fingers on the stickers are all separate points. Try to take bite-sized points to work on and gradually integrate them. You'll know when your child's glass is full. If in doubt, ask your teacher. That's what we're here for.

**One voice at a time** In the lesson it must be the teacher's voice. If an issue arises that concerns us, we will definitely ask for your help and input. At home, choose one person in each session to communicate with the child. Too many cooks, as the expression goes, can confuse a child and makes it difficult for them to concentrate on one idea at a time.

**Celebrate!** Focus on what needs working on, but always remember to celebrate the victories. Though we want students to focus on improving, the most important thing is to get across the sheer joy of making music. That sweet feeling of success will empower your child to move forward with confidence. A reward, (as opposed to a bribe) can be a lovely recognition after an exam or performance, or when a piece has been completed. Gold stars never go out of style, whatever form they take!

# The Menuhin Foundation

*Inspired and encouraged by world-famous violinist Sir Yehudi Menuhin, the Menuhin Foundation has been at the centre of providing specialist string tuition to generations of young musicians in Bermuda for 45 years.*

## Things to do with the Menuhin Foundation

After learning with the popular Menuhin Foundation Schools Programme, in which our teachers give lessons at schools across the island, what can you do next?

### COME AND LEARN VIOLIN... VIOLA... OR CELLO

#### Take lessons

##### Private Tuition Programme

Private lessons are available after school hours with a specialist Menuhin string teacher. Lessons cost as little as \$50 for 30 minutes.

With the loosening of Covid-related restrictions we will be returning to in-person lessons in Hamilton. Lessons are Tuesday to Friday from 3:30–7pm, and on Saturdays from 9am. Lessons can be arranged at a time to suit the pupil.

#### Play in an orchestra

##### Saturday Music Centre

We have three graded orchestras:

**First Orchestra:** for beginners

**Intermediate Orchestra:** Grades 1+

**Youth Orchestra:** Grades 4+

We also have a Saturday Adult Amateur Orchestra. Locations will be announced at the beginning of the new term. Covid protocols are in place and are closely monitored. We will return to regular performances across the island when conditions become normal. Theory and chamber music lessons are also available upon request.

#### Hire an instrument

Menuhin has a small collection of violins, violas and cellos which can be hired at very competitive prices, from as little as \$40 per term. Your teacher will advise on the most suitable instrument.

[www.menuhin.bm](http://www.menuhin.bm)

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