



The Menuhin Foundation

Newsletter
Winter 2020



Orchestras are back!

We were so excited to see everyone when our Saturday orchestras resumed on November 7 at St. John's church hall, Pembroke. These were our first rehearsals since March, and we made sure Covid-19 protocols were strictly enforced.

"The return of the Saturday Music Centre was very exciting," said teacher Jonathan Kightley, who ran the First Orchestra rehearsal. "Playing in ensembles is such a fun part of playing an instrument. It was great to see everyone again."

"What a wonderful sight!" said Alison Johnstone after Intermediate Orchestra. "Apart from the social distancing and face masks, it felt like old times."

Kerry Haslam said of the Youth Orchestra: "It was lovely hearing the orchestra read through some new music, Gershwin for the first rehearsal, and hearing them play together again."

Thanks to Villa Dill and Laura Davis for making this happen and the Menuhin trustees and parents who helped with temperature taking and Covid-19 entry protocols.

Reminder: Please bring your music stand, music and a pencil each week to rehearsals.



Some of the Youth Orchestra back in action

Menuhin 2021 Private Programme

TERM 2 2021 (Spring Term)

Tuesday, January 5
to Saturday March 27
(Half-term Tuesday
February 8–12)

TERM 3 2021 (Summer Term)

Tuesday April 13
to Saturday June 26

Menuhin Holidays

—Friday, May 28,
Bermuda Day
—Tuesday, June 22,
National Heroes Day
(in lieu of June 21)

Due to Covid-19 restrictions no orchestra concerts are scheduled at this time.

Now that we have resumed orchestra practices we will be considering how to move forward with concerts, and will notify parents as updates become available.



Experiences

To listen is human, to play is divine

By Alison Black

One of the single greatest joys of my life has been playing in orchestra. While I love it all—chamber music, playing solo, sight reading gatherings with friends and family—there is nothing like the full immersion experience of being onstage with a large group of fellow musicians, all focused on the single point of music making. A full orchestra is a wonderful mixture of instrument families; in addition to the strings there are winds, brass and percussion, with the occasional piano or harp thrown in for good measure. The strings are special in that they are the largest part of the orchestra...in full professional ensembles you will see up to 50 string players moving as one. It's quite a spectacle to see, let alone be a part of.



Orchestra has been a major part of my life since I can remember holding a violin. I remember my first youth orchestra rehearsal as a gawky youngster, sitting at the back of the section with a retired orchestra teacher next to me. I remarked to him that I hardly got any of the notes and he kindly replied, “That’s okay, me neither” with a gentle smile. I remember getting to know my peers and having exhilarating performances. Most of all, I remember the absolute awe and wonder at finding myself in the midst of such a vast tapestry of sound, as the art of often long gone composers came to life.

Through orchestra I learned how well people could cooperate to create something beautiful together, and the value of a unified goal. I learned the importance of doing my part for that goal, and the discipline required to do so. I learned that there were those who played better than me and that I played better than some others, and that it just didn’t matter in the end; we were all creators.

Orchestras have been adapting to the present Covid-19 situation creatively. After months of wonderful online performances, live performances are starting to come back across the world, with new guidelines. Players and audience members alike must stay 1.5 metres from each other, and wear masks until they are seated. For players this requires a major readjustment of the ears to learn to listen across greater distances. Performances can last an hour with no intermission and can be repeated twice in an evening to bring in more audiences. Where there is a will there is a way!

To those who listen to and love music, I share your passion. But I must also share another truth: that there is simply nothing that beats the actual experience of making music. It is a pleasure like no other. I applaud parents for giving their children this excellent gift of instrumental music; those young players will go on to have wonderful musical experiences throughout their lives.

Menuhin teacher Alison Black started playing at 14 in her hometown orchestra in Kingston, Ontario. After studies, she was Concertmaster of the Newfoundland Symphony and Sinfonia from 1994–2013, leading the orchestra in summer festivals and collaborations with a number of international artists.

Zoom reminders

- Remember to position your device at eye level as much as possible so you can see it easily during the lesson. Violinists and violists should position themselves so they show a full profile with bow movement and left-hand fingers visible by the teacher.
- Find a quiet spot for your lesson. We’ve found that noise from TVs or younger siblings carries equally through Zoom and can be distracting, so a quiet space really helps concentration.
- Unpack your instrument, rosin your bow, put on your shoulder rest, pull out your cello spike and get your music ready before the lesson. We know you’ve heard it before but a little reminder always helps.
- Keep a sharpened pencil near you to mark in fingering and bowing. Have you got one of our beautiful Menuhin pencils? Very classy!
- Think of lighting—your teacher needs to be able to see you. Also, if you are standing/sitting in front of a window for your lesson, please draw the curtains to avoid too much backlighting.
- If your teacher freezes online, please tell them when they return so they can repeat what they were saying.
- Very important—make sure your device is fully charged or keep it plugged in for the lesson. Lots of students waste precious lesson time finding a charger.
- Use a stand. It’s much easier to read music and better for your posture. Ask Santa for a music stand for Christmas!

In conversation with...

In this edition we have two wonderful former Menuhin students. Tiffany Fox is a pillar of Bermuda musical society. Gabriel Jones is a recent Menuhin student, who this summer made a major contribution to Bermuda's official Covid-19 response.

Tiffany K. Fox

*Instrumental Music Teacher,
CedarBridge Academy;
Trustee & Educational Director,
Bermuda Youth Orchestra;
Violinist, String Collective*

At what age did you begin to learn the violin?

Ten. My teacher was Sarah Bridgland.

Do you play any other musical instruments?

Piano and viola

Did you play in any Menuhin Orchestras?

Youth Orchestra. At the time there were only two. I played in the Senior Orchestra for three or four years while at Warwick Academy. I also played in the joint Gilbert Institute/Port Royal school orchestra with Kerry Haslam, Suzanne Dunkerley and Alison Johnstone.

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

Travelling to the UK to tour London and Brighton with the Youth Orchestra.

What do you feel are the benefits of learning a musical instrument?

Learning a musical instrument develops critical thinking, organisational skills, a global mindset and a sense of belonging to a like minded community.

What advice would you give to current Menuhin Foundation students?

Practice. Take advantage of



every opportunity to make music with other musicians. Familiarise yourself with best practices so that you can become the kind of musician that best represents what music means in your life.

Which type of music do you enjoy listening to?

I have very eclectic taste. There are very few genres I don't listen to. I love classical when I'm reading or writing, jazz when I'm cooking, '90's R&B or reggae when I'm driving and soca when I'm socialising. But that is by no means an exhaustive list. It would probably be easier to share genres I dislike but I don't want to seem like I'm discriminating (*cough* metal and/or mumble rap).

Do you still perform or play for pleasure?

I perform regularly with String Collective, which is comprised of Jenia Thompson (cello) and Keisha Brooks (violin) who I met through Menuhin, as well as April Maule. You can follow us @StringCollective on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Gabriel Jones

*Former Orchestra Leader,
Menuhin Youth Orchestra*

When did you start playing the violin? Who was your teacher?

I started at age seven with Charles Knights, who taught me all the way to high school graduation. He remains a great friend and I miss our weekly lessons.

Did you play in orchestras in your community?

I started in First Orchestra and progressed over the years to Youth Orchestra. I also played in school ensembles at Saltus, which went hand-in-hand with things I learned at Menuhin, where I also won the Menuhin Scholarship.

Do you play any other instruments?

I studied piano at the Bermuda School of Music from age five. Although it was also an instrument I loved, it wasn't the same as violin, since I couldn't play in orchestras with friends.

What is your favourite memory of learning at the Foundation?

Most certainly the weekly orchestra sessions. Mr. Knights was a great conductor, and I'm still friends with people I met there. There was a great sense of community and every concert we played in felt special.

What do you feel are the benefits of learning a musical instrument?

In my opinion, playing an instrument is a great skill that opened a lot of opportunities



for me. There were a lot of unique experiences I wouldn't have been exposed to if it wasn't for music.

What advice do you have for current Menuhin students?

Practice! Jokes aside, I would say turning up to orchestra practices is the most important thing you can do. They may seem tedious at times, but it's all worth it when you do a great performance at a concert.

Do you still perform or play for pleasure?

I'm too busy with university at the moment, but I'm always tempted to pick up the violin again! I'm sure it wouldn't take me long to get back into it. The skills we learned at Menuhin will stay with me forever.

What are you doing these days?

I'm currently in my second year studying Computer Science at the University of Edinburgh. This summer I worked with the Bermuda Government on HealthIQ, creating their COVID symptom reporting website.

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 more than 40 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.

Presently we are teaching online lessons using Zoom but will return to in-person lessons in Hamilton when restrictions allow. 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. Saturday Music Centre takes place at St. John the Evangelist, Pembroke church hall. 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.

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