

Practice Diary 2016

Preparing for any music exam is always a challenge but, for me, preparing for a technical exam is the biggest challenge of them all. Scales and studies do not come naturally to me and I have to work in minute and analytical detail on each segment: scales, studies and orchestral excerpts. This year I wanted to plan my practice very carefully to make sure every part of the syllabus was covered. I planned what I wanted to work on in each lesson, and then made a very detailed plan of everything I wanted to practise and then perform in viola class each week. Within those weekly goals I would set smaller goals to help me succeed..

The third year technical exam is much more difficult than that in the second year because there are more bowings and keys to cover. For example, in the second year you could play scales and arpeggios slurred an octave to a bow, but in the third year you have to slur three octaves to a bow. This was new for me and needed a lot of time and care.

Below is a plan I created after Christmas to cover each week. This wasn't to say I hadn't started planning or preparing before Christmas, but it is an example to show you the sort of thing I did. Having a plan like this means you can stay on track and always see clearly what is happening.

<u>CLASS/LESSON</u> <u>2016</u>	<u>WHAT I WANT TO COVER</u>
Viola Lesson January	<u>Cover Everything</u>
Viola Class 2nd January	<u>Cover Everything</u>
Viola Class 12 th January	<u>Studies</u>
Viola Lesson 13 th January	<u>Studies</u>
Viola Lesson 16 th January	<u>Orchestral Excerpts</u>
Viola Class 19 th January	<u>Scales Single / Double</u>
Viola Lesson 20 th January	<u>Scales Single / Double</u>
Viola Class 25 th January	<u>Orchestral Excerpts</u>

Studies

I decided to pick two contrasting studies, Campagnoli 29 and Garth Knox 29, to show my strengths and to improve my playing. Garth Knox's Viola Spaces *Up, down, sideways, round* is a challenging study which explores what can be done by moving the bow in dimensions not usually used. There are a lot of fun bowings in this study. Campagnoli's Study 29 also explores many types of bowings, but these are the more common bowings.

Orchestral Excerpts

These are another big challenge for me, being more difficult. There are also a lot more excerpts to learn than in previous years. Vaughan Williams, Brahms, Strauss are included. When planning to practise the excerpts, I first listen to recordings of them and then put what I have heard into my own playing.

Sometimes my practise does not go to plan and I spend longer on something or it doesn't go right. I just have to adapt and sometimes re-plan. I have come on quite a journey since the beginning of this process, and my practice diary and practice plan have enabled me to stay on track.