

Third Floor - Full of Facts

Derek Hasted's Guitar Ensemble School

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Rehearsal Session 1 - first part

Come to a Rehearsal and see what's involved

Rehearsal Plan

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This practical session © Derek Hasted 1998 - please enjoy!

Come in, sit down and get some music

There's no such thing as a typical Ensemble piece, any more than there's a typical Ensemble group. Or indeed a typical Teacher.

Knowing that I'm most definitely not a typical Teacher, I thought you would perhaps like the chance to come to one of my rehearsals, and I'll take you through a new arrangement, which is yours to keep at the end of the lesson.

Since this is an e-rehearsal, you'll have to make do without me sharing a cup of coffee with you, and I'm afraid that you'll have to make your own copy of the music. It's a little Bach piece which I've arranged as a simple trio.

You can choose between

- GIFs (which print at screen resolution)

There are two GIFs. I've printed it a little oversize to aid the clarity. The score is a little narrow, but I've tested it on one Mac printer and two PC printers, and this is the margin setting which seems least likely to generate those awful extra pages with half an inch of left over bits all down the side, which you and I could both see would fit on the previous page. And if that still happens, well, take ten minutes and some sticky tape and I'm sure you can produce something workable.

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- PDFs (which print at printer resolution). If you have Adobe Acrobat, use PDFs. Find out more in my [Take-Away](#)
 - [PDF](#)

Please print out the score so we can discuss it .
Done? Good.

And you have your Guitar and your cup of coffee? Excellent! Just don't spill the coffee all over your new music.

Have you met all the other people at my rehearsal? No - [Click here](#) and let me introduce them to you. Close the new window to return here.

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The Purpose of this Rehearsal

Why?

Why indeed!

The purpose of this Rehearsal is that I hope I can teach you something.

No, that sounds too arrogant.

The purpose of this Rehearsal is that I hope you will learn something.

- I'm going to take you through a simple trio I've arranged.
- I'm going to explain some of the inner workings, so that you can see how your playing can help bring these out.
- I'm going to suggest some points of interpretation which require the group as a whole to work together.
- I'm going to pick out a few points which each player should concentrate on.
- I'm going to suggest you tape record yourselves and take the tape and the music away and see you much you can improve.

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Overcoming the language barrier...

I'm British. No - I don't need your sympathy - I couldn't help it, and I've quite got used to the idea now.

It means that I use "crotchet" when others use "quarter note".

It means that I use "quaver" when others use "eighth note".

It means that I use "practise" as the verb - the act of playing the Guitar.

It means that I use "practice" as the noun - session itself.

It means that sometimes, I still get the 'c' and 's' spellings round the wrong way...

It also means I drive on the left of the road when I take the car to my Ensemble Workshop...

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Today we're studying Bach...

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Bach's "Now let us to the bagpipes sound..." from the Peasant Cantata.

Why did I choose this piece? Good question!

You should always have a set of good reasons why you choose a particular piece for your Ensemble.

Here's my list of reasons why I've picked this piece...

- It's a trio.
Meaning that virtually any size of Ensemble can have a go at it, by doubling up on whichever parts you fancy.
- It's well-known.
Meaning that it will fall into place faster if you know the tune.
- It's by Bach.
Meaning that it isn't a bizarre piece which requires "prepared guitars" and a high degree of earnest concentration. Indeed, most players should find it positively likeable, and that matters a lot!
- It's tuneful.
Meaning that any mistakes such as errors in the Key Signature are going to be discovered and dealt with before they get "learned in" to the music.
- It's arranged by me.
No - that's not a star feature, it just means I can talk about it in more detail!
I suppose I put my credibility on the line when I offer you something that you can pick holes in at your leisure, but if you are interested in Ensemble music, at least it will give you a flavour of whether my arranging style appeals to you personally. And I will tell you some of the hows and whys of its construction. Understand these and you'll play it better.
- It's easy.
I've **already** put great store in the fact that an Ensemble piece ought to go together easily. This arrangement is quite suitable for players with the most modest experience, and yet I hope you will find that the sound that comes out is satisfying. If it is, then I've succeeded in capturing two of the most important aspects of Ensemble playing - the ease of playing and the richness of sound.
- It's of sentimental importance to me.
My own Ensemble Orchestra started as a small gathering in 1988. This piece was one of the first three we started work on. And this arrangement you have in front of you is a rework which I did for our 10th Anniversary Party. We were playing it for real about 15 minutes after I handed out the music. And that's how it should be. As near to instant gratification as you can get! You can't take it home to work on if you don't know what it's supposed to sound like.

- It's free.
I've not published this arrangement, and so I can distribute it, free of charge; though it is still copyrighted. Please enjoy it, but respect the fact that it's my time and effort that makes it a Guitar Trio. Please enjoy it - but remember me each time you do!
You'll find that my actual published pieces are longer, fuller and more complex. And you'll certainly find them printed to a much higher standard! But if you want a taster, I hope you'll enjoy this.
- Bagpipes?
Coincidence, I assure you, but it's a link to the [Glossary of Groans](#), where you'll learn more about the breeding habits of bagpipes.

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About the general details

General details - the "where am I coming from?" of the arrangement.

- How did I pick the key for the arrangement?
Simple. To meet my need for an easy arrangement, I wanted to keep the bulk of the music in the First Position.
On the one hand, it's nice to get as high as possible in the tune for clarity, and on the other, to get as low as possible in the bass for depth and richness. The compass of the top part is 14 notes - almost 2 octaves - and if we stayed in the first position, we'd go as low as the open fifth string; that wouldn't really leave much space for two parts below it! So we *have* to take one section of the tune up the neck. I attack the top part first, and aim to pitch it as high as possible while keeping the majority of the notes in the first position - in this case up to top G. Our brief excursion up the neck isn't too oppressive, and to go even higher would just make the key signature more awkward too.
So that little investigation defines the key. If the key which falls out of an investigation like this has a grotesque signature, there is *always* one close by on either side with a signature more suitable for the less experienced.
- What are the significant features of this arrangement?
 - The music has been phrased for you, by use of dynamic markings. Since the music begins on beat 4, so each phrase does too. These are my markings, and, as is customary, you can totally ignore them, as indeed Bach would have done, I'm sure!
That's the curious thing about Bach - I'm always playing his music, but he never played any of mine....
 - The three lines are of comparable ease, though the middle line does work the left hand little finger quite a lot.
It's certainly not a teacher/pupil style arrangement with one really hard line!
 - The tune has a large number of quavers. Other parts move with the tune from time to time, and in imitation at other times. Three parts in quavers simultaneously is usually too "thick" and cumbersome, though we use this right at the end, where the extra movement allows us to do a big *rall* without the loss of volume that you'd get if the lower notes were sustained.
- What special features are there?
 - The opening is in unison. This is a very enjoyable way of building the Ensemble up, peeling the parts away bit by bit until we fill the compass of the Guitar with notes. It can help novice Guitarists start the piece with confidence too. It also ensures that the repeat of the opening phrase sounds very different.
 - I have kept the pulse moving whenever the tune has a 3 beat note. Guitar has poor sustain, and keeping the inner parts moving will create the *illusion* that the tune is staying present.
 - At bars 18 and 19, the arrangement does the work for you! A high bass part will help the soft, light sound, and the deep repeat will signal the build-up for the final section, which can be played majestically, with that final *rall* we talked about.
- About the lower parts
There are two sorts of "accompaniment" - in simple terms, the arpeggio-based and the melody-based. This has melody-based harmony lines, and I'll generalise to say that there are two subdivisions. Those which are tuneful and those which are, shall we say, functional. I've tried to weave two counter melodies into the lower parts, and avoiding that characteristic of some trios where the inner part leaps around wildly, trying to find the "third note" of all of the triads which the tune and bass are defining.

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Our first run through

If you think that I've succeeded in making the lower parts melodic, then they'll stand on their own. I hope you'll agree that it makes some sense in this case to play through each line in isolation so that the tricky spots can be rehearsed in slow time and brought up to speed.

So you've done that? OK - keep an ear open for the natural accents that indicate each new bar, and away we go in a trio.....

You have to do this bit without me!

<plink> <sproing> <buzz> <melody> <wall of sound> <triumph!>

There you go - it wasn't too bad for a first try was it?

No. Don't start blaming each other for that buzz in the middle.

You're right - another coffee would be an excellent idea while we read on. It's OK - I'll get my own. Milk, no sugar.

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- Coffee break -

We reconvene [here](#) when you are ready!



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