

# AUSTA NATIONAL CONFERENCE PERTH 2018



**Book Launch – Monday 9 July 12.00pm**

## **BEGINNER STRING ENSEMBLE SERIES by Loreta Fin**

### **Some general points FOR THE TEACHER:**

**REMEMBER:** these are just **MY** suggestions, describing how I use them in my teaching. **YOU** can take and use **ANY** of them, or blend them with your own ideas. Only **YOU** know what will work for **YOU** and **YOUR** students!

- Classroom set-up: All violins/vlas **STAND** but can also sit on bottoms, with legs crossed and instruments **IN FRONT** of them for singing. The “up and down” means they are also getting some exercise!
- **ALL** celli and bass seated – usually celli in rows on the right, with basses behind them
- I teach from the keyboard out the front. **NOT** a piano, as I want to **SEE** them all – there are 60+, with weapons!!
- I **ALWAYS** play piano, to give aural references, for singing and playing
- **ALL** instruments have 1/2/3; 1/3/4; 1/4 finger markers. How can they **LEARN** what “in tune” is, with everything they have to do, as beginners? It’s **ONE** less thing to have to endure, but it reinforces muscle memory, as well as aural aptitude.
- **HELPERS** do not have to be string players, for purposes of walking around, fixing posture, fallen shoulder rests etc, but **DO** have to be string players if demonstrating or doing “*Staff Meetings*”. (see Year 3 Presentation later)

### **Beginner String Ensembles Series Book 1 – recommended for Year 1-3 beginners**

- **No clef-reading in these books**
- Most of the written introduction can be explained by the teacher – pick and choose, but you can go straight to the open string plucking – they just want to play!
- Term 1 is pizzicato only – setting up the left hand to **PLAY TUNES**.
- Everything is sequential and comes from the known to the unknown, step by step.
- For F#, we sing “Fis”. So I tell the kids: When we **SING** this note, we sing **FIS**, but we know it’s **REALLY** called?” and they shout back “**F SHARP!**”
- I use **ROCK, WATER PISTOL, LETTER C** for setting up pizzicato hand. ( we don’t like guns!) and they squirt me - they think that’s hilarious.
- Sing the fingers, sing the Letters, use solfa (if it’s a do re mi song or do-re-me-so-la)
- We always “**SHOW**” the fingers, when we sing fingers **AND** letters
- They can’t **ALL** sing their fingers at the same time, obviously, so you can either **ALL** sing letters and show fingers **OR** “let’s all sing and show the **CELLO** fingers” etc. This encourages a sense of “ensemble” from Day 1
- End of Term 1, preparatory work for using the bow.
- **DEF#, ABC#** - fill in the gaps = D Major scale, that’s Term 2 – using bow
- Now, add 2 more ways to sing: **Direction** - down up down and **Speed** - fast/slow

## **Beginner String Ensembles Series Book 2 – recommended for individual/group or older beginners**

- Still sing everything
- Use hand-staff in 3 clefs in a class situation
- All pieces are original, so notes have to be READ
- Sequential – open strings, then one finger at a time, on the “common strings”
- This can be used as the 1<sup>st</sup> book in a one-on-one teaching situation.

### **In General**

- All the way through terms 1, 2 and 3, we add songs that they have learned in class.
- When we do so/mi songs, they are great for the first string-crossing experience – A to F# - or do/so. (Sea-Shells, Fuzzy Wuzzy, Pease porridge, Rain come wet me – and even MORNING from Peer Gynt.
- The book is really only used by the kids as a visual reference to the PIECES, if they can't remember the notes at first. I use a POWERPOINT version when the pieces are new, so they don't have to use MUSIC OR STANDS – a helper can then point to the notes!! Less packing up. This of course is only so they can be familiar with the LOOK of the book, for those who are visual learners.
- Most pieces are taught aurally and MOST kids can remember the fingers and letters, (Hearing and feeling) which really helps them in their practice.

### **Sing and String Year 3 Presentation – see [www.wilfinmusic.com.au](http://www.wilfinmusic.com.au)**

#### **Go to RESOURCES and type password WILFIN (all CAPS) – Duration 20 mins**

- This might give you some ideas on how to approach the “togetherness” within the classroom
- If you need to “sell” the instrumental music concept to your bosses, there are good pedagogical things to throw around in here
- THIS clip was an actual assembly performance – kids just followed instructions from me – they had no idea what was coming next so if there's anything you don't understand, please ask.
- PowerPoint presentation is much more detailed and shows more on the classroom and pedagogical concepts behind the method

#### **Year 3 Overview – in resources, as above**

- Classroom music preparation UP TO when we start the string program – this will be handy for your classroom teachers to compare.
- Term by term overview of the String program – I certainly don't have weekly lesson plans, after 30 years of doing this, but like MOST instrumental music programs, it's more about: “when is the concert and what am I going to be able to play by then?”
- Bottom line is this: kids at this age still LOVE repetition, so doing the same this 10 different ways is NEVER boring to them

#### **Teacher's Manual/Piano Accompaniments – free download online**

[www.wilfinmusic.com.au](http://www.wilfinmusic.com.au)

All parts are VERY easy to play.

**Remember**, there's NO such thing as a stupid question – especially from you to me about any or all of this. Email [lfin@somerville.qld.edu.au](mailto:lfin@somerville.qld.edu.au) or [enquiries@wilfinmusic.com.au](mailto:enquiries@wilfinmusic.com.au)