

FABIO AMELIA

MUSIC INTERVIEW WITH BEN

AME15466608
Studio Year 3
Information and Interface Design

ual: university
of the arts
london

Ben



Interview length: 1 hour.

Date: 20 October 2017.

Q1: INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

I'm Ben, I'm a composer and I also teach. I have a degree in music from Trinity Laban and I studied composition. So, I studied writing music for other people. I attempt to write in lots of different styles: I write for orchestra, I write for bands, I write for voice. I'm been doing music pretty much from a really early age.

Q2: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING MUSIC?

The benefit of learning music is firstly it's gonna be personal, to the personal learning. So, personal reasons might be: they want to feel a sense of achievement, they want to master a new skill, they want to be able to play

something that they like, because everyone can listen to music, but when they have to play music, I say some people go high [...] because they love it so much. And then, obviously, there are communion reason, people like doing things together, so lots of people might join a band, because that's an easy way in, playing with other people and then the more you learn about music the more you can bring to that. There are more general benefits on learning instrument from the young age, it's because you have to be quite disciplined and it takes time to feel your body, because playing an instrument is a physical thing, even if you are singing you have to use your lungs and it's like exercise, your body has to learn, has to adapt to that. Learning from a young age could be good because you use to grow into the instrument, physically. The discipline thing is that you might carry out over into other areas of your life so, even if you stop play, you know what it takes to get to a certain level on something, so you might be a bit more patient. And then there is a creative reason, it helps people to express themselves.



Q3: AT WHAT AGE DO YOU THINK CHILDREN SHOULD START TO PLAY MUSIC?

Me personally, I would never say that there is a definitive age. I think you can learn music any age. You just have to be aware what stage a person might be up. Learning music as a 2 years-old is gonna be different to learning music as a 20 years-old because you can be in much different stage of your life. I wouldn't say that there is a right or a wrong age. I think music can be good to be taught to children when they are young because it can encourage to work together and there's a lot of musical games and musical activities that you can do with big group of children, like "call and respond": you sing something and he sings back to you.

Q4: AT WHAT AGE THEY SHOULD START TO LEARN HOW TO READ A MUSIC SCORE?

The earlier you will do it the quick you will cross it, because when you learn how to read music can be kind of like learning a language. If you learn in tandem with learning to read and write that could be fantastic because you grow up with the skill. It can be quite daunting to try to learn to read music if you never learned from young. You don't have to read music to be musical or to play, but it is a wonderful skill to have.

Q5. DO YOU HAVE A LOT OF ADULT STUDENTS? DO YOU THINK IT IS A LOT MORE DIFFICULT TO LEARN MUSICAL THEORY AS AN ADULT?

Yes, I do, actually. I have 5 adult students at the moment. I think it depends massively on

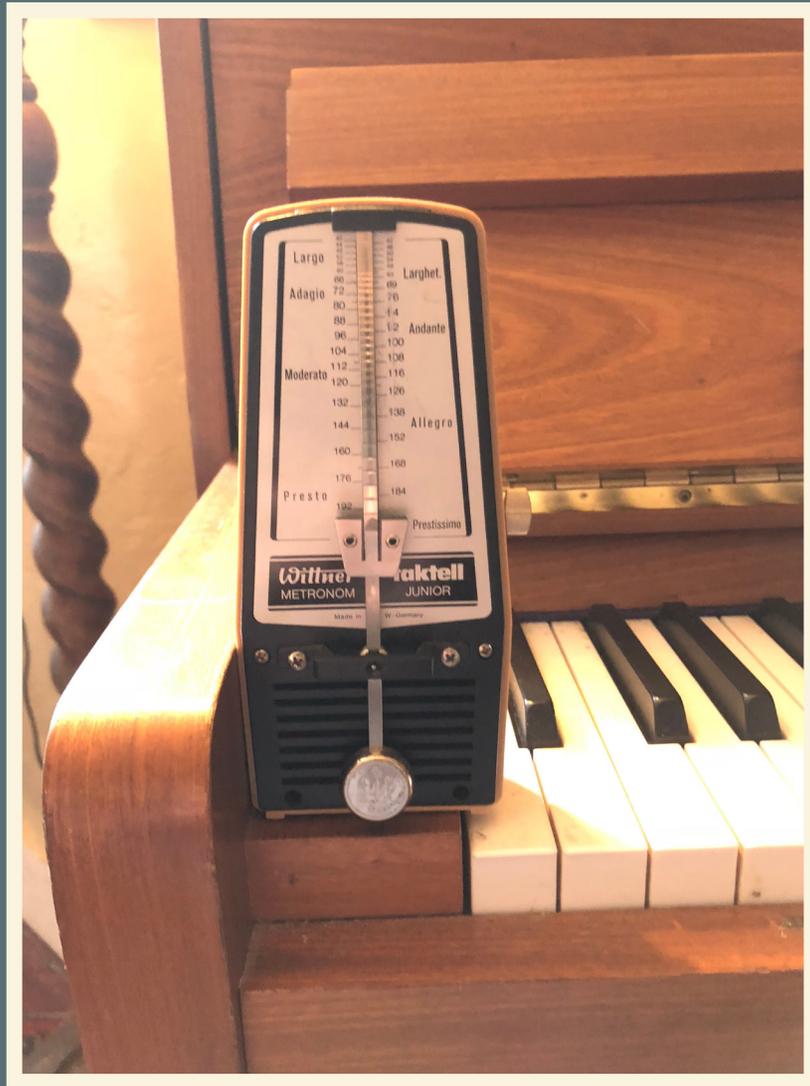
the individual and how their mind works. I think what is interesting about teaching music to an adult is if you say to them: “this is the C major cord” and they’ll go: “why?” whether if you say it to a child he will just accept it. I certainly find that adults ask a lot of questions and they don’t accept facts or rules that easily, they want to know why.

Q6: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT CAN PLAY AN INSTRUMENT WITHOUT KNOW HOW TO READ A MUSIC SCORE?

Yes, lots. It really depends on how you approach music. There are people that can do both, there are people that can read and learn music with or without score.

Q7: WHAT ARE THE INSTRUMENTS THAT PEOPLE GENERALLY WANT TO LEARN?

I’m sort of biased because I teach what I play. I teach piano, guitar and sing. I teach singing as well. But I’d say that in west music tend to be the most popular instruments, piano especially. You find a lot of people who play other instruments like the flute or the violin or the harp, might have a bit of piano knowledge. It’s quite common, because with the piano you can also play more than one note at once very easily, rather than the guitar it’s not a one line instrument like the voice or the flute. A lot of people learn piano and a lot of people may have a piano in their house, if not you can get an electric piano fairly cheaply, now. Then, obviously a guitar with rock music.



Q8: WITH WHAT DO YOU START TO TEACH MUSICAL THEORY? IN WHICH ORDER?

I try to incorporate it into the lesson from lesson 1 because I try to teach it in a way to apply it to what you are doing. Rather than teaching someone a C major chord by making him sit down and write it out with a pencil, I'll just get them to describe it as he's playing it. And that's theory, that not just apply it to their instrument. If someone's really keen and find theory really interesting I'd try to get away with giving them a bare minimum of theory. People learn in a different way: some people find the system of music theory confusing; other people find it comforting to know that there is a system and a structure.

Q9: DO YOU NOTICE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES IN THE WAY PEOPLE LEARN MUSICAL THEORY DEPENDING ON IF THEY ALREADY PLAY AN INSTRUMENT OR NOT?

You can learn music theory without playing an instrument because it's a set of symbols and rules. But I think learning an instrument helps you to contextualise it.

Q10: DO YOU USE TECHNOLOGY WHEN YOU TEACH MUSIC?

I think that there are a lot of things that we use technology for. For example, people often download a score in PDF and have it on their iPad because it is easier to carry around. In terms of people learning a tend to not use that much technology because I'd rather, in a lesson when they play along with me, I want them to first experience in music to be doing it with another person. But then, if someone became more advance you can start introducing technology. Especially when someone is composing you may suggest that they use something to help them to construct a piece of music.

