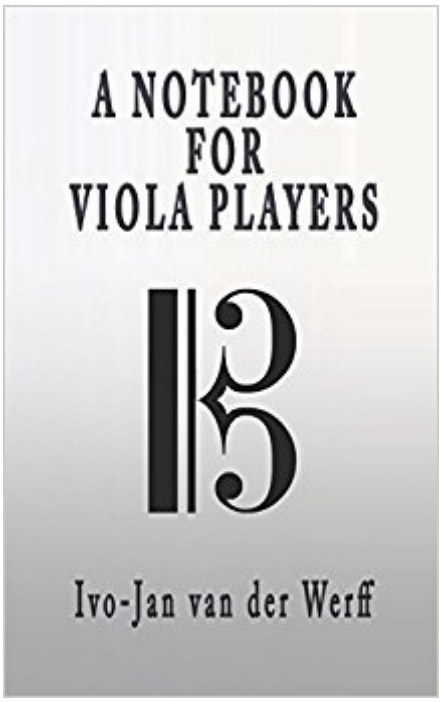
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A Notebook For Viola Players



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Synopsis

The number of ways to play the viola is determined by the number of violists in the world. Each player has (and should have) a unique technique, a unique sound and a unique way of interpreting music. Why should this be? Because each player is physically, emotionally and mentally an individual. It would be so boring if every violist sounded the same. A unique voice is much more interesting and compelling. To this end we have to determine our approach to playing on every level. But, the basics of what we do are going to be very similar. The individuality comes later, when we can develop our techniques to express ourselves as unique voices. The basics are determined by the fact that the majority of us are born with two arms, two hands, two thumbs, eight fingers, two legs etc. The way we all walk is similar due to this, though everyone has an individual and often recognizable walk. The physical movement involved in walking is based on common principles for almost everyone. So it should be in the way we set up the viola and our approach to it. The position of the body, the way we stand or sit, the way we raise our arms to hold the viola and bow, the actual bow hold and the shape of the left hand, all these basic things can be approached from common physical principles, even though every player is built differently. The wonderful thing about violists is not just the physical diversity of the people playing the viola, but also the diversity in the shape and size of violas themselves. It can lead to challenging issues and resolutions to problems. Again, coming from common principles can help in deciding on all the variations of approach we have. The one thing that every single violist can hopefully agree on is that we want to create the best sound possible. Why after all were we drawn to play this amazing instrument? Everything I suggest in the text and practiced in the exercises is to this one, basic, unifying principle. Sound is affected not just by the way we put the bow on the string but by the way we hold the viola, the way the fingers of the left hand approach the fingerboard, the quality of the vibrato, the way we stand and breathe, by intonation. The list goes on and on. Hopefully by reading through the text and playing the exercises in the ways suggested, you will gain a good understanding of how to create a great sound, how to allow the viola to resonate without forcing it, how to gain dexterity in both the bow and the left hand and how to play in a relaxed yet vital manner. Ultimately, everything I suggest to think about in playing the viola should become natural and habitual. For those more advanced players trying this out for the first time, one of the toughest things is to overcome old, ingrained habits. Always remember the goal, don t get discouraged and don t rush. New habits take time to get bedded in. The goal is definitely worth the physical and mental effort.

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Customer Reviews

'..... a personal contribution to the art of viola playing, or more accurately, the art of practicing the viola, which will be valuable for players of all levels.' --The Strad Magazine'van der Werff's overviews on viola technique are presented in a way that allows the reader to fully explore and understand his or her own style and approach..... filled with down-to-earth advice for violists of various levels....van der Werff's text and musical and video exercises create a true educational companion for viola students of all ages.' --Strings Magazine'This book is a significant and notable addition to our literature for viola technique.....It is a wonderful addition to any violist's library and practice routine.... A definite must have!!' --Journal of the American Viola Society'van der Werff's overviews on viola technique are presented in a way that allows the reader to fully explore and understand his or her own style and approach..... filled with down-to-earth advice for violists of various levels....van der Werff's text and musical and video exercises create a true educational companion for viola students of all ages.' --Strings Magazine'This book is a significant and notable addition to our literature for viola technique.....It is a wonderful addition to any violist's library and practice routine.... A definite must have!!' --Journal of the American Viola Society

IVO-JAN VAN DER WERFF has attained many accolades as a chamber player, recitalist, guest artist and teacher both in Europe and North America. As a member of the Medici String Quartet for 30 years, Mr. van der Werff has performed in over 2,000 concerts in major festivals and venues world wide, broadcasting regularly on radio and television. The quartet had collaborations with many artists across the musical, literary and theatrical spectrum including the Royal Shakespeare Company, George Martin, Alan Bennett, John Williams, John Thaw and Jack Brymer. Ivo-Jan van

der WerffMr. van der Werff has performed as recitalist in New York, New Zealand and Hong Kong as well as numerous venues throughout the United Kingdom. His recordings for ASV and Koch include the sonata by Max Reger and the complete works for viola and piano/harp by Arnold Bax. Mr. van der Werff is often invited to perform with quartets and chamber ensembles throughout the United Kingdom and Europe such as the Alberni, Coull, Bridge, Redcliffe and Adderbury. Before joining the Medici Quartet, Mr. van der Werff worked with many conductors, including Sir George Solti, Bernard Haitink and Klaus Tennstedt, and has since been invited to appear as guest principal viola and soloist with many of the United Kingdom s leading orchestras. Mr. van der Werff has been a professor of viola and chamber music at the Royal College of Music in London; he has also developed a private viola program near London and is director of the International Summer School for Violists in Upstate New York. He has taught at summer schools such as Dartington and Oxford in the UK, Schlern in the Italian Alps, in Sweden, at the Texas Music Festival, Domaine Forget and Madeleine Island in the USA and has also been an adjudicator on many competition juries.

This is the second edition of this book: http://smile..com/Notebook-Viola-Players-Ivo-Jan-Werff/dp/1931823979/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1419647439&sr=8-2&keywords=viola+notebookThis book shows you how to develop your viola technique. Basically all kinds of left and right hand technique problems are expalined in words first, and then given a proper excercise. Playing most excersices can be tedious on their own but then playing real music becomes so much more enjoyable and easy. Personally, if I do not practice the excersices for sound, spicatto, some left hand extentions and some double stops every day my overall viola technique would deteriorate pretty fast. Practicing from this book is like practicing scales but it addresses every technical problem and it is much more diverse. I personally warm up about 30 minutes with it daily and change most of the excersices I practice, every single day. Thus, I keep up my overall technique at a pretty good level. The book comes with a DVD where Mr. Werff shows how all the excersices should be practiced.The Contetnts are as follow:IntroductionPostureBowing: that includespreliminary bow excersicesbasic bowing excersicesbow controlLeft Hand:vibratopreliminary left hand excesrsicesshiftingleft hand staminaextensions and flexibilitydouble stopsAt the back the book has reccomendations from some pretty famous violists like Simon Rowand-Jones, James Dunham, Roger Tapping and Edward Vanderspar.

I am a viola instructor at two colleges here in Southern California. I picked up a copy of Notebook for

Viola Players last month, and initially found two or three exercises that were very useful, put it aside for a bit, then started practicing some of the other exercises in the book that I hadn't paid much attention to.As I spent more and more time with the book I came to admire the simple brilliance of these exercises, and am awed at how many important fundamentals of viola playing the book addresses in such a slim volume. I own a number of books on string technique, but I haven't yet come across one that covered so much material so concisely and effectively.One of my mentors liked to say that every teacher has a piece of the puzzle. This book has provided me with a number of small, but very important, pieces that were hampering my own playing. I have already begun teaching these exercises to my own students and have encouraged them to purchase their own copies.

Great resource, but very expensive for the size of the book (which arrived bent and damaged).

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