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Spring 2021

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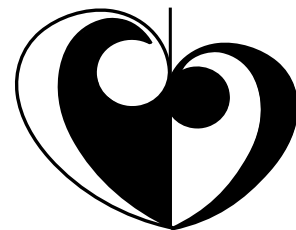
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LONDON CELLO SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Ennio Bolognini

Jeffrey Solow

This is our first online edition. We encourage you to download the free [Acrobat Reader](#) to allow you to enlarge the pictures. Click on each picture to enlarge and then click the enlarged picture to hide.

If anyone can be described as a Renaissance Man, it is Ennio Bolognini. The term could have been coined for him: conductor, composer, music entrepreneur, medical student, pioneering aviator, stunt pilot and flight instructor, championship boxer, bicycle racer, racing car driver, equestrian, guitarist, gourmet cook, marksman, caricaturist, gambler, practical joker, ladies' man, raconteur, linguist (fluent in Spanish, Italian, French, German, English, and conversant in Hebrew, Greek, Japanese, Hungarian, Russian, and 15 Italian dialects), an all-around sportsman who swam, sailed, played polo, soccer, rugby, tennis, golf and billiards, and of course, was a uniquely gifted cellist.

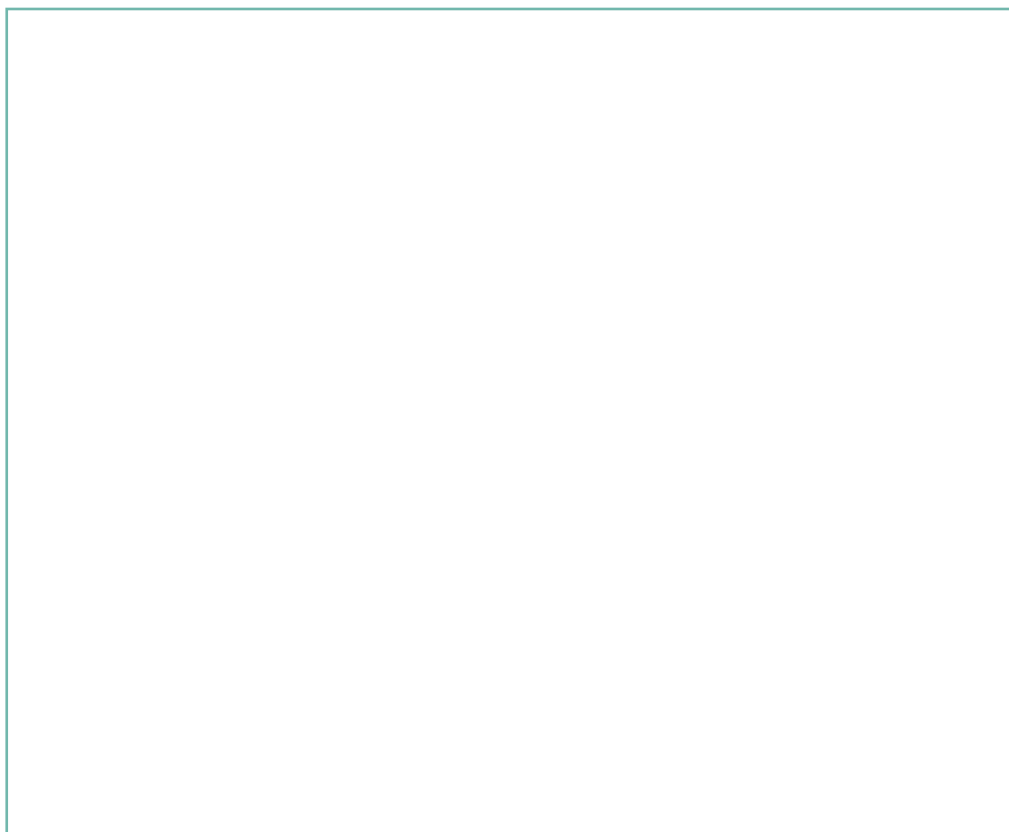


Photo montage of sports and activities in Argentina (caricaturist, bicycling, diving, his racehorse "Prince", his biplane, sculling, yachtsman, "Captain Ennio" gardening, golfing, boxing)

La Valse, with a nod to Scriabin's late piano piece *Vers la Flamme*, and there are even a couple of short quotes from the Ravel.

The common influence behind all these is Fritz Kreisler—one of my favourite musicians of all time. I've enjoyed playing his famous *Liebesleid* and *Liebesfreud* with many violinists and a few cellists, as well as the wonderful *Caprice Viennois*—also a waltz. Those captivating harmonies and the inimitable grace of Kreisler's melodies have somehow seeped into my subconscious and proved a fertile soil for my own efforts. Other influences are Fauré, Ravel and Gershwin.

As a rest from waltzes, I also wrote a bourrée for cello and piano - *Hip hip Bourrée*—with apologies for the appalling pun. This was a commission from Steven Isserlis for his album *Unbeaten Tracks* (Faber), a volume of new pieces of roughly grades 4 to 6 ABRSM standard. To my surprise and gratification the piece has been quite a success and many cellists I meet tell me they have taught it. It replaced an earlier piece, *Sinister Footsteps*, which was judged unsuitable for the volume—perhaps too scary! I might publish it separately one day.

I have been lucky with my cellists. Steven Isserlis played the Gothenburg on Radio 3, though in an earlier version before I realised that the ending needed to be extended. Selma Gokcen recorded it with John Lenehan on her CD *Songs and Dances*. I played it quite frequently, usually as an encore, with the wonderful David Geringas on tours in Spain and South Africa. Johannes Goritzki and Pál Banda have both played the *Valse mélancolique*. I only regret that I never got to play the Gothenburg with its dedicatee and inspirer Zara Nelsova: my concerts with her came towards the end of her career so the opportunity never arose. Her rich tone and dazzling personality would have given a glamorous frisson to the piece and I still sometimes hear her playing it in my mind's ear!

The Waltzes are published by Bardic Edition, handled by Schott and available from their website en.schott-music.com

LCS is delighted to offer a complimentary copy of Julian Jacobson's *Valse mélancolique* to the first member to contact newsletter editor Josh Salter on j.saltervc@gmail.com

Cello Talk

The Inside Out Musician • Ruth Philips

On Boxing Day 2020, the *New York Times* ran an article entitled: 'A Great Cultural Depression Looms for Legions of Unemployed Performers'. Without concerts or rehearsals, or indeed any reason to take up our instruments, musicians are being forced to reflect on their role in an unknown musical future. Though uncomfortable, this reflection may be long overdue.

For the past nine months, along with Italian balconies and neighbourhood streets, Zoom has been our college, our pub and our concert hall. Online platforms such as InsideOut Musician and The Exhale, initially created to meet the need of musicians to connect during this desperate time, have matured. They have torn down boundaries, creating wide open spaces. They have built communities across the globe, promoting a holistic and healthy approach to music-making, the likes of which we have never seen. In a world where performance has been caught up in greed and

consumerism, they are committed to rediscovering the importance of going inwards in order to find authentic outward expression and are leading the way toward a new vision of musical learning for all.

Having taught exclusively online for almost a year, I am convinced this way of working is a gift. It is far from inferior to live interaction and will, in my opinion, always exist as a compliment. Here are just some of the advantages I have experienced:

- With the lack of sound 'quality' and unable to perceive nuance, I have come to rely on what I see, becoming attuned more to the quality of my students' movements. The body does not lie. Whilst any sound can be convincing, a sound that flows freely and organically from the heart through the body is touching, whatever the 'quality'.
- The lack of physical touch, though initially frustrating, has forced me to interfere less and trust

my students more. Used to guiding them through hands-on work, I have instead helped them pay attention to their own somatic experience and the natural wisdom of their bodies.

- I have learned to be less of a teacher and more of a witness. Without the need to project outwards—whether to me, a colleague or audience member, in a hall, theatre or teaching studio—and comfortable in their own space, my students have slowed down and started to listen inwards. Some have found a deeper connection with their creative voice, whilst others located their deeply buried longing to make sound.

- An online platform can be truly inclusive in a way an institution or concert hall often cannot. Discussions, groups, ceilidhs, concerts and one-to-ones in 'Café Zoom' provide opportunities to find connections through music across age, level, continent and culture. Music online doesn't have a snob factor. It is an equaliser.

"The word 'musician' is too often used to discourage people from participating in their birthright as sound-makers" - Mark Stewart, Cellist, Guitarist, Paul Simon Band, Founder of Bang on a Can

On Boxing Day 2020, the same day as the New York Times article appeared heralding a depression, we were sharing a late lunch at our home in the South of France. It was already dark. The candles were lit, and the carol sheets spread upon the table. Suddenly, somewhere in between *In The Bleak Midwinter* and *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, a voice boomed out:

*Che bella cosa na jurnata 'e sole,
n'aria serena doppo na tempesta!...*

Alexander, an opera singer from Paris would never, until this moment, have sung spontaneously for others. After nine months of near silence and isolation, however, it didn't matter how, when, where or for whom it was going to happen. This musician had to express the voice inside him. It was a powerful moment to witness.

I believe there is gold in this pause we have been forced to make. Perhaps the words 'lock down' contain within them their opposite—open up? Perhaps this period of going inwards will, if we can rise to the challenge, herald a period of great cultural expression? I hope so.

Inside-Out Meditation

- Take a moment to sit comfortably. Close your eyes and allow the breath to enter and leave your body. Allow the muscles around the eyes to release. Let

the eyeballs sink back and down in their sockets. Let your eyes cease their looking and seeing. Invite inner listening.

- Try and feel each part of your body from the inside-out. Notice if you sense any tingling, pulsing or vibrating. Feel the life that is coursing through you.

- As you imagine taking up your instrument, notice any micro changes that occur. Is tension creeping in? What happens to your breath? In your hands? What thoughts arise?

- Gently take up your instrument. Notice what happens to your breathing in the areas where your instrument meets your body. Does it change?

- Sit (or stand) with your instrument. Scan your body once more. Take your time. Is there inner movement? If so, where is it? Hands? Belly? Throat? Feet? In the silence, is there a sound?

- If you feel a movement towards sound-making, can you follow it? How does it travel through you? Can you resist interfering? Allow it to move through your body and into sound. Even if it is one simple note, let yourself feel the wonder at the music that can flow from you into the room and beyond. Listen to it with your whole being.



Ruth Phillips teaches and runs classes on [The Breathing Bow](#) and [InsideOut Musician](#).

[Ruth Phillips describes her approach at InsideOut Musician \(video\)](#)