

# Cellocourses newsletter #1

## December 2005



*I'm Catherine Black. I'm a cello teacher and I also create & organise courses for cellists and other instrumentalists. You can get much more information about me and my courses if you look at my website - [www.cellocourses.com](http://www.cellocourses.com).*

Here is my first newsletter. I intend that what appears here will be a mixture of articles and course news. Hopefully, we can develop the page to include your responses, ideas and thoughts on what appears.

This newsletter contains some of my thinking about creativity and some news about the 'Practice' workshop.

### **Thought for the moment on creativity**

We are all creative. In learning to play an instrument you are acknowledging your creativity. After all, we talk about "playing" rather than "working" at our instrument and the "play" aspect is crucial to understanding that we can always be more creative.

When children play, they release themselves from the here and now and go off into their imaginations, rich and deep sources of fun. Albert Einstein, the great physicist, felt imagination to be more important than knowledge. Without using that extraordinary imagination of his which pushed out the boundaries of what was then "known", he would not have arrived at a new understanding of the cosmos and its workings.

What this means for us is that, in being more imaginative and creative in our approach to our playing, **and** making sure we have fun and enjoy ourselves, we then arrive at a greater understanding of what we do and how we do it. So imagination brings us into knowledge.

We live in a very exam orientated time. Those in education seem never to have been so tested. The need to be achieving all the time can get us off the creative course which is an important road to deeper understanding. So maybe we should all take a leaf out of Einstein's book and adopt a more creative approach to our playing. Why not introduce some new ideas into your practice regularly? Here are a few.

Make a point of regularly improvising at your cello. Even at an early stage you can do a lot with two or three notes and even just on your open strings.

You could write some musical sentences that make a story. You may want to say them aloud first to establish the rhythmic feel. Or you could take a subject or mood. Travel into your imagination, let go of thinking about what you are doing, and just let things flow from you. Stand back, observe and enjoy playing. You will find that when you do the Say and Play rhythmic writing, your imaginative powers take you into far more advanced rhythmic territory than your usual pieces. You could then notate the rhythms to see how far you extended your boundaries. If this is tricky, ask your teacher to help.

You could start writing a folk song for the cello. Listen to some recordings to see what folk music is about. Your library will have plenty. Keep your writing simple and natural: don't over try. Folk music is integrated into a lot of classical music. You could listen to works by Bartok, Vaughan Williams and Janacek.

What about dancing? This is a fantastic way to enjoy music and more importantly on the playing front, to get more of the "feel" of rhythm. Though we need to understand rhythm intellectually so our muscles receive the right messages, we also need to feel it through our body. However, don't fall into the trap of thinking classical music isn't groovy. At the moment, if it isn't Robbie Williams, Abba or the Bee Gees at my dance time, it's likely to be Handel or Mozart.

Perhaps the most creative approach to anything in life is to be open-minded. As a musician you have the most extraordinary world there for you to explore. We can all fall into habitual responses. How about listening occasionally to the kind of music you wouldn't normally listen to?

To close, brood on this thought from the great psychotherapist *CJ Jung's* writings:

*'The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with objects it loves.'*

Love your playing!

Catherine

Do email me with any thoughts at [catherine.black@cellocourses.com](mailto:catherine.black@cellocourses.com)

# Cellocourses Course News

Coming up in early 2006: Three editions of the 'Thinking aloud' Practice workshop for cellists with different abilities and ages.

We all need to re-think and refresh the ways we practice. Come and join us. Think aloud in a relaxed and enjoyable way and look at your methods of working. Take on board some new ideas that get you the results you want faster!

**1) Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 10.30am to 1pm:**

For: Long-term adult players and intermediate/ advanced secondary school students.

Cost: £35 per student and this includes refreshments.

At: All Saints Centre, Lewes, East Sussex. [All Saints is five minutes walk from the railway station and there is parking close by.]

**2) Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 2.30pm to 4.30pm:**

For: Adult Learners

Cost: £35 per student and this includes refreshments.

At: All Saints Centre, Lewes, East Sussex.

**3) Sunday May 21<sup>st</sup> 2006 - 3pm to 5pm:**

The Children's Practice Workshop

Cost: £20 per student includes refreshments.

At: St Thomas's Church Hall, Cliffe High Street, Lewes, East Sussex. [St Thomas's is in the centre of town and there are several car parks very near to the hall.]

Check the Practice page of [www.cellocourses.com](http://www.cellocourses.com) for further details.

If you have any questions, do call me on 01273 470558 or, email me at [catherine.black@cellocourses.com](mailto:catherine.black@cellocourses.com)