

1995 to the present



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Contemporary Violinists - Virtuoso or Bad Music? Violins have always enthralled me because I adore classical music. For the past few years, I have relished listening Vanessa Mae's Vivaldi Four Seasons that never fail to uplift my mood. Another group that made me appreciate violin all the more is Bond Girls. In fact, more and more young people get to appreciate classical instruments such as violin due to the beautiful pieces produced by the artists I aforementioned. Nevertheless, a good question lies: Do violinists rely on their instrument to produce good music? Indeed, this is the question that must be answered because pop culture dictates that anyone who can sing or play an instrument is considered as "artist".

Violin is not an easy musical instrument to play; much more, artists arguing that they need to find the right violin before they can play are simply acting as prima donnas. Here's why, according to Flesch (2000), the instrument is as much as influenced by the characteristics of the artist, "by space, weather, or interested impressions of listeners judging the artists" (p. 5385). Indeed, any of such factors can influence the quality of the music produced by the instrument which disproves the caprice of some artists. So artists who use their instrument as an excuse would surely not earn much respect from real musicians. Another good study that supports my argument that artists must not rely on their instruments is the study made by Inta, Smith and Wolfe in 2005 titled Measurement Of the Effect On Violins Of Ageing and Playing. The study was pursued to test the hypothesis if aging violins do make it sound better. In fact, the study cited that there is even a commercial enterprise that sells aged violins (Inta, et. al, 2005). This is definitely a hint that much commercialism has penetrated the music industry and clouds the judgment of many music students. The conclusion of the study was revealing

stating that there are no statistically significant differences in using violins regardless if they are hundred years old (p. 29). This just shows that violinists are the main factors in producing quality music.

One of the basic styles in playing violin includes vibrato. Vibrato means that a high sounding pitch produces different sound which was written about by Samuel Applebaum in his book *StringBuilder* in 1952. Nevertheless, reading more about techniques used by violinists shows that no style can simply mask a bad note. If violinists are good musicians, then they would hit all their notes well. Moreover, they can make produce different versions of classical music that certainly appeals to young people like myself. On a warm summer day, I am awash with Pachelbel's Canon by Vanessa Mae or Victory by Bond Girls. Vanessa Mae played with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra by age 10 after years of training. In conclusion, great artists, whether classicists or new generation takes real talent and discipline to play the violin superbly. There is no short-cut to success because true artists honed their craft for many years.

Works Cited

Applebaum, Samuel *String Builder, Book 3: Teachers Manual*. New York: Alfred Publishing. 1957.

Flesch, Carl. " Chapter 2." *The Art of Violin Playing Volume 1*. New York: Carls Fischer, LLC, 2000. 056365. Print.

Inta Ra , John Smith, and Joe Wolfe. " Measurement of the Effect of Violins Of Ageing and Playing ." *Acoustics Australia* 33. 5 (2005): 1-25. Physics-University of South Wales. Web. 24 Apr. 2011.