

101 Inspirational Stories...

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The following question was put to 101 flute players from around the world:

Did you ever have a difficult or discouraging time in your life related to the flute? And who or what inspired you to continue?

Shortly after finishing my studies, I found myself in a somewhat depressing and rather overwhelming predicament. As both a performer and teacher, I strive, as I'm sure we all do, to heed the composer's every dot, dash, and word, and in doing so, to lift the dots off the page and convert them into tangible feelings, moods, and colours. The choice of every note and each harmony had a purpose in the composer's imagination, and it is our task to convey that to the audience through our chosen instruments..

But this meticulous attention to detail can at times become so intense and absorbing that, contrary to what we wish to achieve, we actually get led further and further away from the real "truth" of what the music is saying. That's where I found myself when I had finished my studies -- I was trying to be a clear pane of glass through which the thoughts, emotions, and intentions of the composer could shine through to the audience. But I began to feel like I was just spiralling deeper and deeper into searching for the sake of searching. By concentrating so intensely on all the nitty-gritty detail, I had lost all contact with my actual goal.

Fortunately, around this very time, I was invited to join a string orchestra playing all six Brandenburg concertos in Japan. When I got my passport back with my Japanese visa, I saw exactly what I needed to see to get myself back on track -- "Purpose of visit: AS ENTERTAINER."

What would the millions of people who enjoy dancing do without music to which to dance? What would a taxi driver do were he unable to listen to the music on the radio? What would a film be without a music score? In playing or listening to music, we all respond on a very deep emotional level, and even in its most abstract forms I believe music is not a luxury, but rather a necessity in everyday life. At times, as we study every note and examine every harmony, it's important to keep in mind our real purpose as musicians.

Welsh flutist Emily Beynon was appointed principal flute of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, at the age of 25, the first woman and the first non-Dutch player ever to hold this position. She has performed with orchestras and ensembles throughout Europe. Beynon is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, and students come from all over Europe to study with her at The Hague Royal Conservatory. For more information, visit www.emilybeynon.com

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