

## NEWSLETTER April 2021



Dear All,

I hope you are all well and coming out of lockdown with confidence and happiness! It was interesting for me to notice that in my case I was feeling quite uneasy about all the pending changes in early April, but spring has definitely raised my spirits:

Just a few weeks before Easter, we invited our newest family member into our lives: On the photo above, you can meet Sütlaç, our rabbit. Sütlaç is Turkish for Rice pudding (in her case, you have to add lots of cinnamon). She rules our living room, with confidence and a graceful appearance.

It is so nice to be able to meet more people again - even indoors, if work-related. Today I sat in the park by myself, in the sun, surrounded by small groups of happy people, enjoying a thermos of coffee, doing some planning work – pure bliss!

This month, as usual, you find a list of posts below. A new feature is the Musical Tip of the Month, where I will post a bit of information either about musical terminology or tips, relating to practice or performing.

As to the latter – we are slowly and tentatively making plans again, I definitely have four concerts in the pipeline, but no dates have been set – I hope by next month, I might know more!

This month was divided into playing some online Grade performances, my ongoing production of digital backing tracks but also, some live performances: I performed at a church service (as singer) and in City and Islington Sixth form college (as accompanist of A-level exams).

I hope you enjoy my latest news, and of course you can share this letter with whomever you wish.

With many thanks for your support, and warm wishes –keep well!

Gisela

- 1. MUSICAL TIP OF THE MONTH**
- 2. ONLINE WORKSHOP: Opening the Practice Toolbox**
- 3. TAKE A BREATHER – FREE 30 mins workshops on Thursday 6pm- running until May 27<sup>th</sup>**
- 4. CLERKENWELL SINGALONG**
- 5. CITY LIT**
- 6. OTHER PRIVATE TEACHING – Face to face, or Online**
- 7. MY 2020 PROJECTS with singers AIDAN CROWLEY and TOM SUTTON**
- 8. On behalf of a colleague: CLIVE POLLARD, composer**

## 1. MUSICAL TIP OF THE MONTH – basic terminology

**Pitch** – In terms of physics, this is the frequency of the sound, measured in Hertz. If you sing or play a high or low note, this is the pitch. The A of the tuning fork is at about 440 Hertz. If you go up to the next A, it doubles to 880! The nearest distance between two piano keys is called a semitone (half tone), but our ear can detect a distance as small as an eighth of a tone.

**Beat** – This is the pulse in music, I also call it the “heart beat”. Usually it is constant (though it can speed up and slow down, at times). Whenever we move in time to music, we feel the beat. In written music, a specific note value is chosen to represent one beat.

**Rhythm** – Quite often, the two terms *rhythm* and *beat* are causing confusion, because rhythm is closely linked to the beat. Very simply put, the rhythm of a piece means *the length of the notes*. When you clap a melody instead of singing it, you are performing the rhythm.

**Tempo** – This is the speed of a piece of music. A lot of the terms are in Italian, but you can find also other languages instructing you how fast to play or sing. Read more here: <https://symphonynovascotia.ca/faqs/symphony-101/how-do-musicians-know-how-fast-to-play-a-piece-and-why-are-the-terms-in-italian/>

## 2. ONLINE WORKSHOP: Opening the Practice Toolbox



**Monday, 24 May 2021**

**6-8pm\***

**Online platform: Zoom**

Do you feel you are spending a lot of time practicing with little result?  
Are you stuck learning a particular piece or passage?  
Can you “sort of” play - or sing - your repertoire, you feel that there is more to be discovered and want to know what to do next?

**Don't wait until you are frustrated and ready to start a bonfire with your music – join this 2-hour online workshop instead!**

*Suitable for all musicians who work from sheet music.*

### Schedule:

Introduction and presentation of general methods	20 mins
Individual sessions masterclass style (active participants)	15 – 20 mins each
Q&A	15 mins

**Prices:**      **Active participant**    £15  
                  **Passive participant**    £ 5

Read more here:  
<https://giselameyer.me.uk/event/opening-the-practice-toolbox/>

### 3. TAKE A BREATHER – FREE 30 mins workshops on Thursday 6pm, up to May 27<sup>th</sup>

I have much enjoyed running *Take A Breather* for the last three months – and the workshop has been featured in our very local newspaper, the EC1 Echo:

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## And... breathe

### Musician Gisela Meyer talks about her lockdown initiative of free weekly breathing workshops

**D**uring the first lockdown, I wanted to connect with and get to know more people in the area. It seemed a good idea to do something related to my skills – I am a classical pianist and singer.

I think we all have something to share, and I felt it was the right time for me to share my skills and connect with others in this time of isolation. The sessions are always designed for all, partly because of my non-medical background but also because I found we could all use some planned calming-down time.

"Take a Breather" was inspired by an ENO/NHS initiative to help Covid

patients – I love interdisciplinary collaboration like that, and I'm personally interested in both wellbeing and music

*"Take a Breather was inspired by an ENO/NHS initiative to help Covid patients"*

so it was a natural step. I also wanted to be more aware of my own breathing – not just during practice, but all the time – and to share my breathing techniques

with others, whether musicians or not. When we are anxious, we take shallow and ineffective breaths. Stress makes us more vulnerable to illness.

Good breathing habits can strengthen the immune system – and help us calm down. It is certainly working for me and from the feedback I've received, it also seems to work for others.

I would love to continue in person after lockdown, but it will depend on lots of practical factors including finding a suitable venue. It would also be great to meet and still be able to include those who might prefer online sessions, especially as a lot of people join in from outside London.

Irrespective of geography, it's certainly been a lovely way to bring people together. Perhaps blended sessions could work in future – with in person and online – maybe even outside if you can overcome inevitable technical issues like background noise.

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In this article was Gisela Meyer interviewed by Yen-Yen Teh

Yen-Yen Teh is the founder of Clerkenwell-based architecture & design practice Emulsion: emulsionarchitecture.com

Take a Breather sessions take place online weekly, on Thursday nights, 6–6.30pm. To read more and sign up to TAB or the monthly online Singalong, please visit: giselameyer.me.uk

Now I find that the urgency for such sessions has receded to some extent – therefore I have decided to continue the sessions up to the end of May, the last meeting will take place on May 27<sup>th</sup>.

### 4. CLERKENWELL SINGALONG

As mentioned before, our monthly Singalong has been mentioned in a sweet article in the Islington tribune <http://islingtontribune.com/article/sing-up-you-wont-be-all-on-your-own> – and we are still growing!

*Meetings take place(s) via Zoom, every second Tuesday of the month (coming up on 11 May, 8 June, 13 July) at 6pm. If you want to join the mailing list, please let me know.*

### 5. CITY LIT

I have started teaching my piano classes last week, with great pleasure.

After teaching Chamber Skills online for two terms – with a solid group in the Spring term, there are plans now to attempt classes in person, later on in the summer term, which is extremely exciting after all this time. I have not been at the City Lit site since 17 March, 2020...

The music rooms on the second floor are currently being renovated, and I'm looking forward to hearing more specific news from the department soon.

### 6. OTHER PRIVATE TEACHING – Face to face, or Online

We are officially allowed to meet face-to-face again, for teaching purposes, including private instrumental lessons. But I will keep up the online teaching, as a permanent alternative – people can choose either one, or mix and match, according to what suits best.

I offer classes for individuals or groups at all levels (see \* for some exceptions) in the following musical subjects:

PIANO, VOICE, CELLO\*, CHAMBER MUSIC

THEORY, AURAL, COMPOSITION\*

\*up to Grade 8

I also offer accompaniment services and backing tracks in MP3 format:

<https://giselameyer.me.uk/accompaniment/>

**Get in touch: [giselameyer.me.uk](https://giselameyer.me.uk)**

## **7. MY 2020 PROJECTS**

*with singers AIDAN CROWLEY and TOM SUTTON*

- recorded remotely - are available to listen to and/or to buy, here:

<https://aidancrowley.bandcamp.com/album/invisible-spirit>

<https://aidancrowley.bandcamp.com/album/tom-sutton-a-song-before-i-go>

<https://aidancrowley.bandcamp.com/album/dirty-rotten-number>

## **8. On behalf of a colleague: CLIVE POLLARD, composer**

I usually don't share things about other people's businesses here, but Clive is a colleague from the City Lit and a friend. He has published an amazing song cycle as well as a single song – all songs can be heard and purchased, here:

CLIVE <https://www.goodmusicpublishing.co.uk/composer/clive-pollard>