

Script

You will hear Leonie Steiner talking to an interviewer about her work as a music teacher in a school. For questions 1-7, choose the best answer (A, B or C).

Interviewer: I have with me Leonie Steiner, who's had a distinguished career both as a pianist and as a music teacher. Leonie, who was your first-ever piano teacher?

Leonie: There's a long piano-playing tradition in my family and from a very early age I was keen to start playing. In earlier generations fathers and mothers had taught daughters and sons, but both of mine were working full-time, so from the beginning they had me taught at home by a tutor. That would have been shortly before my first year at primary school, where I also had lessons.

Interviewer: And when did you actually start giving lessons?

Leonie: In my late teens, by which time I was giving solo performances. Some professional musicians give private classes to make enough to live on, or perhaps to find out whether they would make good teachers, but for me it was never a conscious decision to become a teacher. I'd always enjoyed working with younger students, doing what I could to help them develop as musicians, and without realising it I was becoming a teacher. And ever since then, that - together with performing - is what I've done.

Interviewer: And what kind of students do you prefer?

Leonie: I'd say those who perhaps aren't naturally brilliant but respond well to intensive teaching and go on to become top performers. More so than those who seem to have been born to play at the highest level, or students who've been taught the

wrong way and need to get rid of bad musical habits. That can be hard work for both pupil and teacher.

Interviewer: And what do you think of the standard of music education in our schools nowadays?

Leonie: It varies widely. I get the impression there's been a general shift away from putting pressure on students to achieve exam success to a more skills-based

approach, and I think that's to be welcomed. The media sometimes talk about a shortage of qualified music teachers but I'm not convinced. I'd say there's a much greater need to invest in new pianos, violins and so on, ensuring they're top quality so that students really like the sound they make. Because the key to success is making sure pupils enjoy their music lessons, both in terms of playing and singing.

Interviewer: Do school music lessons normally include singing these days?

Leonie: In the majority of cases they still do, and it's generally popular among pupils, but a lot of them are afraid of doing so in public because of what other people may say or think. That's a great pity, I think, and if a child wants to sing, I feel strongly that they should always be encouraged to do so.

Interviewer: You're very highly regarded by your ex-students, many of whom have gone on to have successful careers. What do you think has made you such a good teacher?

Leonie: Well, if that's true it probably has something to do with the fact I've always found it easy to get on with those of a different generation, whether they're at primary school, secondary school or university. In that respect. I don't think I would've benefited from actually being trained at college as a music teacher.

Interviewer: Looking back over your career, what big decisions have you had to make?

Leonie: Well, in my late thirties I wondered whether I'd still have the energy needed to keep doing lessons as I got older, but once into my forties I found that wasn't an issue. Also around then, I was offered the position of assistant head, and I had to think carefully about that because I would've been on a much higher salary, but in the end I said 'no', It would also have meant I had less time for doing lessons, and for performing. My response to an offer of work in another country was the same, though I found it much easier to make up my mind about that one. I've never regretted staying here.

Interviewer: Thank you Leonie.