

CHRISTINE HOOK

Mozarteum University Salzburg, Austria

SOME YEARS AGO, when I was a student, I did a university entrance test. After I passed, the teacher called my parents to tell them I was very talented and had better play the cello! That would not happen now. Bassists have much more self-confidence and there are many more women playing the instrument. Perceptions have changed and that has given students more knowledge and confidence.

I was quite satisfied with my teachers and felt I was able to look to them for guidance. Of course no one is perfect, but you can take different things from different people.



Repertoire for orchestral auditions is a key focus of Christine Hook's teaching

◀ 'It's not realistic to study with the goal of being a soloist': Christine Hook

With my first teacher, I played only exercises – no pieces at all. But somehow that was OK for me, because I was curious enough to look for music elsewhere. It's important to try to understand where your teacher is coming from, to be interested in your teacher and how they teach.

I do think it's important for a teacher to be an active musician, to be performing on stage as an artist. This can be a problem for bassists because there are not enough solo concerts to go around, but most teachers today are very versatile, playing solo and chamber music, and in orchestras. I get invigorated by playing solo recitals, but I also keep in contact with colleagues from orchestras and involve them in special orchestral training projects for my students.

There is a lot more bass repertoire today, and many contemporary composers have written for the bass and know a great deal about the instrument. I'm very optimistic about the future of new music for the bass.

However, besides a strong technical basis and the solo repertoire, a key focus of my teaching is on repertoire for orchestral auditions. This is very important and hasn't changed. It's not realistic to study with the goal of being a soloist. The best you can hope for is to get a job in an orchestra and give solo recitals alongside that. Then, later in your career, if you are very successful, you can leave the orchestral job. No one can start out making a living as a soloist. ▶

OSCAR HENN, ILONA KLIMEK

