

## Caroline Nicolas • Teaching Statement

Learning to play a musical instrument is an endlessly rewarding process. As a teacher, it is my responsibility to guide my students to realize their fullest potential by giving them the necessary tools to develop their unique musical voices. Each student's path to acquiring those tools will be a completely individual process.

The most important skills a student can learn to develop are those of practicing thoughtfully and listening with an inquisitive ear. This means that one accurately hears their playing and possesses the required physical understanding of the instrument in order to figure out how to improve. I help my students achieve this by combining challenging repertoire with exercises, technical etudes, and ear training exercises.

My goal as a teacher is the same for all of my students, regardless of level: to get my pupil to a point where they can confidently say that they are good practicers!

### **A few ideas to keep in mind when you're in the practice room:**

- Slow practice will always yield the quickest results.
- Keep it Zen: simply **listen** and *observe* your sound. Ignore that critical voice in your head.
- If the sound you want isn't clear in your mind, it won't come out clearly on your instrument.
- Keep it simple: work on one thing at a time. It is better to fix one thing than to almost fix many things.
- You will always have enough time to practice, *if* you're smart with your practice time.
- Regardless of how much time you have to practice: It is important to work *consistently* on the most difficult parts of your pieces.
- Keep breathing! Deep breathes are the antidote to tension.