

“Immersed in music”

I had been to Tandem Festival before. A friend of mine asked someone who was performing because I was too shy. I was like, ‘hey, this is really cool!’, can one participate? And I'm really glad she asked. She was so nice, and was just like, ‘come! Whatever your level is, come!’ And I felt really lucky.

I signed up for it never having done any playing by ear before. I came with my violin, having had classical violin teaching before and got there and was a bit like, ‘wow, that's a lot’. Overall it felt like it was exploratory, and quite intense and allowed me to dip into a different way of making music.

I think that was a sort of curve throughout the week. When I got there, I was quite excited, curious, and then had this kind of learning curve going up and at some

point kind of reached this moment where I was overwhelmed and had various low points where I felt stressed and quite exhausted. Had one or two days where I just had to take a rest and let things settle down and then kind of going up again, just the excitement of playing with people and feeling like things are coming together.

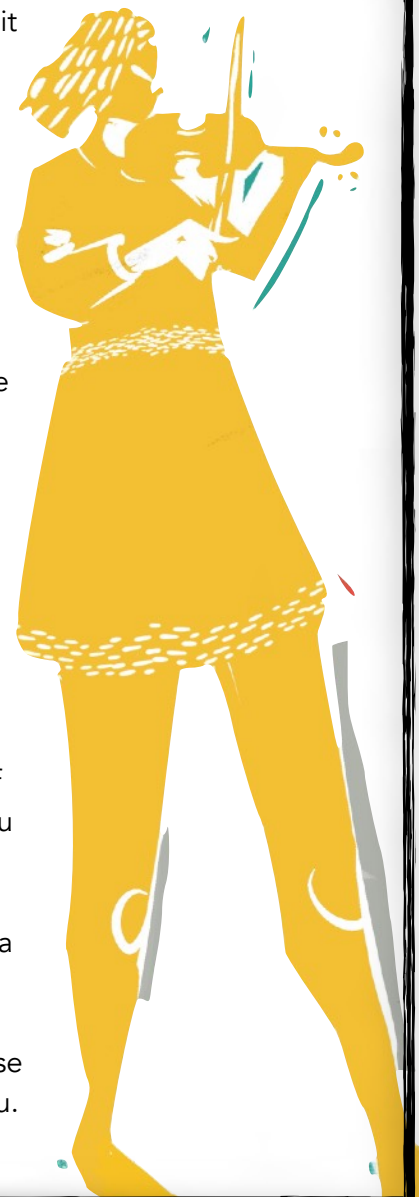
I was feeling quite nervous, given that everything was quite new and especially with the violin, my instrument, the other people, everyone else had a lot more experience and more experience with that type of music. And also feeling like some people kind of had done lots of Ethnos before and a bit like there was some sort of in-group, some people who had known each other before and had kind of bonded really well. And it felt like because I didn't have that much energy. I was having a

hard time kind of doing the bonding in the way I would have wanted.

I guess a cognitive challenge, especially for me, was trying to learn lots of things, the habit of listening to stuff. So that was quite intense because there was a lot of it and in a very short time, so it wasn't just, ‘oh, we get together for a week and we perform at the end’, but it was like, ‘oh, by Wednesday we have this first little concert’.

And I felt quite rushed as well, like, OK, now we have to like, pull everything together and there's not that much time to go over things again.

The second type of intensity, I think, is just camping with the people, you're sleeping in the same place, you don't really have time to yourself that much. And I mean, you probably know that feeling just like being around the same people. Especially if a week can be just quite intense, you're getting to know everyone and all these social dynamics around you.



And that's also quite a lot of something.

One thing is, I think, about confidence. It's not just the sharing, but I think part of that is like, even when I'm playing by myself, in my head, where I'm quite critical of myself in general. Especially so when I play the violin, I think that's been holding me back a lot and for a long time, so it feels like in a sense, that was a kind of personal development goal. When I'm playing this self-critical voice is coming out very strong and it's an opportunity of learning to deal with that. It might have to do with the sort of reactions I got when I started learning the violin. I guess when you start learning the violin it's usually not pretty. I kind of got into this habit of, you know, ugh, what I'm doing doesn't sound nice, I should play less loudly, and then start getting quite a weird technique where it's played really softly. That kind of thing didn't help getting a good sound later on. I got into the habit of expecting the first thing, when I'm playing the violin, to be criticism.

It was feeling like getting a glimpse. Feeling like I could get into more traditional music. I think I've always been very nervous or self-conscious around the violin and feeling like there might be a way of getting more in tune with just producing sounds and playing melodies. For example, after that, I joined a few Celtic sessions around and played with

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people there. I think it definitely gave me a push to come out and be like, 'I can learn more tunes and play with other people!'. And I think one thing was the kind of tunes that I learned at Ethno, I felt like, 'I know these I'm confident just playing those without sheets'. And I can just tell a friend like, 'hey, look! I learned this tune!' and then I play it to them and that's something I wouldn't have done before. Usually I don't really like playing in front of people.

I think it had to do with not playing from sheet music. It felt like learning the tunes by heart made me feel more connected with them, or made it easier to not get so nervous around people. Being on stage and playing them, it felt easy because I was like, 'oh, there's all these other people, I miss something it'll be fine'...everyone else is dancing and you get that positive feedback because everyone else is enjoying themselves in a way. At the end I think maybe my critical voice was just drowned out by fun, or something. I didn't care!

Maybe it was less about the confidence in playing in front of others by myself, but more like a group energy - you're just having a lot of fun and it's very energetic. It's an aspect of a different way of making music or something which I've had before when singing in a big choir. But I've never



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had that really with playing the violin. There was something that felt quite free about that.

You're so surrounded by music and you have music more in your body, so it feels more natural. It feels like it's quite different to going out dancing - there it felt like, 'wow, I'm immersed in music!'. For this whole week, dreaming of the tunes, and then you're moving around and it feels like it's less like dancing, but like music in your body.

As told to: Maya



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