

*A Guide to
Advanced Modern
Double Bass
Technique*

KNUT GUETTLER

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Dedication

To Henrik Lindemann, my first double bass teacher

This book was first published by Yorke Editions in 1992. It has been out of print for many years. This version is an electronic version in PDF format which was published in 2016 with a few minor changes.

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It is worth mentioning that chapters 10 and 11 include material not normally found in guides for musical instruments. This subject matter, the physics that govern music, was further developed by the author and was central to his doctorate at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm in 1998. The website that the author established in 2012, www.knutsacoustics.com, where this book is published, includes numerous works by the author and other scientists on subjects related to the acoustic properties of string instruments.

Cover photograph by Gunnar Lie

Introduction by Tanja Kleive Guettler

When my father died, the rights to his book "*A guide to advanced modern double bass technique*" passed on to me. The book is intended for the double bass player who wants to study to his own. As the book is no longer in print, I want to give all double bass players access to this updated pdf-version.

Special thanks go to Aslaug Holgersen, Jan H. Guettler, Håkon Thelin and Venta Gaarder, whose engagement and work with corrections and retouching notes was essential for the pdf-version.

Some of you knew my father, others may only have heard some of the many anecdotes about him. He was a man of many skills, with a sharp tongue, a subtle humor and a truly warm heart. He never wanted to impose himself on others, but used his extensive academic background to explore new methods and to create new knowledge, both as a musician and as a scientist.

The best way to honor his memory is to continue his work. I hope you will let him inspire you.

In Knut Guettler's memory - words of Wallace Stevens:

*They said, "You have a blue guitar,
You don't play things as they are."
The man replied, "Things as they are,
Are changed upon the blue guitar."*



Tanja Kleive Guettler

Asker, Norway 29.11.16

Introduction

This book addresses itself to the double bass player who wants to study on his own, not necessarily supported by a teacher. It deals with technical problems at all levels, from those of the student to the advanced professional, all of which I have experienced and discussed in different forums during many years of teaching.

The chapters are organised in such a way as to enable specific topics to be found easily. The book, however, does not provide comprehensive progressive etudes, as the reader should be in possession of such material already. Many of the music examples and exercises here, are linked to considerably detailed explanations in the text in order to clarify the technical points being discussed. The student may well read the entire book through first, to provide an overview, before working in depth.

Fingering systems give rise to as many discussions as choice of bow! One chapter here is devoted to the four finger system which, I feel strongly, works best when combined with conventional three finger systems. Its success is also highly dependent on the player's ability to pivot the left forearm within the position, a task which I consider fundamental to all left hand technique.

I must acknowledge special thanks to Gary Karr, whose bowing concepts have profoundly influenced me over the years: he generously gave permission to include two of his own exercises here. My colleagues Geoffrey Gotch and Michael Williams gave me helpful advice and practical assistance throughout my work on the text. The Norwegian State Academy of Music gave generous financial support and Gunnar Moreite was responsible for the clear and instructive photographs. Rodney Slatford and I spent many hours finalising complex production details. I am grateful to them all.

Although this book was written with the main aim of improving the reader's *technique*, it must always be remembered that the prospect of a better technique tomorrow should never inhibit *musical* playing today...

KNUT GUETTLER
Oslo, 21 August 1990



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