

Patience



Patience is a virtue which is sometimes quite hard for me to accomplish. If I have bought something nice in the shop, I have no patience to wait unwrapping the box until I get home: the visual check must be immediate, just in case not everything is in the box!

My impatience at times affects my guitar playing too.

Lack of patience is awkward while studying a piece. When studying guitar, things often do not come naturally: you need care and patience to find out how to play the piece, the way you want it to sound, the most optimal fingering for a smooth performance and last but not least for playing the piece by heart and experimenting with expression.

Study is not merely priming the piece; a lot of polishing is required before the piece is ready for performance. Patience is necessary for the finishing touch after you have learned to play the piece. Think about the patience of a saint which is required to lower the playing noises (this annoying creaking of the fingers on the bass strings) to an acceptable level.

Impatience on the other hand thwarts the final strokes and renders your play messy and sloppy. Aaron Shearer calls this the introduction of *Confusion and Error* in your play. I regularly have to correct myself when I find out that I am in impatience mode.

Such a sense of impatience is increased by the limited time you can spend on playing guitar. I am quite happy if I can find half an hour up to forty-five minutes on a weekday for a guitar session. In this time, I have to set up (I used to play in the bedroom, which is no place where you can leave guitar and stand set up), do a (technical) warming-up, practise solo and ensemble pieces, do a bit of recreation on the guitar and record myself from time to time. With a busy programme of this kind, impatience is bound to creep in.

A warming-up is necessary each day, your muscles must be in good condition. After the warming-up, the time-management problem must be solved.

One solution is concentrating on one thing at a time: practice your pieces under development on one day and do the recreation (browsing music books and playing whatever you like) on the next. Or subdivide your session in parts with a clear focus. In this way, you can get around to what you would like to do. I am attempting the mixed variant, warming-up, study (for solo or duo) and as a conclusion playing from score whatever I like. I must admit that the latter (recreational) component has become quite large lately. I hope that I will start practising again, now that I have found a new guitar teacher again, because the study component has lost momentum quite a bit since my last teacher stopped his lessons. Apparently, part of the drive behind a study is the big stick of the teacher, despite all spectacular slogans about self-teaching.

One of the challenges is finding the balance between progress and available time. In order to satisfy your impatience, you want to push on, to proceed! Half an hour or three quarters of an hour daily, however, will not yield spectacular progress: You will kick the bucket against the guys and gals who are studying guitar virtually full time. Sometimes this frustrates me. Law of nature, however, is rigorous: *What you don't sow, you won't reap*, a free statement of the *First Law of Thermodynamics*.

My former guitar teacher had a good laugh about this Western impatience of mine. He had read quite a lot about and experimented with Oriental meditation techniques and regularly explained that Hurry and Impatience make sure that you need lots more of time to achieve what you want, preventing playing fun in the process as a consequence of frustration.

"Concentrate so well that you can enjoy every note, irrespective of its speed. Grant every note its time and let the note actually happen without cutting-off" was his wise lesson which appeared hard to realize for me. Granting every note its time while you sense the approach of a difficult transitioning fingering is almost threatening. You are inclined to anticipate and pick the next note too soon, well, so much for your patience.

How to assess the quality of your concentration -whether it is sufficient for what you want to play or to study on guitar- is a subject for another *Guitarity*, I think, I will have to do some experimenting first.

Aaron Shearer writes that you should put aside the guitar if you think that your concentration is insufficient for the current session. Well, if I told my boss so with my regular job, he would not be that pleased! 100 percent of concentration is quite rare, I guess. So, I try the best possible at a certain instant.

As a conclusion, again I have to admit: Patience is a virtue. I hope to find that on the guitar in the near future.