

## PLAYING FROM THE HEART

Charles Way

TEACHER: Do you know what a paradox is?

EVELYN: Is it a bird?

TEACHER: No...

It says here you have no musical ability - cannot tell a high note from a low note but it also says here you have passed six grades on the piano - that's a paradox. Is there something you should tell me?

EVELYN: No sir/miss. I don't think so.

TEACHER: But Evelyn: according to this test - you have no musical ability, at all. You have no sense of pitch. You have no sense of tone. Perhaps music is not the right thing for you.

EVELYN: I love music. I'm going to be a musician in the orchestra.

TEACHER: The piano may not be -

EVELYN: That's why I was thinking about... the drums.

TEACHER: Percussion? Do you know what percussion is?

*(Evelyn: is puzzled by the question.)*

EVELYN: Rhythm?

TEACHER: Yes - but its more... Do you ever lose your temper Evelyn? *(She nods)* And what do you feel like doing when you lose your temper?

EVELYN: I feel like...

TEACHER: Like striking out? *(She nods)* But you know that's wrong, so you strike a drum instead. In other words - it's about feelings - emotions, but not just anger; excitement, fear, happiness - you have to... to... hit from the heart. *(He shows her the instruments, hitting each as he goes.)* This is a vibraphone... this is a Marimba and these are drums... a Timpani and that thing you were whacking so energetically just now... is a Tam Tam... and that I take it is a hearing aid? Why didn't you tell us?

EVELYN: I can cope. If I watch people's lips, I can tell what they're saying most of the time. I want to be in the school orchestra.

TEACHER: But if you can't hear the sounds?

EVELYN: I can hear. Not hear exactly... I sort of hear it.

TEACHER: What kind of sort of?

EVELYN: Inside me... the sound...goes right through me.

TEACHER: In a moment I'm going to make two different sounds and I want you to tell me what they are... but first, close your eyes... go on.

*(He slams a door then clashes a cymbal.)*

EVELYN: A door shutting... a cymbal crashing.

TEACHER: That's remarkable... it's -

EVELYN: A paradox?

TEACHER: Aye - Wait... *(excited now)* ... put your hands on the wall and close your eyes... I'm going to strike the Timpani and you tell me which note is higher.

*He hits the drum.*

EVELYN: The second note was higher... I could feel it.

TEACHER: You can feel the difference - between a high note and a low note?

EVELYN: Yes.

TEACHER: Sing... um... 'You take the high road and I'll -'

EVELYN: *(sings out of tune)* ... take the low road and I'll be in Scotland afore you...'

TEACHER: But you can't sing in tune.

EVELYN: Inside my head I can sing in tune... inside my head it sounds... perfect.

TEACHER: But the orchestra is outside your head. The orchestra is a whole bunch of sounds - outside of you. You'd have to learn how to distinguish one sound from another. It would be hard, hard work.

EVELYN: I'm a hard worker-

TEACHER: You'll have to learn to count notes like a demon.

EVELYN: I can be a demon - you ask my brothers. I can do it. I can, I can, I can.

TEACHER: Then we'd best be making a start.

*Evelyn starts to hit things. He joins in and it develops into the school orchestra and she is part of it. The following text comes out of and is part of the music.*

EVELYN: Learning how to play  
learning how to count  
learning how to listen  
when I cannot hear.  
School life - home life  
falling silent.  
Learning how to play  
day after day  
Learning how to count  
time away.  
School life - home life  
learning how to listen  
when I cannot hear.

*Spotlight on Evelyn -Wind. She climbs the grain tower.*

EVELYN:      Every day the world became a little quieter -  
                    and the quieter it became  
                    the more I felt... its rhythm  
                    in my feet - in my hands  
                    my legs, my heart...  
                    my heart...  
                    And the more I knew  
                    That music was going to be my life.