

# Episode 32: December chats, medication, rejections, and whet...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

life, people, feel, audition, nice, musicians, cello, rebecca, bit, margot, medication, week, point, doctor, hattie, obsessive, ballet, fluoxetine, opera house, self harm

## SPEAKERS

Rebecca Toal, Hattie Butterworth

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**H** Hattie Butterworth 00:03  
Hello and welcome to Things Musicians Don't Talk About with your hosts Hattie Butterworth,

**R** Rebecca Toal 00:09  
and me Rebecca Toal.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 00:11  
Within our vibrant musical world, it can often feel that the struggles and humanity of the musicians is lost and restricted.

**R** Rebecca Toal 00:19  
Having both dealt in silence with mental, physical and emotional issues, we're now looking for a way to voice musicians' stories, discuss them further and to connect with the many others who suffer like we have.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 00:30  
No topic will be out of bounds as we are committed to raising awareness for all varieties of struggle, and hoped to do so with some fantastic guests along the way.

**R** Rebecca Toal 00:40

So join me Hattie, and guests, as we attempt to bring an end to stigma by uncovering the Things Musicians Don't Talk About. All right, so, hi Hattie. It's us, me and Hattie. How are you?

**H** Hattie Butterworth 01:11

Good. I'm really good. Yeah, I kind of said that, and I was like, is that true? And I'm not sure. I feel like I'm not... I feel like, it's that time of year where you're like, not really sure. You might be in a... in the role of just doing stuff and not really being in touch with your emotions brilliantly well, that's kind of how I feel a little bit.

**R** Rebecca Toal 01:32

Yeah, like, do you feel Christmassy?

**H** Hattie Butterworth 01:35

It's a really weird one because it's like, I feel like I could have felt Christmassy, but I've tried to hold it off a little bit because I'm always that person that gets Christmassy too soon and then ruins it for myself. So trying to hold it off a little bit. Tried to keep Autumn going as long as possible and ... but I am feeling Christmassy, like we've got snow forecast for tonight, so that's just for Scotland though, not for anywhere else. How are you?

**R** Rebecca Toal 02:08

I'm fine. I feel like yeah, just being pulled in all different directions at the moment, which is nice because there's lots of things going on. But I think it's this thing of like being a freelancer and sometimes I find that it's hard to feel like I'm working hard enough because I'm working hard on lots of little things and cumulatively like it feels like very hard work, but actually doesn't always feel like I'm working really hard on one thing. If you know what I mean, so. Yeah, I'm always like, "should I like working harder?" Or? Yeah, so I'm preparing from some auditions at the moment. And in my brain. I'm like, I should be working hard. I should be, you know, doing a whole regime of...

**H** Hattie Butterworth 02:58

Yeah. Is that like a superstition thing? Or is it like something you've learned from like, if I don't do this much preparation, then I'm definitely gonna fail or?

**R** Rebecca Toal 03:09

Yeah, I haven't done that many professional auditions, so I don't know what my like my pattern is yet. I guess also living with three other musicians, it's very easy to compare your audition prep to their audition prep, and it's easy to know, like in my head that my life isn't comparable

to their lives, like I do a lot of teaching. They do a lot more practice, blah, blah, blah. But it's harder to feel that as a reality.

H

Hattie Butterworth 03:37

So we wanted to say a massive thank you to everyone who supported our Musicians Injury Awareness Week, which was from the 15th of November for the week. The response was just so beautiful, and we were actually in London together, which was really sweet. And yeah, it was really... It felt so nice to do something tangible. How did you feel it went Rebecca?

R

Rebecca Toal 04:08

Yeah, no, it was good. Yeah, felt like we had lots of nice responses and because ... it's always that thing, especially when you're planning something for the first time, or you know, doing something like Things Musicians Don't Talk About where actually we have no idea what we're doing really most of the time, um especially then planning something in real life, it's nice to get some feedback of ... yeah, usually doing a podcast, you just put stuff out and then you don't really see the reaction, so it was nice to have, as you say something tangible to work with. And nice to see you even though it was really cold.

H

Hattie Butterworth 04:47

That was actually a very festive week, to be fair. I felt very festive that week.

R

Rebecca Toal 04:51

You were doing Christmas shopping.

H

Hattie Butterworth 04:52

I was doing Christmas everything. I was ... honestly I had no days just to be on my own and I got back here, and I was just like, "shit. I've had no you know, I've had no time. It's been literally so manic and so fun but wow, I'm tired now", you know.

R

Rebecca Toal 05:12

Well, when you're next in London, you can have your own place, and then you can chill.

H

Hattie Butterworth 05:15

This is it, this is the plan, stay tuned. This is the plan. I think with projects like that, it's a sort of thing you just learn so much from doing, and I feel I learned so much about, like, what to expect, in terms of, you know, our own time and like the amount we put into it, and what we

get out of it, and also the fact that people don't consume it all in that one week, like, hopefully, people will come across it, and things you know, it just, even though it's a weekly awareness thing, a week's awareness, it's like, the point of it is to start something that has longevity. So...

R

Rebecca Toal 05:58

What would you... if there is anything that you would change for next time, what would it be?

H

Hattie Butterworth 06:04

Oh, my gosh, I really don't know. Do you have an answer? While I think about that one.

R

Rebecca Toal 06:11

I would just, I'd love to do more live stuff. Yeah. And it'd be nice, because obviously, with COVID restrictions still in place, it'd be nice to have like a public audience for some of the things because it was a shame that even though we did some live interviews, we couldn't, we couldn't have, like, public people. Public people? Public citizens.

H

Hattie Butterworth 06:33

That's it, isn't it like? And also maybe doing something as part of another festival or event or something? To...

R

Rebecca Toal 06:42

Or like a workshop or something as well?

H

Hattie Butterworth 06:44

Yeah. Do you want to talk a bit about the random sticker blow up?

R

Rebecca Toal 06:56

What do you mean, random stickers? Or you mean random blow up?

H

Hattie Butterworth 07:01

The stickers you bought for yourself that ended up being...?



R

Rebecca Toal 07:05

Yeah, I bought 75 stickers that said: "What would Yuja wear?" And I don't really know what I thought I was going to do with 75 stickers. Maybe subconsciously I was like, "Yeah, I'll be selling these" but then I put them on Instagram and was like, "would anybody buy these if we sold them?" And everyone was like, "yes". But I think we had two people were like, "no". Thank you for your honesty, so yeah, we've almost run out of them. I mean, I'll probably order more if people keep ordering them. But yeah, so they were inspired by a certain article that was written by a certain music journalist, quote, unquote, journalist.

H

Hattie Butterworth 07:55

You're so specific these days.

R

Rebecca Toal 07:58

I don't want to get in trouble, but I kind of do. And he was criticising Yuja's concert...choice of clothes to wear on stage for a concert. And you know, she is known for her dress sense. But yes, there was not only this focus on what she wears, but there was also quotes, like, "she's got a sell by date to consider", you know, "she's 34. There's only so much makeovers and gym workouts can do", this sort of stuff so, yeah, the whole article was pretty inflammatory. And, yeah, it seemed like it was on purpose, the language he was using, just to get clicks and whatever journalists are searching for. I don't believe that's an excuse. Yeah, so we put out a response, I did some random scribbles all over the article and then put it out there and people seemed to agree. And I think that there is always a danger of when posting responses or reactions to things, that you're posting into like an echo chamber. And you don't want to censor people's free speech, but particularly in this instance, I mean, he's a pretty successful journalist, who continues to use this sort of language, yet nothing has been done about it, so it feels like a response was necessary. Sorry, that was a rather large rant.

H

Hattie Butterworth 09:32

No, it was great, because I think what we realised through you doing that and you talking about it on our platform is that actually, it goes beyond just this one article, you know, the impact he's had and we don't know whether we can maybe share in the future more about people's experiences with how they've been treated, but it's very clear that it does go beyond just Yuja's dress sense being criticised, you know, like...

R

Rebecca Toal 10:01

It's not only his articles, I mean, it's the whole website as a whole is kind of rife with racism, sexism, all these kinds of things and yeah, I imagine, I think he said that the readership was 2 to 3 million. Yeah, I understand that it will be hard to sort of monitor all the comments and stuff that go on. But in which case, I think you need, yeah, not impossible, other websites do it, and if it's such a problem on your website, then you obviously need to get someone on board to

monitor it, or stop using such inflammatory language in your own articles, which people then assume is okay, or like, creates an environment in which people assume it's okay to comment the things that they do on the articles. So...

H

Hattie Butterworth 10:52

Yeah, and I think this is something we're gonna continue talking about, you know, not not the article necessarily, but the issue of dress code and artists or orchestras that are moving away from that. And obviously, we've spoken to Ellie Consta from her ensemble about that and I think Laura van der Heijden also touched on it when we talked to her but, you know, we want it to become a bigger part of what we do, so if you want to support the campaign, buy a sticker ...link's in the bio. Link's probably on the podcast notes as well.

R

Rebecca Toal 11:28

Yeah, no it definitely will be.

H

Hattie Butterworth 11:34

I just want to say thank you so much for sharing this morning, this morning being the first of December, thank you for sharing about your experience, or the just the clear fact that you are someone that takes antidepressants, as am I, so people don't realise there's been a bit of a campaign going round, which I know can be a bit of an eye roll for some people, because it's like "not another one of these"!

R

Rebecca Toal 12:02

But if it's important...

H

Hattie Butterworth 12:04

But if it's important then ... the question of whether or not to take medication is so down to who you think does and what the look is of the people that do and what the capabilities are of the people that do, so thank you for sharing that Rebecca.

R

Rebecca Toal 12:19

It's my pleasure. The thing is, I have posted about it before, so it doesn't feel that scary until you kind of post it and you go, "Oh, okay". And it's always that moment where you think, "should I have done that?" Like you said before like, is there a danger of oversharing, etc.? But no, I'd be interested in hearing about your experience with medication, if you're comfortable and talking about it? Like when did you start?

H

**Hattie Butterworth 12:48**

Yeah, so I started on a drug called venlafaxine it's called and it's actually an SNRI. If you're interested in the difference between SSRI and SNRI, it's a slightly different one. It does something with noradrenaline, I think which is interesting, and dopamine. So basically, what it means is that it's ... I take it for anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder and intrusive thoughts, so it's very powerful at like, not necessarily like removing the thoughts but removing the kind of dive and spiralling that my mind used to do, I suppose. So it feels like I'm being uplifted by it, definitely. But the one thing I do kind of have from it is it does have quite a lot of side effects. It doesn't tend to be ... because people not many people have heard of it is because it doesn't tend to be prescribed unless you're gonna take it for a long time. My doctor said this, to me, she was like, "sounds like we've been struggling for ages. I feel like you should be on something that you're going to have to be on for a while to feel quite secure and by a while I'm talking about over a few years, more than two years". And I didn't have to be but I was at a state where I really felt like "gosh, like I need something that's definitely going to work, have a shot at working." So yeah, I started it, had very, very bad side effects at the start, but now the side effects are kind of limited to like having really bad dry mouth all the time which is still have a thing I have. I also get very up and down actually I get quite bad fatigue, which I've never been great with the mornings but like especially in some periods of time, I can get very bad fatigue and another side effect, which is very common with my type of antidepressant and might sound like a reason to stop taking it ...sorry if I'm going on too long...

R

**Rebecca Toal 14:54**

No, it's great!

H

**Hattie Butterworth 14:55**

Another side effect of it is increased thoughts around self harm which is something I've only actually had on this medication and I feel like it's not something that people ever talk about. Psychiatric medication having an like a negative mental effect, because I'd never ... I'd had so many low points but I've never used self harm as a way of coping until I'd been on my medication. But it's like, my medication has so many benefits, like I don't have the terrible intrusive thoughts anymore, I don't have this, I don't have this. But I do have this terrible thing that I have to manage every day. And to me, I found ways of managing it and it does feel worth it... worth that because I do know how to deal with those urges and things now, but like it definitely hasn't been easy. Definitely has felt like a big risk taking it and it did when I started taking it was like "shit this is risky, this feels like, am I going to be one of those psycho people forever?" But it's got me to a place where I can deal with all my massive phobias, massive OCD problems. And yeah, I am a massive advocate for it if you feel at a place where you want to try something like that.

R

**Rebecca Toal 16:16**

Yeah, it's interesting, because actually, you do read, you read the side effect leaflets with any sort of medication like this, and the list is so long. I feel like a lot of medication stigma is around this fact of yeah, not necessarily that it's lazy from the doctor's side but that it is, like, lazy from

the person that's taking it, like they're not ... they'd rather just take the medication and not do the work on themselves or something like that. I don't know, for me personally, if I'm okay or if I've weighed up the pros and cons of taking this drug, and I have read all the side effects, I'm still like, "yes, my life is going to be significantly improved by taking this", then it's not me being lazy that's me taking a pretty serious decision, which is going to benefit my life. Yeah, I often find that with the antidepressants, like it's quite a common side effect is that element of increased risk of self harm or suicidal thoughts and this kind of stuff, which is always such a oxymoron, almost. One doctor described it to me as like, it kind of gives you that ability to do things in life a bit more, and I don't know because sometimes, I felt maybe too depressed to go about my daily things or whatever. And actually, having the antidepressant is great for making me feel like I can get out of bed or whatever. But then that also means that you're more likely to get up and harm yourself, for instance, if you're in that particular circumstance, and you're more likely to take action, whether it's negative or positive. But yeah, so how long have you been on it now did you say?

H

Hattie Butterworth 18:02

Nearly 18 months. So it's a start of July 2020, a bit less than that. So what about you? How long has it been for you?

R

Rebecca Toal 18:14

I've been off and on fluoxetine for I'm gonna say like, six years. Yeah, it was interesting because when I went, I was at boarding school, and I went to the doctors and said that I was feeling like this. Oh, no, it would have been maybe, yeah, about six years, maybe. Off and on for maybe closer to 10 years, actually. Yeah. And I went to the doctors, and they prescribed me this and at the time, again, it was like, well, you can either wait for therapy on the NHS, or you can take this drug. I didn't know that was quite, I guess, because I wasn't that old I must have been about 16, 17. I didn't really know any different, I guess. But looking back that's quite shocking that even in the county of Somerset, you know, I wasn't in London at this point, even in Somerset, I would have had to have waited a year minimum for therapy on the NHS, and it felt yeah not like a lazy action on behalf of the doctor but just like the only option that they had. Yeah, which is just like, wow, I mean, I did end up having some counselling at school. But yeah, and actually, yeah, over the past however many years it's been, I've just been like of and on it, and I always get to a point where I'm like, "I'm fine now - I'm just gonna stop taking it." Because of living in London you don't necessarily see the same doctor all the time so you don't have like checkups, like mental health checkups in the same way. So I never really ... like once I was prescribed fluoxetine, again, say there was another, another round of it like, I wouldn't see that doctor again, which is so nuts. People are just being prescribed these things and not being checked up on. However, I do feel that it's sort of essential to my daily life so, I'm not saying that it's a bad thing that I'm still on it, it's just, I would and yeah, I don't not advocate being on it. But I just wish there was more provision for people to be checked up on. And the thing is, I know that if I made an appointment with the doctor, they'd be like, "how you feeling?" With another doctor that you've never met before, then you have to explain everything all over again. And you kind of feel like it's not worth it, because you've only got 10 minutes or something.



H

Hattie Butterworth 20:47

So do you feel like it's something you want to continue taking for a while now?

R

Rebecca Toal 20:53

Yeah, I feel like, especially the past, well, no, up until probably this round of meds, I feel like my mental goal has always been to not be on them. That is definitely part of just the stigma around medication, that it's, you know, it's not good to be on medication, so you must get off them as soon as you can, but every time I've done that, I've ended up having to get back on them. I don't know at what point I would consider making an appointment to ask to stop or whether I even would because I've stopped it so many times in the past and I would know how to like gradient it until I wasn't taking it any more, I guess. But yeah, I don't know when I feel like the time is right but I'm going to assume that the default for now is being on them, rather than the default should be being off them for me.

H

Hattie Butterworth 21:51

Like it's something you have to do in order to stay well, sort of thing.

R

Rebecca Toal 21:54

Yeah, exactly in the same way that some people have to go to pilates to feel like themselves or go and see their grandma or whatever. Like for me, sorry I couldn't think of anything, but yeah, for me, in my life as it is now, the medication is an essential part of my self care. Yeah. And I'm okay ... and actually campaigns like the hashtag post your pill, and all this kind of stuff really help because you often take your medication at home. You don't see people taking their medication so you just have no idea who is on things... not that it should matter, but it does...you can feel awfully alone in it.

H

Hattie Butterworth 22:38

And I felt like that when I read about you taking yours because I actually didn't know any musicians that were on it, believe it or not. I mean, I don't know when this was maybe in February or something you first posted about it. Or maybe...?

R

Rebecca Toal 22:51

Maybe.

H

Hattie Butterworth 22:52

And I remember thinking "wow, like, she got to be one of the first that I actually know about"!

R Rebecca Toal 22:57

Like we've talked about this so many times before, but the image of like the tortured artist and all these, like artists having the ups and downs and depression and all this kind of stuff, like people are, you know, even people that listen to classic FM are willing to, you know, accept this image as "like oh yeah, no Liszt or whoever, you know, was really depressed and then ... but that's what made them a true artist". And it's like, but yet, we're not allowed to take medication to help with that. Is that not okay?

H Hattie Butterworth 23:27

We're supposed to compose music to cope with that.

R Rebecca Toal 23:30

Oh, yes, sorry. I forgot.

H Hattie Butterworth 23:31

Where's your like... Mystical Nocturne.

R Rebecca Toal 23:36

Yeah, where's my Symphony, Hattie?

H Hattie Butterworth 23:38

Rebecca Toal in B flat.

R Rebecca Toal 23:40

I don't think people usually call their work just their name, and then in a key.

H Hattie Butterworth 23:47

That's because in church music, you call like, like a mass setting...This is really really going beyond... but you you call it like Stamford in C or like...

R Rebecca Toal 24:00

That's true.

H Hattie Butterworth 24:01  
Howell's in G. And it's Toal in...

R Rebecca Toal 24:03  
Well, I think if I had a masterpiece, from my mental illness, it probably wouldn't be church music.

H Hattie Butterworth 24:15  
It's gonna be ... it's gonna be rap. It's gonna be...

R Rebecca Toal 24:23  
You recently went to the opera house shop? Gift shop?

H Hattie Butterworth 24:28  
I'll tell story, if you want?

R Rebecca Toal 24:30  
Go for it, baby.

H Hattie Butterworth 24:31  
So on my festive week, on the Friday of the festive week, I went shopping with my piano trio shout out, Sophie and Songeun. We went to literally everywhere. We started in Dishoom in Covent Garden.

R Rebecca Toal 24:48  
Ah, delish.

H Hattie Butterworth 24:49  
It was so nice. And then we went to MUJI, we went to White Company, blah blah blah, then Songeun was like "let's go see the Christmas lights", so was like, "I need a wee. Can I go to the opera house for a wee please?" And she was like, "Yeah, okay", so we all went to the Opera

House and then they decided they were gagging for a cup of tea. So that's not really relevant. We had a cup of tea. It was very expensive.

R Rebecca Toal 25:10  
It is relevant.

H Hattie Butterworth 25:13  
Had some nice vegan pear cake.

R Rebecca Toal 25:15  
Oh, wait, pancake or pear cake?

H Hattie Butterworth 25:18  
Pear cake. Pear and almond or something? Yeah, it was nice. They got a lovely new like cafe. It's probably not new.

R Rebecca Toal 25:24  
Oh yeah?

H Hattie Butterworth 25:25  
It's new to me. And then they also have this beautiful shop, which is like down a ramp from the cafe, and literally walked into the shop, and the first thing I saw was this postcard, and also, I think it has a couple of prints of it in the opera house shop as well. And a couple of other bits of merchandise with it. And there's this, basically this quote from the ballerina, Margot Fonteyn, who lived from 1919 to 1991 for a bit of context, and the quotes is...

R Rebecca Toal 25:55  
Did you Google that?

H Hattie Butterworth 25:57  
It's literally at the bottom of the quote.



R Rebecca Toal 25:59  
Ah right. I just didn't know you were such a fan.

H Hattie Butterworth 26:02  
Yeah, knowledge. Margot Fonteyn. Anyway, the quote says, "ballet is more than a profession. It's a way of life." And instead of just moving on...

R Rebecca Toal 26:15  
Discuss!

H Hattie Butterworth 26:16  
And I was like, "I'm gonna send this to Rebecca Toal!"

R Rebecca Toal 26:20  
Not just any Rebecca!

H Hattie Butterworth 26:21  
I know she's gonna have something to say. So when I sent that to you, and you read it, what was your first sort of reaction to that?

R Rebecca Toal 26:30  
I can't remember what ... I feel like I put it much more succinctly in my text than what I'm about to say. I think I said a positive and a negative. I think I tried to go for like a feedback sandwich but with only one positive.

H Hattie Butterworth 26:45  
Do you want me to read it out?

R Rebecca Toal 26:46  
Oh, yeah, go and then.

H Hattie Butterworth 26:48

H Hattie Butterworth 20:40

This is Rebecca's reply to the photo: "whilst I agree that professions in the arts can alter the way you see the world and can feel philosophically all consuming, I think that calling it a way of life encourages a belief that one has to sacrifice aspects of life such as wellbeing, relationships and other activities outside of that profession. A way of life harkens to religious cult ideology, which again, encompasses a life of complete obsession and imbalance. These are my thoughts. What about you?"

R Rebecca Toal 27:17

It's almost as though I, it's as if I knew it was going to be read out on a podcast. I never text like that. That's so intense. I'm so sorry.

H Hattie Butterworth 27:24

It's brilliant. I was like here for it, I was "pow pow!" Well, I don't know if I'm gonna read out what I said. I'm just reminding myself what I said. Yeah, I suppose I made the ... because it says ballet, first of all, it says ...I'll read it again. "Ballet is more than a profession, it's a way of life." I was kind of thinking: ah, so if you were struggling with being a bit different, you know, say you were as a ballerina slightly bigger, very talented, but slightly bigger than everyone else, you might think, 'well, if this is meant to be a way of life, surely I'm meant to sacrifice everything in my life for this art.' You know, surely that must mean then Margot Fonteyn saying it, I can't have other interests, I can't have a well-rounded life, I can't advocate for my mental wellbeing, as you say, because I have to sacrifice everything for this. It's my life. It's my whole way of life. I kind of liked it when I was younger, but I always remember watching on BBC young musician, they do those little documentaries, and their favourite fucking thing for people to say was, "I have to sacrifice so much for music. I have, you know, my friends go out on the weekend and I just have to stay in practice, because I'm so obsessed with playing the trumpet, or whatever." Or, you know, "when I go shopping, I go to the music shop and look at scores because I don't want to do normal shopping."

R Rebecca Toal 28:47

Yeah, and I, you know, I completely advocate being different, but it definitely it puts this pressure from the offset, it's like, well, you're only a good musician then and if you practice all the time, or you don't socialise, or you don't do all these things, especially on such a platform, such as the BBC, where even non-musicians occasionally tune in to young musician, or people that are younger tune in to sort of get inspiration, and that's the message they're hearing is that they have to sacrifice things in order to be successful.

H Hattie Butterworth 29:26

They love to ask on those little documentaries, like, "how many hours a day..." I can just tell like, "how many hours a day do you practice?" Like, "how much do you have to sacrifice for this?" They kind of love that. It's like a kind of documentary thing is like, let's make this look

super dramatic. Let's make it so these kids are like, ultra prodigies, because that's all they do and like they have no life outside of this.

R

Rebecca Toal 29:47

I think it felt particularly relevant because it was .. was it our injury week? Yeah, that you were ... you must have been ... because you were in London. And yeah, it felt particularly relevant because it's like, well, what happens if say you're a ballerina and you get injured? And then suddenly your life is...your whole life is gone? Or it kind of promotes this idea of, well, once you're in it, you can't get out of it. And then you know, something happens that's beyond your control, then it's not just your identity that's gone, it's your whole life. There's no point in ... I don't know, going on because you can't do ballet, you can't do music anymore. There's a sign in one of the schools I teach that. And it's a quote, I don't know, whether it's a quote from someone or just the quote that they made up, but it was like, "All the world's a stage. But all the players have proper jobs now." And then under it it said "Is there a place for the arts in modern society?" and I couldn't tell if it was like advocating for the arts as, quote unquote, proper jobs. But it seemed really backhanded. And actually, that, yeah, it was just gonna just encourage this, this image of proper jobs as being separate from like, jobs being proper or jobs being not proper in this kind of, and it was just really weird, and you know, I see it every week, and I just want to tear it down.

H

Hattie Butterworth 31:13

That's so weird. Like I was, I was thinking, "Am I stupid? I don't quite understand what that means."

R

Rebecca Toal 31:18

Yeah, I don't understand it, either.

H

Hattie Butterworth 31:21

That's so weird.

R

Rebecca Toal 31:23

And I looks like it's been put up by the drama department or something. And it's like, you've shot yourself in the foot there.

H

Hattie Butterworth 31:29

You're not gotta get any jobs, guys.

R

Rebecca Toal 31:34

Yeah, no proper jobs here.

H

Hattie Butterworth 31:38

But how do you feel like with your life as a trumpeter? And especially during the auditions you're doing at the moment, does it feel like a way, way of life? You know, are you bordering on that? Is it tempting for it to be a way of life?

R

Rebecca Toal 31:59

Not really, I think anybody that I've come across that trumpet, or, you know, music, or whatever, is the only thing in their life that they hold above everything else, or you know, it's a way of life for them, they don't seem that happy. And I guess I've been lucky to come across a couple of those people but also, I don't think I ever had a propensity to, to, yeah, be on the verge of it becoming a way of life for me, I think I always, I mean, it's not necessarily a good thing but I always spread myself too thin over too many things to be too obsessive in one area. And yeah, that's been not great, in lots of circumstances but now, like, yeah, I'm preparing for these auditions at the moment, but I'm also teaching three days a week, and, you know, doing my counselling course, and all this kind of stuff, and as much, you know, even at a time like this, where I kind of want to make it a way of life, you know, to an extent I can't really because there are other things that I'm committed to every week. If I had every single day in the week free, and I just spent everyday practising or playing or just getting into a trumpet, sort of, hole, I think that'd be pretty bad my mental health and I think it'd be very easy to shut myself away from the world and not do things to look after myself. Yeah, I don't know. What do you feel about cello as a way of life? Get that on a t shirt for you?

H

Hattie Butterworth 33:45

Oh my that's the thing isn't it? There's all these T shirts and I think I might have even...

R

Rebecca Toal 33:50

You love them though.

H

Hattie Butterworth 33:52

I feel like I might even have had a sticker and I was about 14 that said something like "cello is my life, cello is life" "eat sleep cello repeat" or something like that.

R

Rebecca Toal 34:00

Yeah, Stuart has a t shirt with "eat sleep tuba repeat" on it.



H

Hattie Butterworth 34:04

To be fair he's a legend. He can wear like the pride. It depends how much of your life eating and sleeping takes up because I mean that's true it's not leave much room for cello in my life, so it's fine. I feel like I'm unlike you maybe, so my teenage years were very obsessive cello life. I feel like you haven't known... a lot of my old friends, going back a long way friends, know me like...

R

Rebecca Toal 34:40

Former friends.

H

Hattie Butterworth 34:40

Former friends, yeah, no...know me as like the obsessive little cello girl who was so annoying. So nerdy. So embarrassing. I had weird obsessions with like, weird cello things. I don't know. It was partly because I came to it late and I just really liked it and it was one of those things that I felt really saved me from like my mental illness because it was at that point I wasn't diagnosed, I didn't know what it was, I didn't know how to deal with it, so the way I dealt with it, was like to put all my purpose, my whole life into the cello. And then when I had to, like, you know, lots of break downs and shit, along with that, the cello kind of broke down, as well and because I couldn't practice it anymore, but that was just, I just felt awful. I had that injury, and then I had all this mental health stuff. And it was like, I know what my life's purpose is, but I can't do it at the moment because I am so ill, you know. So, as soon as I kind of recovered from my mental illness, that was the moment that I could really heal, the like, do I really want cello to be my whole life? Like, is that really healthy? So I really did, until maybe third year, that's what it felt like, it was like, you know, we're ill, and then we're better and then we practice five hours a day, and then we're ill again with then we're better and ...

R

Rebecca Toal 36:14

And I wonder why I'm ill.

H

Hattie Butterworth 36:17

And it was like, and then we're better, and then we do this competition, and then we fail, and then we feel shit, and then we hate ourselves, and then we get ill again.

R

Rebecca Toal 36:25

I wonder, I wonder whether your pattern I mean, it's probably a no brainer but it sounds to me like your OCD plays a big part in how you view the cello. And for me, I mostly have depression, and my depression mostly manifests itself in avoiding things or like, hiding away, and actually

avoiding the trumpet or avoiding things I've got to do. And yeah, it just seems interesting that naturally, we follow the patterns of our mental health as well in relation to our instruments.

H

Hattie Butterworth 37:01

That's really ... that is so true. I don't know, do you ever find it's always a ... it's always a thing and I'm gonna sound maybe a bit nerdy now but going back to Margot Fonteyn, I feel like the making it a way of life kind of takes away from like the beauty it can really have, I don't know. Because quite often, it will be the last thing I want to do. It's not my way of life that day at all ... my way of life is wanting to get through the day, and I pick up my cello and it's like, "oh, wow, oh, my gosh, I feel like renewed from that". That's really awesome that I know that I can find this renewal sense from it now. And I think if it's the only thing you do, it's like, how would you ever feel renewed by it? You know, if it was your way of life? How could it ever have an impact? Like it has for me at the moment anyway, where it's like ... I'm not making much sense. I'm trying to I'm trying to...

R

Rebecca Toal 38:04

No, no I do understand.

H

Hattie Butterworth 38:06

Okay.

R

Rebecca Toal 38:07

I think... I don't know, it's kind of contradictory but it's calling it a way of life for me, sounds like it omits other people from the equation even though 'way of life,' like in my text, I said, you know, that kind of harkens to cult or religious ideology, and which is, you know, by its very nature kind of communal. I don't know, with the way of life the kind of self-sacrificing artist, it makes it very isolated. And so much of the joy that I've found from playing trumpet has been from the communal aspect, or the ensemble aspect, or the teaching aspect and this kind of stuff, and actually, often the most difficult times have been when I've just been practising by myself, or preparing for a solo thing. Basically just not a big fan of this postcard.

H

Hattie Butterworth 39:04

No. And it's just the thing of like, who are they wanting to buy this? And I'm imagining, you know, eight year old girl who's come to the opera house for the first time with her mom from her little ballet school in County Durham ... don't know why I'm going all Billy Elliot, all of a sudden.

R

Rebecca Toal 39:18

Lovely.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 39:21

I'm picking up and I'm thinking, that's what I want. I wanna be like Margot Fonteyn. I want it to be my whole life, and if I have other interests, then that can't be in line with it. You know?

**R** Rebecca Toal 39:30

It also just doesn't leave any room for like I said about injury but it doesn't leave any room for failure.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 39:36

Ooh, yes.

**R** Rebecca Toal 39:44

And I'm going to interrupt this broadcast with our first ever advert. Aren't you guys lucky? We're now officially pro. This week we wanted to give a shout out to one of our favourite podcasts: Where's my freaking dressing room? with Alex Simpson and Helen Daniels. Aside from being absolutely hilarious and me wanting to be friends with them, and also according to H. Butterworth their episodes, quote unquote, actually slap, they tackle difficult topics like rejection, injury and illness, crises of confidence, and recently I listened to "managing your Christmas diary", which obviously hit home hard. They discuss things like saying no to work, which is, as we all know, really, really hard, and you never know what to do, and it always feels like a massive deal. They also discuss taking rest days, and the peaks and troughs of the Christmas season and the old empty January dilemma. And if it isn't enough that they're great and clever and interesting and funny, they also sung me some Christmas carols in between segments, or maybe that was for everyone, I don't know. Please, please, please go and take a listen to them (if you have time in between listening to us). You can find them on Acast, Spotify and Apple podcasts, and you can find out more about them via their website. [wheremyfreakingdressingroom.com](http://wheremyfreakingdressingroom.com) or through Facebook and Instagram @dressingroompod and Twitter is @dressingroompo1. We think they're great. We think you'll think they're great. We'll think you'll think that we'll think they're great. Basically, they're great. So yeah, please go and listen to them. So yeah, that's all for the advert section. Let's go find Hattie. When you were in your obsessive ... and you said you know you'd do some cello competitions and stuff and you'd maybe not get so far in them as you wanted, how did that feel like in relation to cello being your whole life?

**H** Hattie Butterworth 41:45

Awful. Um, I mean, the kind of biggest ones that I have talked about before, I think I talked about them on the episode with Jasmine but I'll just never forget being rejected from NYO, like, that's the one that sticks with me because I didn't get over it for weeks like and I mean, crying

a lot like a lot of crying and a lot of like, sad, sad Faure on my own. But it was also this kind of artist thing where I was like, "Ah, this happens to great people too. I just have to work even harder." You know, I often those ... the kind of depth I was in this obsession was like, the downfall only means you should work harder and it's only going to push me further and further and further towards another breakdown.

R

Rebecca Toal 42:38

That's a quote for a tote bag.

H

Hattie Butterworth 42:40

"It's gonna push me towards another breakdown."

R

Rebecca Toal 42:45

But like, what would the few days ... so you said lots of Faure by yourself? What would the few days after like a quote unquote failure look like for you at that time?

H

Hattie Butterworth 42:56

Just denial, denial, denial, denial. This sounds really strange, but I would quite often like lie to people. Not that I hadn't got in but like that I hadn't heard you know, and that I ... I hadn't heard, that I didn't really care or that I didn't... I'd refused the place or something like that, you know, which sounds ... it's just really upsetting to look back on that I actually lied but when something is that much your identity, you can't come to terms with the fact that it's like your dream isn't the reality and I remember with me getting into nyo like, I was peak obsessed at that point. And to be fair, I did actually have a teacher that was telling me "you're going to get in, you're going to get..." like she really bigged it up. And I'd worked so hard, like I've never worked on excerpts harder. I can, still play that Elgar 1 excerpt. That was hard. No, but like I'd really ... it was a massive part of of my life like, preparing for that audition and the thought of going on tour with them and all this and ...

R

Rebecca Toal 44:00

But it is that thing that like at that age when you're auditioning for NYO or NCO or any of those sort of youth things, at that point, you probably haven't done many music auditions, and that will be one of your first experiences of failure, yet so many of your music friends have also auditioned for the same thing, like even people that aren't ...I don't know ... it would be doing like an orchestral audition now, but everybody auditioning for all the places, on all the instruments, and all the people your age group, and quite a few people, you know, getting in, like, that's awful and they re-audition every year. It's not like an orchestral job, which comes up once in a blue moon, it's like every year.

H Hattie Butterworth 44:48  
It's so savage isn't it? It's so savage.

R Rebecca Toal 44:50  
Yeah. And you're expected to just keep applying. And keep like...

H Hattie Butterworth 44:54  
Well, that's the thing ... I was so traumatised by the failure that I didn't reapply, because I just didn't want get told that again. That's how devastating it was, you know, and actually going for orchestral auditions really freaked me out because of that as well. Yes, but I meant conservative.

R Rebecca Toal 45:12  
I think I auditioned for NYO maybe three times, four times? And I got in on the last one. For a year. I'd already come to like, dread the audition and I would only do it because all my friends ... and like they had a minibus from school, you know, going to the audition centre, because so many people would like audition. But yeah, I just did it because everyone else was doing it. But if I hadn't been in a music school, I don't think I would have kept going.

H Hattie Butterworth 45:40  
Yeahhh.

R Rebecca Toal 45:42  
It's just like a routine audition rather than a choice. It's five to six!

H Hattie Butterworth 45:48  
Is it? I actually do have a theory student at six. Rebecca's making facial expressions.

R Rebecca Toal 45:58  
You love teaching?

H Hattie Butterworth 45:59  
I do. I do. Um, I'm pointing out circles of fifths in some Queen songs, which is quite fun.

R Rebecca Toal 46:07  
Oh yeah? That's pretty cool.

H Hattie Butterworth 46:09  
No, it's pretty interesting! Did you know Killer Queen has some circle of fifths in there?

R Rebecca Toal 46:14  
No, I didn't. Now I do.

H Hattie Butterworth 46:16  
Pretty much Baroque. Is there anything you want to say to wrap up? Oh, yeah, sorry. Asking and then butting in. Thank you for everyone that has been interested in writing a blog. I think I've been I've got back to everyone now, but it's not too late. If you do want to write a blog, send me a message with a bit of a pitch just a few sentences about what you'd like to write about and then I'll send you a document that Rebecca put together.

R Rebecca Toal 46:43  
Nice.

H Hattie Butterworth 46:44  
But yeah. That's Barley, coughing. Sit down you.

R Rebecca Toal 46:50  
Oh babyyyyy.

H Hattie Butterworth 46:51  
She's been sitting so patiently.

R Rebecca Toal 46:53  
So quiet.

H Hattie Butterworth 46:55  
She's so quiet. She's so old.

R Rebecca Toal 46:56  
Been nice chatting, even though it's like an interview-based podcast, it's nice to just chat.

H Hattie Butterworth 47:01  
I feel like we do a lot of discussion alone and also over text and also through Instagram separately, I suppose, so it's really nice to like ...

R Rebecca Toal 47:12  
To get it on record.

H Hattie Butterworth 47:13  
It almost feels like a weekly round up.

R Rebecca Toal 47:16  
Yeah, we show weekly round up.

H Hattie Butterworth 47:17  
Weekly news... News round up. All the beefy news.

R Rebecca Toal 47:20  
This week on our news.

H Hattie Butterworth 47:23  
Rebecca you need to tell us about your trip to France

R Rebecca Toal 47:26

Bonjour.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 47:27  
I hope you get into the Paris Opera.

**R** Rebecca Toal 47:32  
It's yeah ... just so weird doing an audition abroad like I have no idea, who knows who or like, what sound they're looking for or if there are specific teachers whose students are going for it, like all the politics I would usually be aware of in a British audition. It's kind of scary not knowing at all, but it's also kind of liberating. So yeah, I'm looking forward to eating some baguettes.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 47:53  
You should audio vlog!

**R** Rebecca Toal 47:56  
Audio vlog!

**H** Hattie Butterworth 47:56  
You should, you'd be like "I'm on the Eurostar... currently feeling ill" or whatever.

**R** Rebecca Toal 48:03  
Why am feeling ill?

**H** Hattie Butterworth 48:04  
I dunno! Nervous. I feel ill when I'm nervous.

**R** Rebecca Toal 48:07  
Oh, I see.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 48:15  
You've been listening to Rebecca and Hattie of Things Musicians Don't Talk About. Thank you



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