

# Rosie Bennet part 1

📅 Tue, 5/3 5:30PM ⌚ 40:59

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, realised, life, feel, thought, started, guess, feeling, musicians, study, teacher, awful, god, told, rosie, ego, guitar, kid, school, moment

## SPEAKERS

Rosie Bennet, Rebecca Toal, Hattie Butterworth

---

- H

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

**Rebecca Toal** 00:08  
and me, Rebecca Toal.
- H

**Hattie Butterworth** 00:10  
Within our vibrant musical world, it can often feel that the struggles and humanity of musicians is lost and restricted.
- R

**Rebecca Toal** 00:18  
Having both suffered in silence with mental, physical and emotional issues, we're now looking for a way to voice musician stories, discuss them further and to connect with the many others who suffer like we have.
- H

**Hattie Butterworth** 00:28  
No topic will be out of bounds as we're committed to raising awareness for all varieties of struggle.
- R

**Rebecca Toal** 00:34  
So join me Hattie, and guests as we attempt to bring an end to stigma by uncovering the things musicians don't talk about Hi everyone it's me Rebecca I'm so today we have our interview

musicians don't talk about. Oh, everyone, it's me, Rebecca. Oh so today, we have our interview with the amazing Rosie Bennet. Guitarist, social media star, just musician extraordinaire. We talk about her journey, the highs and the lows and it just seemed appropriate to release it during Mental Health Awareness Week, just because there are themes of mental health and wellness and illness within Rosie's story. I will also add as a little trigger warning that we do talk about some eating disorders and kind of the reality of that. No specifics in terms of calories or numbers, but just if you're in a place where this might not suit you at the moment, I just thought we should let you know. As usual, we were just so grateful to Rosie for her honesty and openness, and just the generosity with which she, kind of, you know, she gave us her time, her vulnerability and everything that she said we were just glued to our seats for the entire interview. But yeah, we're going to do this as a two parter because we didn't want to crop anything out of Rosie's episode. So part two will be released probably next week, we'll let you know. But for now, here is part one of Rosie Bennet's story. We have with us today Rosie Bennet, who is an amazing guitarist and, well I guess Instagram personality.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 02:37  
Sensation!

**R** Rebecca Toal 02:37  
Yeah, sensation! How are you doing today, Rosie?

**R** Rosie Bennet 02:41  
I'm very well, thank you. How are you both?

**R** Rebecca Toal 02:44  
How are you, Hattie?

**H** Hattie Butterworth 02:45  
I'm okay. Yep. Very, very excited about this interview. I was kind of like, madly researching things in my work this afternoon.

**R** Rebecca Toal 02:54  
Don't tell anyone.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 02:55  
I'm not telling anyone from work. No bloody hell. No, no, it was it's really ... It's always such a privilege to like interview anyone but especially to read so much of the work you've already

privilege to like, interview anyone, but especially to read so much of the work you've already done through your blog and through your podcast too, and through your Instagram as well, you know, through captions you've written, to just be honest about you know, "sometimes I have moments where I want to give up" or "sometimes I have moments where it's all a bit shit." So it feels like a real privilege to be able to talk openly with you and to know that you want to be just as open as we do, so thank you.

R

Rosie Bennet 03:31

Well, I'm very grateful for what you guys are doing. I know I said that before. I'll keep saying it.

H

Hattie Butterworth 03:36

Aw thank you!

R

Rosie Bennet 03:37

It's really amazing to meet other people who are, I don't know, it even sounds funny talking about it like it's a movement of some kind. But it does take a lot, especially from this world, to talk about almost anything openly and honestly, in the sort of normal and yeah, habitual rubbish that it can really be sometimes. So I'm really excited about what you guys have done already. And I'm really excited about what you guys are going to do in the future.

H

Hattie Butterworth 04:07

Aw.

R

Rebecca Toal 04:07

Thank you. That really means a lot.

H

Hattie Butterworth 04:09

Yeah. I does.

R

Rosie Bennet 04:09

And how you're going to do it as well. That's important too.

R

Rebecca Toal 04:11

Yeah we don't know about that.

R

Rosie Bennet 04:12

You do it very well.

H

Hattie Butterworth 04:14

It freaks us out but excites us at the same time. The thought of the future.

R


Rebecca Toal 04:17

We have no foresight. To start off with do you want to just give just a little bit of background about who you are, where you come from... We know that you started off going to Yehudi Menuhin, but do you just want to, in your own words, tell us a little bit about your kind of musical backstory?

R

Rosie Bennet 04:35

Sure. So I was born in... no. Yeah, I was... I grew up in England. I grew up very close to the Menuhin School, actually. And I started playing guitar as just a coincidence. There was no real beautiful story. I didn't hear a piece of guitar music or have a role model and I think "yes, I want to do that." I just fell into it somehow or other and I met a teacher who happened to be teaching at the Menuhin School as well. I auditioned. The first time I auditioned, I didn't get in. I auditioned again and then I got in, and I started this amazing, incredible journey of being a musician, and a classical musician and everything that that means. A complete immersion into all of those amazing opinions and things that you should know, at such a young age as well. And then, we will get into that I'm sure later, I'm sure you know a lot of people have been to Menuhin School. I then, I left, I went to study in The Hague Conservatory with Zoran Dukic, which was wonderful, but which I wasn't really ready for. And I then went study in Tilburg which is in the south of the Netherlands, where I felt very lonely. And I then decided that was also not for me. I had a sort of pivotal moment where I thought that I might stop playing guitar, I decided to give it just one last chance. And in that last chance, I decided to travel to America, I went to study with a Cuban guitarist called Rene Izquierdo in Milwaukee of all places, which is kind of Bible Belt middle of America. Whenever I say that I went to study there, people always ask me "why?!". And then I ended up settling down in Belgium, in Leuven. I came here to study with a teacher and then I finished studying. And in the last five years, I guess ... so much time has passed since COVID now that it seems crazy saying five years, but okay, the last five years, I spent my time trying to figure out who I am. I spent so much time in my life trying to perfect who I am, and now it's just been a big period of trying to figure out what the hell I'm doing and how I want to do it, what I want to talk about, which yeah, has manifested itself in writing a little bit, in podcasting a little bit, trying to have more conversations with people like yourselves, who just kind of have the feeling that they want to do something about the fact that none of us seem to be talking about anything. Or at least nothing honestly. So I love what you guys do. This has brought me to this conversation now, this Monday evening.



R

Rebecca Toal 07:18

It's really ... I really love that you say that you ... there wasn't like, going right back to the beginning, that there wasn't like a pivotal moment where you were like, "I love the guitar", because I feel like so many people ... I've had it so many times when people have been like, "why did you start playing the trumpet?" And I've been like, "I don't know," like, "didn't even particularly like it at the beginning", you know?

H

Hattie Butterworth 07:37

Yeah.

R

Rebecca Toal 07:38

But whereas everybody else has been like, "I went to see this concert when I was two and there was this flautist..."

H

Hattie Butterworth 07:44

Yeah.

R

Rebecca Toal 07:45

"...and I was in love." And like, it's really refreshing to hear somebody be like, "yeah, just kind of happened." So why...

R

Rosie Bennet 07:52

I think it happens for a lot of people like that.

R

Rebecca Toal 07:55

Yeah! So why did you end up going to Menuhin. Like, was it your choice? Or did you feel that it was your parents or what what happened there?

R

Rosie Bennet 08:05

It's a very weird, I can't really, I can't really transpose myself back to the time exactly. But I do remember the feeling when I auditioned and I been, because you get to stay for three days and sort of experience school, and I think it was just everything my dreams were made of. I grew up reading Mallory Towers and stuff, like I just wanted to be in boarding school, I wanted to have these amazing, you know, sort of adventures, I guess. And it really was just a gut feeling from being young, I just thought "I have to be there. I want to be there. "Which broke my parents'

hear. You know, my parents really didn't push me into this. I'm an only... Well, I have a half brother, but he's much older than me so I was an only child. But I just kind of felt that it was my calling. It's a really strange way to talk about it. But when you're a kid, you can dramatise these things and I really felt that that was where I had to be. To do what I didn't know, or I didn't even have any notion of what you could do playing guitar. I just knew there was this thing that people kept telling me I was good at. I liked attention as a kid so I thought I should pursue this. I mean, people keep telling me, "You're good at this." And that's really nice. And so yeah, I just I suppose it was a decision that was made between my parents probably thinking that I was super gifted, people telling my parents that I was really ... I had this talent, and then me just kind of thinking, "why not?" I want this adult experience. And I guess that's kind of where it came from.

H

Hattie Butterworth 09:43

Yeah, it's really, it's really interesting and in terms of your life now, I mean, with playing guitar, obviously, you have a wonderful kind of varied life online, which is beautiful to read, fascinating to see but kind of away from from being online and in recovery from COVID, are you currently performing a lot or are you teaching? You know, what, what's the sort of setup of your life in terms of work in Belgium right now in person?

R

Rosie Bennet 10:10

Good question. Good question. It kind of feels like I'm doing everything and nothing all at the same time. It feels really gratuitous to say it or especially to share it on any kind of platform but COVID was a really amazing time for me. I loved not having to do concerts. I loved the idea that nobody was doing concerts, that it wasn't just me thinking, "Oh, no, I don't want to do this." But no one was getting ahead, there was something so peaceful and just glorious about that time. And it's taken me a lot to come back to what real life is, because there was a little hint of it last year, in about, I don't know, let's say June, July, it kind of ...things started to creep back. It was like "Oh, it's all done." And then we came back into the COVID period. And I didn't really do a lot during COVID in terms of guitar. Some people chose that time to, you know, they took that time to really improve their technique or develop a new repertoire. Oh, my God, those people are so ... they're such giants, you know, how can you... like what a devilish wonderful opportunity to just sit in your bedroom for a month and watch Netflix. You know, how can these people go and do this stuff. I just can't even imagine. And I just took that time to reflect. And then that reflection became a sort of habit. When you've been doing something so long, I guess you guys can relate to that, when you've doing something so long, it takes a long breathing time to have any kind of reflection over something. So I ended up basically taking the last two years off of playing seriously, which has really saved my relationship with the instrument because I think if things had just been going as they were pre-COVID, I probably would have well, I don't think I ever would have ended up giving up just because I just ... that's too much for me to really comprehend. Not because I love it too much but just because what is my life really if I'm not... you know, it's a very strange feeling. But I think I probably would have ended up hating my life. So there's, there's that. And now for work. What am I doing? Well, let me think. So, for work, I guess the podcast does come into it. Let's start with that. I've been lucky to have sponsors right from the beginning. So, so that kind of became work, although I'm cautious of ... more and more cautious of making things that I like into work. But let's say that I earn money from doing the podcast, from writing, which used to be a lot more freeform. I used

to be so angry when I first started writing that piece for ToneBase every week. I had so many things to talk about. And now I have been sort of tamed to writing things about, you know, the pinkie and stuff like that. So I do that. I do a little bit of reviewing, which makes me feel like sort of half an evil person, it's funny to be on the other side. And then I teach a little bit but I have to, I will be open and honest about this with you: I don't really like teaching. It's not because I just because I don't enjoy it but it's because there's so much pressure coming from all of the teachers that I've studied with, the different kinds of issues that I've worked through since then. I've had examples of great teachers, I've had examples of not so great teachers. And essentially, when I have a child in front of me with their gappy teeth and their cute smile, and they stand there with a guitar, I just think, "Oh my God, I don't want to ruin your life." So it's too... it's just so much pressure. I like teaching people who have a lot of questions, and I try to answer them, but I don't teach a lot. And it's for that it's not, you know, it's not because I don't like the lifestyle or that I don't like it. I mean, I think it's the most admirable business really, in our industry. But I just, I'm just not ready to kind of go back to that space. Because I feel that there's so much responsibility that perhaps other people in my past didn't quite take as seriously as would have been useful. That would have been great. And then performing I guess it's coming back, but it's very tricky. I don't really know who I am right now, in terms of what I'm doing as a musician. I'm in this sort of crossroads. So I'm playing a few concerts that I know I'm gonna have to play repertoire that I don't really like, things that I'm not really convinced by and feel like a heinous human. But hopefully, at some point in the near future, I'll have worked through all this stuff. It's actually, it's positive things, but it's just, I just kind of wish, again a gratuitous thought, but I wish that we would just have one more three month lockdown, then I'd be great. This is it.

H

Hattie Butterworth 15:05

I get you. I do. really get you. I mean, so already so much of what you said has really resonated, and I'm sure...

R

Rebecca Toal 15:11

So much.

H

Hattie Butterworth 15:12

...you feel the same, I mean, being honest about how you feel with teaching...that's the reason I don't teach anymore. And I mean, I had another ... something to say and ask, but I've forgotten it, so I'll hand over to you.

R

Rebecca Toal 15:25

I was gonna say, because you, you just said it felt like a crossroads and I also feel like it at the moment, I'm not quite sure who I musically am. But do you feel like there's something that needs to be done about that? Or that you're just going to keep on going and it will just iron itself out? Like, do you feel the need to like do something really drastic to find yourself?

R

Rosie Bennet 15:50

I suppose, iron itself out is a funny phrase. I guess what it feels like a little bit more to me is that I feel like I've kind of outgrown the soil that I used to be in. And I feel like a seed has been planted, but it's just, I'm like waiting with my watering can for the day that it's going to come actually out of the ground. Maybe that's the, that's the feeling right now. So I know it can only bring good things in general, when everything in your life falls apart, or you have the feeling of "I have absolutely no idea what I'm doing", you're actually at the best place because you are at the first step. And in that first step, you can take whatever direction you want. I guess we've all been on, you know, in the feeling that we're taking steps down a path that we know is not right. For instance, these concerts I'm going to do, that's that. I just need to reach this dead end there and just close it off, cordon it off and be done with it. But I'm excited, I mean, it's, it's kind of double, you know, because it's really hard on a daily basis, when you want to sit down and just practise something and you think, "Yeah, I'm just gonna, I just want to sink my teeth into something," there's nothing to sink your teeth into, because you just kind of don't know what it is that you're looking for. And you kind of don't want to force it. And I'm sort of listening to stuff and trying to read stuff. And I guess one thing that has helped me because otherwise this is gonna sound really bleak, one thing that has helped me is trying to use all of the things that make me feel any kind of way. And kind of use that as a catalyst or something else, because I used to think that you just had to find the thing you loved. And then I would get really panicky like, "Oh my God, I don't really love any of this stuff." It could ... it's kind of ... with a lot of classical music, I always felt especially listening, it was a bit 'take it or leave it.' If it didn't exist, I probably wouldn't care. I don't know, you know, it was really difficult to find my own feelings about that stuff. But these days, I just kind of, I tried to, especially because Instagram, you know, I know we're gonna get round to this - I'm sorry I'm talking a lot. But Instagram is really a great place for that and a lot of social media as well, because you see so many things that, in inverted commas 'trigger' you in a certain kind of way. For instance, the other day, I saw something that said ... it was a it was a just a little post, somebody I love who has a festival in the Netherlands and it was a post where they were announcing the prize winners. And the first prize was not awarded. And then I was like, save that post, it makes you feel a certain way. Why would you not award a first...? Like what does that even mean? Does it mean.. you just ... what?! So I've been trying to find those things and kind of save them into a little folder on my Instagram, or just take note of interesting conversations or things I've read or just feelings that I've thought, even in wacky, weird moments, and trying to think about how those things make me feel as this new emerging person, that doesn't sound too strange. That had nothing to do with your question.

R

Rebecca Toal 19:11

No, no. It's totally... it's exactly to do with the question. It's perfect.

H

Hattie Butterworth 19:15

Yeah, I really get the impression that it's like, and correct me if I'm wrong, but it feels like you have a sort of acceptance of of a sort of messy time in your life. It's like it's a sort of, I suppose, like that whole cliché of a beautiful mess, maybe. But I mean, was there a time where you you



didn't have this sort of faith of, of feeling all sorts of different emotions and and accepting this very varied colour of your life? You know, have you had times where you really, you felt very, very lost and it wasn't quite so clear to you that it would change or anything like that?

R

Rosie Bennet 19:53

Yes. Let's ... well, I can say it like this. This is the first time that I feel this way. I think I'll start at the beginning, I guess. But I think, going through the kind of education where you realise that your end trajectory is, or your end destination is success, and that everything leading up to that equals something, you can't put a foot wrong, because otherwise you'll be off track. I remember being 10 years old and looking at the kids who were eight years and thinking, "Oh my God, if I'd only just taken this more seriously two years ago". My whole life was driven by this kind of anxiety of catching up and feeling like a complete mess inside because I never really knew what I liked or what I thought, I just, I was very observant as a kid, I was very quiet, very shy. So I just used to watch how other people reacted to everything. And whenever my life felt like a mess, I just used to parrot the things that I'd heard other people say. I was actually telling the story the other day, you know, this is something really, for me, this is the classic feeling of being at school, which was, somebody would ask me, "oh, what's your favourite recording of Beethoven three?" What a question to ask a 12 year old. And I think of the one thing that I'd heard and I'd say, "oh, yeah, I really like that 'Karajan'...recording? 'Cara-jan'...? Yeah, I definitely wouldn't have heard Beethoven three by the time I was 12. This is, I mean, yeah, this is the thing. It's already coming from this place of like, I mean, what kind of world is this? But yeah, I would say something like that, you know, "I like that Karajan recording." And someone would say, "Karajan, you got to be kidding me. You have to hear the Furtwangler recording." And I wouldn't go and listen to it but the next time somebody asked me any question like that, I'd say, "Oh, I like the Furtwangler one." And of course, they'd say something else like, "oh, no, you know, Furtwangler... you can take him or leave him. But Bruno Walter, you really got to go and listen." And then just this never ending, sort of this cycle of just never being able to say the right thing or never being... and all of it being fake, in a way. I never ... nothing was ever, I could never settle on my own opinions. I can never say, "hey, but I like that Karajan recording. Actually, that's the one that I like the most." Because I really believed that there was a right and wrong and whether it's to do with me, or whether it's to do with the way that a lot of music schools are set up, there becomes this sort of like a myth that arises of this one right thing, and it's elusive, you don't know what it is. Somewhere inside of you, through people telling you you are talented or gifted or whatever, you have a little particle of it, you know that, but you don't know which part it is. It's all really mystical. And everything else is wrong. Like everything else you do in your life is wrong. Everything you play, there's so many mistakes to be made ... my god, the overwhelming amount of mistakes that there are, this wealth of opportunity to make mistakes. It's just unreal. And so I kind of grew up with that feeling. I thought "everything is a mess. I don't know what to do about it. I just hope that no one realises." And then after I left school, I had this moment to rebrand myself, I moved to a new country, I had my little metaphorical briefcase of opinions that I should mention, you know, that Bruno Walter recording is just to die for. And then I went and I just armed myself with probably the strongest, like this platinum-belted ego plate that I wore all the time. My ego was, I mean, unbearable. I can't even imagine that I made friends in my first year. I was so ... I mean, it was just awful. I really I just, I thought "if I can't be the best," because deep down cripplingly, I know that I'm awful, but somewhere in me, I know there's something. "At least if I pretend that I'm the best, and I give off, I exert this big dick energy my whole life, then no one

will ever notice that I'm actually not good at all." Both of those things are awful. And then when it came to ... so I changed teacher, this is sort of an important part of this. I am getting to your question, because it's a big ...

H

Hattie Butterworth 24:20

No I knew it was a...

R

Rosie Bennet 24:22

It's a big breakdown.

H

Hattie Butterworth 24:23

big part of your story. So we're loving it.

R

Rosie Bennet 24:28

So I was studying with this teacher who... Zoran Dukic - Croatian guy. You'll probably know the type: a lot of those Balkan legends, I guess you could say, they are very ... they have a big facility for technique when they're very young and it's drilled and trained. And they're impenetrable. I mean just amazing, and basically impenetrable. No mistake will get by them. And so he was one of these guys, you know, he'd never understand if you felt bad, it was like, "what? I mean? How can you how can you take a day off for you for your mental health? What's that?" You know, "that doesn't exist." And obviously, with my huge ego, these things clashed because he had an ego that was built on something sustainable. And my ego was not built on something sustainable. So I would come up with these awful things, I would say things ... he would suggest a really expressive and beautiful fingering to me of some Bach piece, and it would be somewhere up high on the fretboard where the tone would warp slightly. And I would say to him, "Well, that's not very in style." I mean, can you even imagine an 18 year old saying that to, you know, a 50 year old guy, you know, that's spent your whole life winning competitions, being loved by everybody in the world. I mean, just, it's unthinkable now. Anyway, so we didn't ... we got on, I think he felt kind of provoked by me all the time, so he tried to push me to a point where I would also have to make some sort of monumental change. Unbeknownst to him, everything that I said and my whole ego was built on the fact that I had this deep, deep anxiety that actually I was a complete fraud. And I really felt the same kind of feeling that you ... as if you had been ... I dunno... if you stole something, and you just realised you weren't gonna get away with it. And that's what, that feeling really coloured my last month's while I was studying, because I just thought, "Oh, my God, he's gonna find out. This is really awful." So it felt, I guess, like the start of a breakdown, but I didn't really talk to anyone about it, I was never very vocal. That made it a little bit more tricky. And also, it's not without consequence, I guess but I started at Menuhin when I was 10. And so at this point, I was 19. So I've been also living away from home for 10 years so my relationship with my parents had changed also a lot. Still love my parents, never went through any teenage problem, we never had any of that stuff because I wasn't there. But the relationship was just different., you know, I always had to call home, telling my parents that everything was going really well, because I

wanted them to be, you know, to keep supporting me and to be really excited for me. And I needed them to be excited, because if everybody around me it started saying, "oh my god, this is really going badly," I think I probably would have crumbled a lot more. So I had to keep up that pretence. I'm trying to figure out what's relevant really here. What's relevant.... So I suppose ... okay, I will just drop this in, it's not relevant at all for this. But something that was really interesting during that time, I actually went to see a therapist once. It was a school therapist, his name was Paul Denir. I don't ever remember really acknowledging that I was having any real issue. I never really thought that there was a proper problem. And yet, somewhere in that spring, summer term, I ended up going to a therapy session with him. And we talked a little bit about that parent relationship, which I found really fascinating. He said to me, you know, he had this picture on his computer that his daughter had drawn. And it was a lovely picture of both of them. And then she'd written "to my daddy" but she put the D the wrong way around so it said "to my baddy", and he said, "Oh, look" - it means something different now but okay... So, he took this picture and he said to me, "look at this picture, it's so beautiful. You know, when my daughter gave me this, I never told her that she spelt it wrong." He said, "You know what happens when you tell a kid that they have done something wrong? Even something tiny, tiny, tiny. Kids are constantly adjusting the point of their the needle of their compass." You tell a kid "Oh, you haven't done that quite right." And they'll think, "okay, that's fine. There's a million other things for me to do. I'm just not going to do that again." Then he said to me, "don't you ever think that it ... maybe you know, going to a specialist school like that from so young, but kind of being stuck in it, that you've just always felt like you've wanted to move your needle, but you can't?" I mean, my ego was still there so I was just like, "Well, okay."

R

Rebecca Toal 29:12

Yeah, whatever.

R

Rosie Bennet 29:13

"Yeah, that's just your opinion man. I don't care." But it struck a chord with me a lot later, because I realised that that probably is what happened. I mean, I'm, I'm cautious of grouping all specialist schools together. But then again, I rarely meet anyone who hasn't had the same thought so it's tricky to know where to put yourself. I guess, the caveat is that I understand that people can have different experiences, blah, blah, blah, terms and conditions, a little star, all those little things, but it just ... I do think that that kind of education lends itself to that feeling. I, you know, it's been really amazing, reconnecting with a lot of my schoolmates, who I've been sort of like revered ... I mean, I really revered a lot of them, thought that they were all amazing, no one could have felt like I did and just realising that basically all of us are just completely, you know, waist deep and anxiety, all feeling like we're imposters was just "what?! Why couldn't we have realised this earlier?" You know, it was so... it was all so abysmal to me really. But um, but that's ... okay, I will go back to where I was because it's, you know, this is not even the breakdown yet. Can you imagine?

R

Rebecca Toal 30:25

You should listen to our normal, like, unedited versions of our podcast because we never get to the point.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 30:30

No.

**R** Rosie Bennet 30:32

God, so yeah, so that's the the school experience has kind of led me up to this feeling that I felt inadequate, I guess. And then something happened - a bolt out of the blue. Probably the best thing that ever could have happened to me. And also cued the start of kind of sinking... I felt like I was a ball who had been on top of the mountain, and I'd been slowly declining. This bolt out of the blue that ended up changing/shaping kind of the rest of my life ever since then made me realise that the rock bottom was just the start. Oh, God. I have to caveat this by saying it, because I hate it in interviews when people say "and then this person told me that and then my life was changed. It was great." It was awful. My teacher, who had accepted me, and he never accepted people who were younger than ... people who were in their bachelor's, he never accepted these people...he told me, "you know, Rosie, if it's life or death, you shouldn't be doing this." And I was like, "what?!" It was awful to be told that you shouldn't be doing it. I suppose it's a real mixture of having this huge complex. I mean, it's in general, a huge complex, but it's almost this ... like a god-complex megalomania. This idea... like, I couldn't believe that somebody was telling me that I, I shouldn't do it. Somewhere like that little tiny kernel, maybe the same mystical kernel that I was always looking for at school, kind of told me that like, "but I'm God's gift to humanity." You know, there was that feeling of indignation. Like, "how can you tell me to not do this? I'm so good at this." And then I had the biggest, longest, slowest, painful breakdown I've ever had. It started in May 2015. I just basically took control of whatever I could take control of in my life, which was absolutely nothing ...except for eating. So I stopped eating. It was, you know, it was a very toxic time online as well.

**R** Rebecca Toal 32:35

Perfect. Yeahhhh.

**R** Rosie Bennet 32:44

I started doing those things like the military diet, I started getting into long distance running. It was awful. I really, but I kind of felt like "yeah, I'm winning. I mean, this is amazing". And no one really ever said anything either. I mean, this is ... I'm not blaming anyone. I mean, I did have another kind of moment where I realised something was wrong. I went to my boyfriend at the time and I told him... You know what had happened? I ate something. And then I was like, "Oh, my God, I shouldn't have eaten that. What was I thinking?" You know, after months of having, like, counted every tiny little thing: the calories in toothpaste, the calories in the calcium in my water, like all these little things. I just ate something and then I was like, "what?" And then I thought "I have to get out, I have to get it out." So I went to the bathroom and I was over the toilet with a toothbrush stuck into my throat. And then I had this moment of thinking, "How did I get here? Like, really how did I get here?" And I remember going into the bedroom and saying, "I think I have a problem." Went unheard. Then I got into a really bad kind of binge

purge... I don't know what, like a period of my life, I guess it must have been five or six months. It felt outside of what was going on at the time, but if I look back, it was very clear. It's very clear to me now that it was just a big part of that. And I kind of just evacuated my life of all of the things. I amputated everything that could possibly make me happy. I just... I realised that I was destined to be sad. I decided that I was going to give up guitar. Obviously if somebody has told me, one person has told me that I don't need to do this, then that must mean that there's no point you'll be doing this ever again. So I thought "I'm gonna give up", but I had paid to go to a course in Spain with Rene Izquierdo, this Cuban guitarist and teacher, and I thought, "Oh, well, I'll just go like just for the holiday or whatever." And I went there looking like frail as a little wafer. I looked so ill as well. I couldn't see it, but I looked so ill. I got to the first lesson, one on one. And he said "what are you going to play for me?" And I just said started crying. And he was like, "Oh, it's okay. You don't have to be nervous." And then what started out as a little tear, started to be that kind of heaving, sobbing when you can't breathe, and then you kind of calm down then you go. "Yeah, it's just..."

R

Rebecca Toal 35:19

"I'm gonna play some Bach."

R

Rosie Bennet 35:21

Yeah, exactly. Just awful. So I basically, then, because it was a, it was a very lovely course, it was just, I think it was eight of us just doing technique every morning and having a one on one lesson during the day in this really secluded, strange place. It's called Carriñ de los Condes. And it's the midway point of the Camino Frances and it's 800 kilometres' walk. There's a lot of reasons why people do it. Over the last 100 years or so it's kind of been emancipated from its religious connotation, and it's become something that people also just do because they are in a weird place in their life. So you meet a lot of strange people there. A lot of lone travellers who just took a sabbatical from work. So I met a lot of people there who were also having this strange moment in their lives where they needed to look for something. And it stayed with me for I mean, it's it's one of the most, I guess, probably important emotionally things that I've been through just, well, the lessons ... I didn't learn anything really apart from that I just couldn't stop crying, so it obviously meant something else.

R

Rebecca Toal 36:30

That's a big lesson in itself.

R

Rosie Bennet 36:33

Yeah, exactly. We talked through it, we decided on the next practical steps that I could take, which were to leave the Hague where I was studying, to my great shame, and study somewhere else. Somebody who would take me, bear in mind, within two weeks of the school year starting. So it was a little hectic, but okay, we just ... he asked around, he called in a lot of favours for me. And he said to me, "just, do this year, and we'll meet back here next year. And then we're going to compare notes on how this year has gone. And if you really want to give

up, then you can give up." So yeah, so we took the practical decisions in hand. I will not go into my love life, but it was a mess. I will tell ... just as a whole thing, it was a whole, a whole different kind of mess.

H

Hattie Butterworth 37:24

It's another episode on it's own.

R

Rebecca Toal 37:25

I think these things often go hand in hand, don't they?

R

Rosie Bennet 37:29

Yeah, it was part of the evacuating myself of all the things that made me happy. I cheated on my boyfriend that I had been with. And then in the face of it, of him finding out, I just kind of laughed and was like, "Yeah, well, that's just the kind of thing that I do these days I guess. I'm such a lunatic. I don't know what's wrong with me." And then he said to me, "I would, I would like to work on it. We could we can get through this." And I was like, "No, I don't, I just, just want to get out." I just didn't care about anything at all. This was really the feeling. I just, I couldn't care less about anything. And then I'm still descending down the hill of my break down. So I've kind of think I'm at rock bottom. I basically wake up every day thinking that I'm at the bottom of this thing. And then the next day is gonna be better. And every day I wake up, and it's worse, like every single day. I start studying in Tilburg. And it's nice, it's it's tiny, but it's cute. And then I get to school, and even though everybody has convinced me through the last two weeks, you know, the Director of Music, the Head of School, the teacher that I'm going to study with, they've all convinced me that everything's going to be in English. I arrived and everything's in Dutch. And all the teachers are kind of, well, I guess, quite rightly, but also quite shockingly, xenophobic about it. They're just like, "well, how can you expect to come and study here and you just don't speak the language?" And I'm like, "oh, yeah, okay, I get that." So I go to all the lectures, I record them all with a Dictaphone, I go home to my room every night and write out phonetically all the words I think I've heard, I then go and say them to people who are Dutch and try and get translations. And then I learn my vocabulary like that, and I built it up. But ultimately, what happened there is that from this really, really difficult point, I was just so lonely. I've never been more lonely in my life. And I kind of felt as though I was having a pre-death experience as if I was already dead. I was having this little sneak peek into what it would be like which I guess is what a lot of people went through during COVID. What would it really be like if your life just stopped.

H

Hattie Butterworth 39:32

That's a good comparison, actually.

R

Rebecca Toal 39:35

Yeah

mean.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 39:36  
Yeahhh. It did feel like a dead time.

**R** Rebecca Toal 39:39  
Really isolated.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 39:40  
Like this could be what happens to me when I die.

**R** Rebecca Toal 39:43  
Buried alive. So that is the end of Part One. As I said, part two will be released imminently. We hope you enjoyed or found it useful/interesting/...Yeah,why not? Hope you enjoyed part one. And if you fancy following us on any of the socials, we are @tmdtapodcast. Our website is [www.thingsmusiciansdonttalkabout.com](http://www.thingsmusiciansdonttalkabout.com). Um, yeah, I think we have an email. It's [thingsmusiciansdonttalkabout@gmail.com](mailto:thingsmusiciansdonttalkabout@gmail.com) I believe. But yeah, I'm sure you guys can find us. If you've found this podcast, you can find us. But yeah, see you next time for part two.