

Hello! My name is Beatrice Marks, I'm a student of Juni Yeung, and I've been practicing the qin since January of this year (around 8 months). I've just passed my beginner exam, and so I was asked to speak a little bit about my learning experiences with the guqin.

Going into it, I knew very little about the guqin, as my main exposure was music posted on Youtube (which is not entirely the most informative). I had some experience with the piano and the clarinet, although I was never very good at either of them, mostly because I didn't have any passion for playing them.

When I first started my lessons, I was more than a little overwhelmed, both by playing the instrument and the theory surrounding it. For example, tuning especially scared me, as I had no experience with anything of the sort. Sight reading also worried me, as back when I played the piano and clarinet I would simply memorize the piece as my teacher taught it to me, instead of reading the score. The learning curve was almost insurmountable in my eyes. In the end however, the things that used to scare me have become easier, or interesting, anything but scary.

For me, there existed a sort of balance between on the one hand working at the qin so much that I lost sight of why I loved it in the first place, making learning it feel almost like a burden, and on the other, pushing myself to improve. I think most students probably know what I mean, and certainly have to find that fine point in between for themselves.

There were certainly times towards the beginning when I considered putting my instrument down, but luckily, I never did. After climbing that steep learning curve I truly found my passion for the qin. Now, I can't even conceive of putting it down for good.

Working at something is the only way you'll improve, and when I finally figured that out is when I finally started to make good progress.

Overall, I think us students shouldn't be afraid of learning, of being told we're making mistakes; even if it seems like there is so much we don't know. We're always learning, and I think that's not something to be ashamed of.

So to anyone interested in playing the qin, or doing really anything that seems impossible, don't back down just because it looks hard, because you'll never know what happiness it might bring you in the end.

Thank you!