

LONDON SESSION MUSICIANS PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE	Gavyn Wright
INSTRUMENT	Violin/Viola
BORN	1948
LOCATION	City of Westminster Archive
DATE INTERVIEWER	17 th March 2023
PARENTS OCCUPATION	Artists (both parents)

In this interview Gavyn talks about how he got involved in session music and how once established he became a fixer for orchestral musicians. He describes different playing styles and the how the changes in technology have altered the approach for session musicians. Gavyn also mentions being approached to do work for Michael Jackson and a session with Joni Mitchell.

Gavyn started playing the violin aged 8 and is very self-effacing in explaining that he never considered himself particularly driven to play the violin and considered that he was not talented enough to succeed in the classical music arena. He attended the Royal Academy and explains how his first session work came about as a consequence of a producer looking for a younger crop of musicians to undertake session music and add some freshness. Following those early sessions work kept arriving and he would frequently do 21 sessions a week for a variety of clients.

He discusses the advent of digital recordings and how the sound of the music being recorded changed when compared with analogue recording.

A key element running through the interview is Gavyn's pursuit of musical excellence in sessions. Very early in his career he would become frustrated by the inconsistency of musicians attending sessions and in particular string sessions. He then decided to become a fixer and would arrange/pick the musicians to appear with him on a session. In his pursuit of excellence Gavyn was the de facto orchestral leader and considered that he was able to improve the quality of the collective playing to achieve the best result in each session.

Gavyn describes the qualities of different type of musicians and explains the necessity for a session musician to be adaptable. By way of example, he explains that a folk musician although excellent in their field would find it difficult if not impossible to adapt to a different style whereas the best session musicians can sight read perfectly and are able to adapt to different styles.

Gavyn also describes the differences between being a violinist within an orchestra and a smaller ensemble, one of which is the ability to hear oneself play in the larger orchestra compared with say a string quartet where the musicians are far more exposed and thus

under more stress. He explains biggest fears of musicians is seeing, music which for whatever reason they are unable to play. It very rarely happens but the feeling is omnipresent.

Gavyn talks about various recording studios and the importance of the role of the engineer in generating the right atmosphere. He then discusses the impact of technology from 4 track machines through to the use of multi-track machines, sampling, the use of synths and discusses the concept of stemming whereby each player is recorded separately in addition to the group and as a consequence there are unlimited possibilities of changing the recording and sound after the session.

Finally Gavyn talks about the need to play in time and the precision that is needed and hence the importance of using a click track and he explains how this works in practice.

The interview ends with Gavyn explaining with some emotion his pride in a flawless performance.