

21st Century Connections

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The 21st century has seen many exciting developments in its short 15 years. The new generation of flutists has grown up with extended techniques, modern music is at a pivotal time between experimental and contemporary classical, and conservatories are filled to the brim with outstanding pedagogues closely connected to those who propelled the legacy of the flute in the mid-20th century. However, the greatest achievement of the 21st century is the advancement of technology and the worldwide web.

Through social media, musicians have direct access to audiences, colleagues and teachers. It is easy to advertise performances and self-promote through the online sharing of recordings and compositions. With the right marketing, people can get a multitude of followers on websites like Twitter or Facebook. This means thousands of potential listeners who

can share these promotions through their own accounts. Online networking also gives the ability to message friends and colleagues directly to organise rehearsals, initiate collaborations, and contact composers to commission pieces, adding to the repertoire.

Social media isn't simply for aspiring professionals; this platform is key in the lives of famous performers, orchestras, professors, composers and conductors. These websites are most commonly used for posting recordings and videos, advertising concerts, and sharing information on masterclasses, courses and teaching philosophies.

YouTube is the most well known website besides Google. Since it was first activated in February 2005, it has attracted millions of hits per year. Professors frequently tell students to go on YouTube to listen to repertoire they are learning, and is the go-to source for watching orchestral performances when preparing for auditions. It is used for promoting personal recordings and seeking criticism from the online community. Videos of masterclasses or instructional material on new techniques are readily available, allowing flutists to learn even when not undertaking studies.

Applications such as Skype and FaceTime, created for keeping relationships alive across the globe, are useful to the modern-day flutist. They enable connecting with potential ensemble partners, job interviews for teaching positions, and – when coupled with the right microphone – orchestra auditions. Consultation lessons with professors at conservatories of interest can now happen trans-continently without paying an exorbitant amount for flights.

With online sources like the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP), flutists have free access to sheet music that are out of copyright. Getting scores for courses, auditions and orchestral work through sites like this means flutists can properly prepare for any situation. IMSLP is great for practicing repertoire that is difficult to purchase in the flesh.

Other children of modern technology are online listening libraries like Naxos and Spotify. These resources are perfect for comparing recordings, ideas on interpretation, tempo indications and sound quality. This helps when learning new pieces and deciding what kind of repertoire to explore next. Like YouTube, these are used for listening to full orchestrations in preparation of auditions or rehearsals and listening to the recordings of pedagogues.

Search engines like Google are used daily in all facets of life, whether it be new recipes or looking for information on the flute. It is used for researching masterclasses, job openings in orchestras and ensembles, teaching positions and college auditions. Flutists are now able to better prepare for auditions by finding information about orchestra members, conductors, repertoire preferences, and performance and recording history. They can study local culture and language, and know if they would want to live where the job is available.

The millennial generation will never understand the not-so-distant past of isolation and not being constantly attached to people via email or mobile phone. Growing up with the internet and talking with friends and family at the touch of a button, people from the '90s are fortunate. I've had one experience in particular that showcases how lucky I am that it happened in 2012, and not 1992.

I was in the Netherlands for the first time going to a course run by Emily Beynon of the Royal Concertgebouw orchestra. It was supposed to be easy: get a train from Schiphol, ride for a few hours, get picked up from the station by a shuttle and be brought to the course location. I didn't understand the Dutch signage in the station, however, and it wasn't until 3 hours later that I discovered I had boarded a train in the opposite direction. I was stranded on the other side of the country, and in a panic I got on Whatsapp, messaging my mom in Atlantic Canada, begging her to call me. She jumped in the car with her cell phone and laptop, and immediately drove to where she could access the internet – the marina across the lake. We talked on the phone while she used Google to find my location, brought up train schedules, then emailed me directions to get back on the right track. Had it been 20 years earlier, I'd have been trapped on the border of a country where I didn't speak the language, not knowing how to get to where I was supposed to go or contact anyone. I now look back on this day with a kind of dry humour, but can only imagine how awful it could have been if not for modern technology.

While there have been a great number of advances directly in the flute world, the evolution of modern technology has been the development of the century. Never before has so much information been right at our fingertips thanks to the likes of YouTube and IMSLP. Never before have communications and advertising been so simple with Twitter and Facebook. And, finally, never before has the world seemed so small and easy to conquer.