

Leadership and Mentoring Scheme

At Bath Strings Academy we believe that players can learn a lot from one another and to that end we have developed a Leadership & Mentoring programme designed to build confidence in young musicians.

Why should I apply to BSA Leadership & Mentoring Scheme?

Becoming a BSA Leader & Mentor is a great way of developing yourself as a person and as a musician. In this role you will learn lots of skills that can be transferred into other aspects of your life and learning. If for example you are already enrolled in or are interested in doing the Duke of Edinburgh programme, then being able to say that you have been a BSA Leader & Mentor can count towards your award. For younger players, it can also count towards skills awards such as those you might take through Brownies, Cubs, Girl Guides or Scouts.

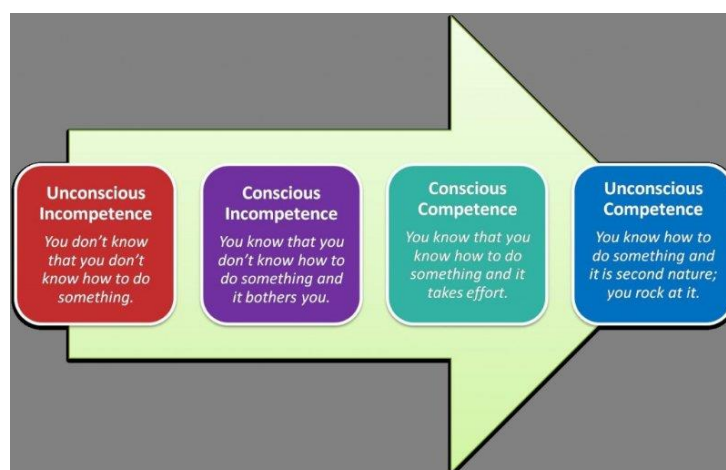
Empowerment – younger inexperienced players are often inspired and “wowed” by their more experienced counterparts. This is a two way process as Mentors often realise their own potential and ability to inspire others, thereby building their own self-confidence and worth.

Confidence & Self Esteem – inexperienced players are given confidence in playing alongside more experienced mentors. Mentors gain leadership experience, having to physically show and lead their desk partner in playing, whilst also helping with the logistics of navigating the music, reading signs and pencilling in instructions.

Teaching – we know that one of the best ways to learn is to be able to communicate and pass on our knowledge to others. Mentors build their skills in processing what they know, focusing their own attention on the smaller physical details of playing in order to verbally explain and to show “how”. In teaching others we always learn more about ourselves.

Perspectives – in instrumental lessons when teaching young players it is often necessary to explain the same thing in several different ways before an understanding is reached and that is because we all have different experiences as individuals. A “learning to drive” metaphor may well connect to a teenage player of 17 years but is unlikely to communicate the message to a 6 year old. In finding a metaphor that works, it is necessary for the teacher to mentally stand in the shoes of that young child and make a connection. A Mentor will have the opportunity to stand in the shoes of “Teacher”, entering a voyage of discovery that is often surprising to all concerned. Learning how to look at things “from the other side” is a useful life skill as much as it is a tool to be applied to musical learning.

Unconscious competence



This is the stage of competent ability to which we all aspire in any skill that we learn. Put simply, this means that our minds and our bodies can carry out the skill without having to actively think; where once we stumbled and fell as toddlers learning to walk, most of us can now carrying out the act of walking with competent ease. And so it is with learning an instrument. Our Mentors will discover how they have become unconsciously competent at many of their playing skills, building their own confidence and realising that they have a lot to give to those who may still be frustrated or struggling with the stage of “conscious incompetence”. By sharing those experiences, we learn to understand that we all find it “difficult” at some point but the trick is to be encouraged and to just keep on doing it; no toddler ever said “I’m giving up on this walking thing, it’s just too difficult!” They just kept on trying, succeeding by resilience to “failure”. As someone once said, to “FAIL” at something is merely the “First Attempt In Learning”.

Perfectionism – in our modern world we are presented with images and products that appear to be “perfect”; photographs of pretty models, with “imperfections” airbrushed, Classical CD Recordings where all traces of poor tuning have been technologically cleaned. It is likely that we have all seen, or even experienced ourselves those moments in a performance, whether that be a musical one or otherwise, where the performer makes a “mistake”. Through the resulting sharp intake of breath, we witness that physical cringe that belies the emotional discomfort and that thought of “oh no, I’ve gone wrong again”. At Bath Strings Academy the word “perfect” is not one that exists in our vocabulary. Our students and Mentors learn to control those imperfect moments using positive mental processes. They learn that even though there may be “slips in execution”, so long as we have tried our best we have permission to enjoy being in the present moment and that is good enough. Performers who feel they have made a “monumental mistake” are often surprised to learn that it has not been noticed and that it has certainly has not detracted from the audience enjoyment of the performance. All of our students, including our Mentors are encouraged to give positive feedback to one another; with this knowledge and free from the burden of perfectionism and judgement, it becomes easier to perform at our best.

Modelling – our more inexperienced players can learn by listening to and watching others, with their attention being particularly focused when observing their peers. Mentors may be asked to demonstrate some aspect of their playing at which they are competent. There may be opportunities to “perform” to the other players or act as the “stooge”, in which we may deliberately demonstrate (with a sense of humour) something that is “wrong”, showing that it is okay to make “mistakes” because this is the way we learn to observe, change and improve.

Leadership – Mentors will be encouraged to lead certain tasks and activities appropriate to their own skill base and confidence level. For example, they may wish to have a go at conducting a group, thereby developing their own sense of pulse and how to physically feel and communicate it to others. They will learn the value of “the conductor” from being on the other side of the music stand. Mentors may be asked to lead the orchestra or a section in the orchestra, have the opportunity to give rehearsal comments or lead a group in a warm-up exercise.

Social Skills – players attending our workshops need to know that Bath Strings Academy is a fun, friendly and supportive place to learn. To that end our Mentors play an incredibly important role in making that happen. Mentors are asked to empathise with their own first experiences of attending a music group and are encouraged to talk to all of our participants, particularly newcomers. Mentors will welcome other participants at the start of a workshop and may also lead and help organise activities during breaks and lunchtimes.

Fun – the aim of all our music making at Bath Strings Academy is to have fun! If everyone is having fun, then the likelihood of our students continuing to practise their instrumental skills increases greatly. Mentors are encouraged to nurture and make friends with their younger counterparts and many of our Leaders & Mentors really relish their increased responsibility. They have the opportunity to lead in creative ideas during musical and non-musical activities.

Team Spirit – Bath Strings Academy nurtures team spirit. We bring musicians together to play, learn together and perform. We emphasise that we play as part of a bigger whole and that every individual contributes to that team effort, whether they are Grade 8 or Grade 0. We believe in respectful team work, not hierarchy.

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What we expect from our BSA Leaders & Mentors

All of our Leaders & Mentors are expected to nurture our values of Friendliness, Focus and Respect; by setting an example in themselves and leading it in others. Mentors need to be full of positive energy, social and friendly, be able to focus their attention to details so that they can help both themselves and other players, whilst always remaining respectful of the learning stages of other musicians.

The way it works – Leadership & Mentoring for Workshops

On each of our half or full day workshops we have six Leadership & Mentoring places available at a subsidised fee.

To become a BSA Leader & Mentor for a first starters workshop (Grades 0-1), our Mentors need to be playing at Grade 2 – 5 level and must have attended a previous workshop.

To become a BSA Leader & Mentor for an intermediate workshop (Grades 1-4), our Mentors need to be playing at Grade 5+ and must have attended a previous workshop.

To become a BSA Leader & Mentor for a senior workshop (Grades 5-8), our Mentors need to be playing at Grade 8+. Mentors at this level would usually be studying for or recently graduated with a Music Degree at a University or Music College.

To apply for a BSA Leadership & Mentoring place, please visit the Fees and Booking page of our [website](#) to register your interest. Please remember that there are only limited places available and that your application will need to be approved by a member of the Bath Strings Academy staff. If you are unsuccessful this time, please do apply again another time.

The way it works – Leadership & Mentoring for Holiday Courses

For our summer course, we have two levels of Leadership & Mentoring as follows:

Senior Leader & Mentor

Four places available for Leaders & Mentors who are aged between 15 – 18 years and who are playing at Grade 6-8 level.

Advanced Specialist Leader & Mentor

Four places in total (2 violins, 1 viola, 1 cello) available for Leaders & Mentors who are enrolled on a Music Degree undergraduate or postgraduate course at a University or Music College.

Candidates for these places need to be highly competent musicians with a positive attitude and interest in teaching. There will be a written application process and you will need the support of your educational institution. Successful applicants will need to attend an additional day on one day prior to the official start date of the Summer Academy in which you will receive training on our

philosophy and be given a practical run through of the key areas of course content.

As well as teaching and leading some activities, you will have the opportunity to rehearse as a string quartet, preparing repertoire and receive coaching on all aspects of the music. We believe in a holistic approach, so your tuition will include performance and stagecraft aspects such as mental preparation, physical stage presence and how to effectively communicate with your audience. You will have the opportunity to perform as a quartet and as part of the Bath Strings Academy ensemble.

If you are interested in applying for a place, please visit the Fees and Booking page of our [website](#) to register your interest.