



Mini Violin
Violin Method for
Children aged 5 and 6
Lenneke Willems

Thimble Books, part 1, £ 18.30, including magic wand ; teacher's guide £12.90
Beginner

Here is a pair of volumes, for pupil and teacher, written by experienced Dutch teacher Lenneke Willems. She has also compiled a DVD (included), showing some of her pupils with her method in action. Another book for beginners, this time for groups of five- and six-year olds, though you could use it for individuals and romp through it a bit faster. Likewise older classes would progress more quickly. But the whole point of this book is learning a thorough right and left arm posture, lots of singing games, and absorbing early reading. Lessons are carefully and prescriptively planned with much singing and clapping and plucking. Most of all, though, is the emphasis on posture. The book comes with a magic wand and this is included to help secure a good bow hold. A gimmick? Possibly, but the instructions in the book make good use of it. Excellent pictures are provided showing extremely relaxed and totally correct posture. Progress is slow, but then nothing will have to be undone later. By lesson 33 at the end of the book the child is playing clapping exercises detailed earlier in the book, and is playing with first and second fingers on all strings.

Beautifully printed and laid out, this tutor would be an excellent addition to any early learning repertoire. You could

use as much or as little as you wished – certainly I've found the photographs very useful. I'm not sure how it would work with a class of 30 – the DVD shows a class of about 7 sweet and absorbed children. Also, Ms Willems doesn't allow parents to her lessons, but you'd need parental support to enable this method: there are quite complicated homework lessons to be achieved each week. Reservations, there may be, but I'd be keen to see the next volume which is in the pipeline. ANNE INGLIS