

Rodney Friend's *The Orchestral Violinist* is set to become a cornerstone in the literature of performers worldwide. He shares his philosophies with *Sheet Music Review*

Rodney Friend's two precious volumes, **The Orchestral Violinist**, should find their way immediately into every conservatoire. Moreover, any violin professor at a music college preparing highly-trained virtuosi for what Rodney Friend admits is a precarious profession, will want to encourage the application of individually-practised technical skills to service the greatest orchestral masterpieces. A good young violinist coming out of college wishing to succeed at auditions is faced with a 'catch 22' situation. Technically, the excerpts must be as convincing as a concerto but must also bear the evidence of stylistic confidence inherited through exposure and experience, which is exactly what they cannot offer at this stage. This is exactly where Rodney Friend's wealth of experience (literally) illuminates each excerpt, lifting it off the page and into a tangible sound-world through his enlightening bowing markings (highlighted in red) and a commentary (in green) which firmly weds technique to the stylistic demands of the music.

The preface supports Friend's impeccable credentials. As leader of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and later the New York Philharmonic, under conductors of the calibre of

Friend proves himself to be a great teacher through the clarity of his instructions, communicating succinctly the crucial characteristics of each excerpt

There is too much good advice to mention it all – 'feel the melodic line' in instances where the shortness of bow stroke often distracts, such as in the Scherzo of Schumann's second symphony

and the HDS-P Variation from Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. 'Feel the silent beat,' says Friend, indicating that rests are an active part of dance music in *Háry János* by Kodály. There is even help for those tackling the fearsome 'Danse Sacrale' from Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. 'We must feel the changing combinations of twos and threes as clearly as do disco dancers. Our basic practice

should be done away from the instrument, simply clicking our fingers and finding a way of verbally articulating the relentlessly alternating patterns.' Friend helps here by giving reference points within the uneven stress pattern, by urging a lengthening in quaver articulation in 3/8 bars and shortening it within a 2/8 bar.

The absence of postgraduate courses in orchestral training now makes a self-help publication such as this the more vital.