

The Nourished Flautist Retreat

August 2019

I have to admit, what first attracted me to Jessica Quinones' Boho Flute Retreat was that it wasn't just about flute! *The Nourished Flautist* is marketed as 'a long weekend created with the aim of nourishing body, soul, mind and flute playing'. As well as one to one lessons and ensemble playing, the retreat offers massages, yoga and guided coastal walks around the gorgeous and iconic retreat centre of St. Agnes on the north Cornwall coast.

Arriving at four on the Thursday afternoon, the first event was welcome drinks with Jessica and the other retreat participants. Numbers are intentionally small (there were four of us) and the schedule for the weekend deliberately spacious so that there is time to relax and explore the locality, as well as book practice sessions between retreat activities. There is the opportunity to get together in the evenings to share experiences whilst eating in one of the many fabulous pubs or restaurants in the village.

On Friday, my day started with a shiatsu massage with the incredibly dextrous Marja. An hour of work on my neck, shoulders and upper back left me feeling so relaxed that I booked an additional massage for the following day! I then had some time to explore the village, which actually mainly involved hiding from the great British weather in coffee shops...

In the late afternoon I had my first one to one session with Jessica. Pre-retreat, we were asked to provide quite a comprehensive background to our flute-playing experience and history, and clearly this had been thoroughly digested by Jessica! She took the time to talk through some of the 'blocks' I was experiencing with my playing, and tease out some possible ways forward. This included spending some time 'feasting' on new repertoire in search of pieces that would stimulate my creativity and communication, and that I could fall in love with. We found several, including my first encounters with Hoover, Fukushima and Marcel Stern.

On day two, the sun made a welcome appearance and walking the coastal paths was definitely on the agenda. The retreat schedule included a yoga class with Amy, specifically focused on breathing and stretching for flautists, and my second wonderful massage. In the early evening, I booked myself a session in the practice lounge for some work on the previous day's musical discoveries, before dinner in another of St Agnes's lovely eateries.

The final day comprised a guided cliff-top meditation, my second one to one with Jessica, some coached ensemble playing and our closing event—a delicious Cornish cream tea.

I came away from the retreat with new repertoire, new practice ideas and, more importantly, renewed motivation to practise. I definitely feel that the retreat achieved its aim of rejuvenating both my soul and my flute-playing, and for me had just the right balance of music and pampering! I'm looking forward to the



follow-up lesson that forms part of the package, and can say for certain that I will be booking on to a future Boho Flute Retreat. All in all, a most nourishing experience!

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