

Learning from the greats

Digital sheet music brought to life by inspirational recordings

While most orchestral musicians might not be reading their parts from the screen of a tablet just yet, the technology is becoming more and more commonplace – particularly in the context of education. Tomplay is a library of interactive sheet music and live-recorded backing tracks that has recently teamed up with Deutsche Grammophon to allow tracks from the label's catalogue to be streamed via the Tomplay app. 'Listening carefully to different interpretations of a piece is a vital part of the learning process,' says Tomplay founder Alexis Steinmann. 'This partnership means we can bring recordings by the greatest artists together with the convenience and versatility of the Tomplay score and audio library.'

The DG recordings, by the likes of Hilary Hahn and Nathan Milstein, supplement the backing tracks commissioned by Tomplay, most of which have been recorded by professional

musicians. 'We're constantly adding to these,' explains Steinmann. 'At the moment our studios are recording 200 pieces per week. For the sheet music we take an out-of-copyright urtext version and engrave a new edition from it ourselves.' While that does mean that students will not be playing from an edition with which they or their teacher is familiar, the software allows users to add their own annotations and save them for future reference. And in the future, Steinmann hopes to broaden the scope of Tomplay to include editions published externally, too.

Unlike most interactive sheet music libraries, which tend to focus exclusively on higher-level solo repertoire, Tomplay covers the full range of performance standards. 'In some ways,' says Steinmann, 'having recordings to refer to is even more important for younger students, since they are less likely to be able to "hear" the music in their heads. This way, they can play along at home



without the help of their teacher, which helps motivate them to practise.' As well as arrangements ('Spring' from *The Four Seasons* at seven different levels of difficulty, for example), there are MIDI recordings from which any combination of tracks can be omitted. The tempo of any backing track can also be altered to suit the player's needs.

Tomplay interactive sheet music app free to download; scores and recordings from £1
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