

REVIEW - ARCO magazine, Autumn 2025

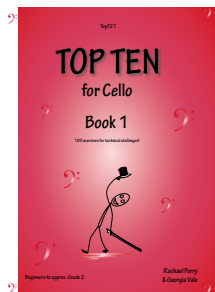
Top Ten for Cello by Georgia Vale and Rachael Perry Hey Presto Strings

'Top Ten for Cello' is an extension of the 'Top Ten for Violin' and Viola, the brainchild of violin teacher Georgia Vale and part of her 'Hey Presto' strings series. The cello version has been adapted by cellist Rachael Perry who writes:

"The inspiration came straight from my teaching. I noticed students often struggled with techniques that popped up unexpectedly in pieces they were learning—techniques they hadn't met before and which quickly became stumbling blocks. I was forever scribbling out short exercises to bridge the gap... and that's where the 'Top Ten for Cello' began.

Instead of tackling long studies that eat up time and don't always target the issue, I wanted short, focused exercises that hone specific techniques. Teachers can easily slot them into lessons, and motivated students can dip in and out independently. And for a bit of comic relief, I included some stick figure drawings—hopefully just enough to raise a smile between scales."

These four volumes of cello exercises offer a delightful and imaginative approach to technical development, thoughtfully structured from beginner through to Grade 8. Each book builds progressively, beginning with concise two-line exercises and culminating in more expansive five-line studies carefully calibrated to support the evolving needs of students from Grade 1–2, 2–4, 4–6, and 6–8.



What sets these volumes apart is their playful spirit and engaging presentation. With whimsical titles such as 'Finger Aerobics', 'Walk Like a Crab', and 'The 2nd Greatest Bowman', the exercises manage to feel both light-hearted and purposeful. The vivid, warm descriptions and the charmingly expressive 'pin-men' illustrations

bring a sense of joy and character to the page, making technical work not only accessible but genuinely enjoyable.

Each exercise offers a short, sharply focused exploration of a specific technical element, allowing for targeted practice without overwhelming the student. Their brevity also encourages regular rotation, keeping the material fresh and adaptable to individual learning paths. Teachers will find these exercises easy to integrate into a variety of pedagogical approaches, using them flexibly to reinforce key concepts and support technical growth.

Altogether, these volumes are a welcome and valuable addition to the world of cello pedagogy: imaginative, efficient, and inspiring. I will most certainly be incorporating them into my own teaching. Bravo to Georgia and Rachael for such a creative and beautifully executed resource!

William Bruce
