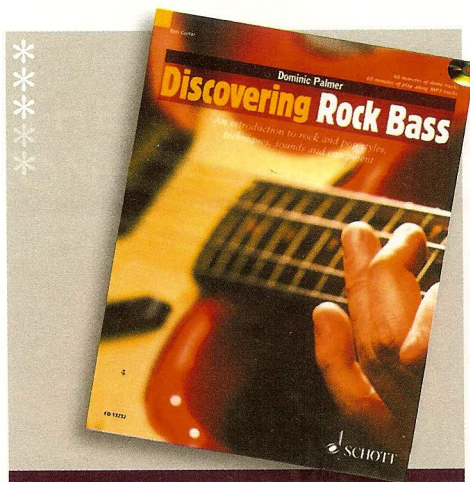


# SHEET MUSIC & BOOKS



## DISCOVERING ROCK BASS

DOMINIC PALMER

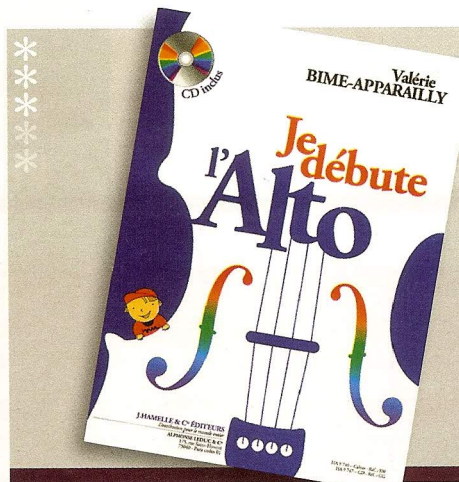
SCHOTT, £16.99, ISMN 979-0-2201-3126-4

As usual with Schott publications, there is little to find fault with this book's production values. However, despite being a book that aims to familiarise the electric bass player with a range playing styles stretching back to the very invention of the instrument, it doesn't include any transcriptions of existing songs – because acquiring the rights would have been economically unfeasible. But with that quite substantial caveat out of the way, it really does do what it says on the cover.

Dominic Palmer has successfully distilled the essence of bass styles from rock'n'roll and Motown to reggae, slap and R&B. The exercises and pastiche tracks he has written, coupled with a brief but pithy commentary, cut straight to the point – I found the 'getting the sound' section for each genre (equipment settings, playing style, instrument and so on) particularly interesting. The book also offers some pertinent recommended listening.

Even experienced players are likely to find something of interest here; it's a brief history of the instrument more than a method for learners. If you are considering using it in lessons, I would caution that there isn't an obvious progression in difficulty, and you may have to jump about to find tracks that match your student's level. Tracks are written out in parallel chord chart, tab and standard notation, and the CD includes full versions as well as backing tracks to practise along with.

Reviewed by Kimon Daltas



## JE DÉBUTE L'ALTO

VALÉRIE BIME-APPARAILLY

J HAMELLE & CIE EDITIONS, ISMN 979-0-2307-9740-5, £31.99

*As the tasks become more advanced, it is the student's bowing that develops most* “”

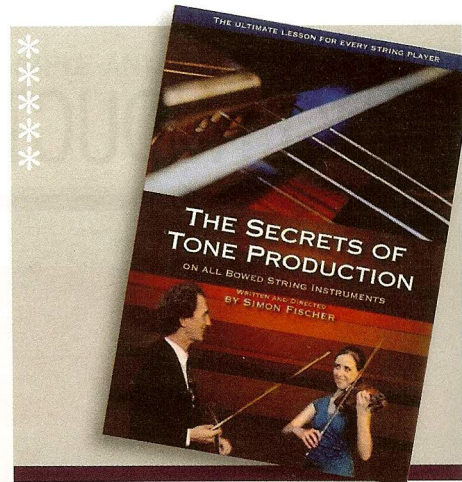
They say we should learn to walk before we run. *Je débute l'Alto* (I'm Starting the Viola; instructions are in French so teachers may need to seek help) reminds us that first need to stand and tie up our shoes. Here, this means encouraging players to become comfortable holding the instrument and to develop a repertoire of rudimentary movements.

The main focus is on developing independence of movement in the bowing arm. There are exercises for the left hand but these are mainly to help players build the strength they need to keep a good hand shape.

There is much to be said for letting beginners adapt naturally and gradually to the viola rather than prioritising rapid technical advance. This approach provides a focus for such adaptation, although the repetitiveness of the exercises will demand a large dose of patience and concentration.

There are treats, though, in the form of specially produced CD accompaniments. Although the instrument sounds used are synthesised (comically so, sometimes), the arrangements are well done, using different instrumental combinations in a fun, unpredictable range of styles from circus music to cheesy continental lounge jazz.

Reviewed by Toby Deller



## THE SECRETS OF TONE PRODUCTION

SIMON FISCHER

EDITION PETERS, SF0L001P, £39.95

If you have the discipline to sit down and watch two DVDs which feature almost exclusively the note D, the exercises presented here are bound to work for you. You may find it easy enough to improve your or your students' tone by simply reading what the method books have to say about effective bow use. However, Simon Fischer has painstakingly studied and applied these ideas over many years and has come up with five simple exercises that both distil and expand upon them.

Here, Fisher isolates the elements of playing in order to understand each one fully. If you are clear that there are three elements in tone production: the soundpoint, bow speed and bow pressure, then you can thoroughly explore what difference each one can make by keeping two elements constant while varying the third.

Fischer applies each exercise with students aged between 11 and 20. Hearing each exercise played well, you know exactly the quality of tone to aim for and you can also see the common pitfalls. Perhaps most importantly you understand just how meticulous a player needs to be to play them without a blemish.

This DVD could be the very thing you need to improve and maintain your playing, or to set a less advanced player on the right tracks. The tagline (the ultimate lesson for every string player) makes a bold claim and one that is, in my opinion, fully justified.

Reviewed by Helena Ruinard