PAEDAGOGIA MUSICA

(4) MAY 2023

Universitas Bohemiae Occidentalis Pilsnensis
University of West Bohemia in Pilsen
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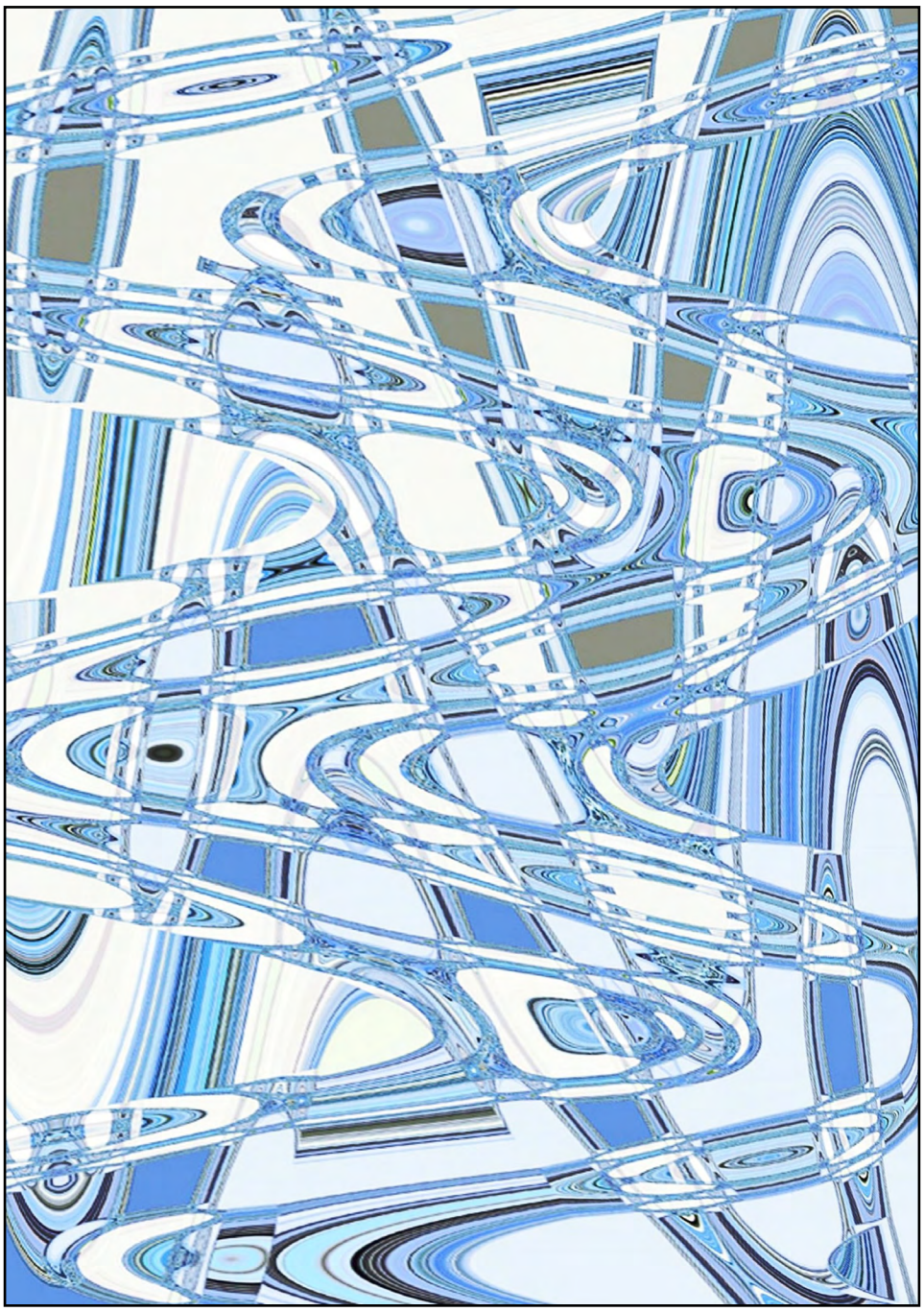

Eva Hubatová
Blue basoon (composer and trombonist Jan Kaňka)

MUSICAL THINKING AND ITS EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Mária Strenáčiková

Abstract
Many papers, articles, and even books are devoted to musical thinking, approaching it from different perspectives. After a long development of the concept, it appears to be most elaborated in the field of music psychology. However, it also has its representation in aesthetics, ethnomusicology, computer science, and, marginally, in education. Although it receives less attention today than in the past, it still has its own meaning, and its development is also occurring in music education. Musical thinking is being developed in all music education activities, perceptual, vocal, instrumental, musical-motor, and music-dramatic. Although the musical mindsets of performers, percipients, and composers differ, it is possible to contribute to their development in music education lessons by introducing new, optional subjects and adjusting the teaching methods and the classroom climate. The quality of musical thinking influences the quality of musical activities, so it needs purposeful attention.

Keywords
music activities – music education – music psychology – musical thinking – music theory

The aim of the study is to summarize historical theories of musical thinking, characterize its nature in terms of interdisciplinarity, and describe the educational implications of current understandings of musical thinking.

Diversity in the Understanding of Musical Thinking

To this day, the concept of musical thinking does not have the character of a scientifically defined term. Increased attention was paid to it in the 20th century when extensive research activities were carried out. It resulted in numerous theoretical studies with a considerable thematic dispersion and different approaches – historical, aesthetic, semiotic, psychological, or linguistic.

The connection between music and thinking is undeniable, but the theories explaining the nature and different aspects of musical thinking are not uniform. In practice, it is possible to distinguish three modes in the use of musical thinking:

1. thinking by/during music, during which free associations of various kinds arise (at this mode, music forms a soundscape and activates the emotional and/or rational components of consciousness);
2. thinking about music, its organization, and impact, i.e., standard form of conceptual thinking;

3. thinking through/via music – includes forming, understanding, and expressing ideas, attitudes, and subjective relations to reality. "To think through music is to create and organize sound structures in such a way that they express and communicate something." (Kulka, Poledňák, Pražáková, 1988, p. 186; translation: the author of the article).

In the fields of music aesthetics, music pedagogy, and psychology, all three activities leading to musical thinking are the subject of research. While the first one is exclusively related to musical perception, the sounding music could be an aid in the second one. However, an educated musician can also think about music based on musical notation or even without it. The third alternative is related to compositional activity or the interpretation of musical works. In these activities, the thinking individual works with musical material, i.e., sound, musical notation, or mental interpretation of these phenomena to which he/she applies musical thinking. It can be studied from the aspect of logic, aesthetics, psychology, or even ethnomusicology.

Nowadays, the term musical thinking is associated with modern content, and in search engines, it is (for musicians) misleadingly found also in connection with non-musical fields. For the sake of interest, one can mention the concept associated with leadership and business, with Agile methodologies, organizational change, design thinking, etc. It is understood as "a mindset to think from diverse perspectives at the same time and to get inspired to work in meaningful collaborations above silos." (Zürn, n.d.).

Historical Development of the Concept of Musical Thinking

Musical Thinking as a Psychological Category

Psychology is probably the most frequent area where musical thinking is explored. Nowadays, scientists emphasize the nature of musical thinking as a process of understanding in which not only the specific individual's characteristics but also social and cultural background and aesthetic aspects are reflected. It can be assumed that "... it is based on musical feeling, musical perception and relies on sound, musical and artistic images. Musical thinking is an understanding of the specifics of musical culture, a specific intellectual process of learning the laws and works of musical art." (Murodova, 2021, p. 196).

Let us consider musical thinking from a psychological point of view. We can classify it as one of the higher cognitive processes (equivalent to general thinking but associated with music). Alternatively, we can view it as an accompanying phenomenon to the musical experience (which could be associated with the perception, performance, inner experience of music, emotional input, and thoughts processing of musical material). These views developed gradually from the mid-19th century onwards when the conceptus of a theory of musical thinking appeared in Herbart's *Psychologische Bemerkungen zur Tonlehre* [Psychological Notes on the Theory of Music] (Herbart, 1811, pp. 99, 194, 259, etc.). Herbart first used the term "musikalisches Denken" [musical thinking] as a factor that enables one to understand the meaning of music. He limited it to a recognitive process that complements perception.

Friedrich Theodor Vischer further developed the idea of the need to use rational functions during music perception. He assumed that these functions include memorization, recollection, and ideas/images hierarchization, all of which require the involvement of

thinking (Vischer, 1922, p. 85). However, he did not use the term musical thinking. The term itself reappeared in Eduard Hanslick's work *Vom Musikalisch Schőnen – Ein Betrag zur Revision der Aesthetik der Tonkunst* [On the Musical Beauty – A Contribution to the Revision of the Aesthetics of Sound Art] (Leipzig, 1854). He suggested a connection with the use of the figural imagination during music perception, i.e., "further mental processing of the perceived musical material" (Burjanek, 1970, p. 30; translation: the author of the article). Hanslick's theses were further developed on the Czech scientific scene by Otakar Hostinský. He explained the active music perception as "a process of comparison, of assigning new perceptual material to a general image of the same material that has previously arisen in the psyche (the psyche, meanwhile, functions analytically) ..." (Burjanek, 1970, p. 34; translation: the author of the article), thus reaching a particular stage of thinking.

After a short time, a separate line of music psychology began to develop concerning, besides others, the connection of music-theoretical thinking. Its direct initiator was Hugo Riemann, who was the first to use the term *Musikalische Logik* [Musical logic] (1873). He defined the musical logic in his dissertation *Űber das musikalische Hőren* [About Musical Hearing] and described it as "the sum of all the rules of music which have their roots in physical and physiological conditions and continue in the ranges and laws of the psyche" (Burjanek, 1970, p. 40; translation: the author of the article).

He drew attention to the specifics of musical thinking when listening to music and its parallels with standard logical operations. His explorations resulted in the knowledge that when listening to music, the following applies:

- comparison (when following consonances and dissonances, the percipient compares currently perceived chords with ideas of already heard chords);
- analysis (the listener breaks down the overall sensory impressions into parts);
- induction (induction allows understanding of the whole musical idea through the analyzed parts).

"The deductive (analytical) method would therefore divide the whole piece of music into parts, periods, movements, bars, and time signatures. To a certain degree, however, great artists are capable of comprehensive conceptions, which do not arise gradually, but all at once, so that the artist, with a glance of the mind, overlooks (hears intuitively) the whole thought at once. (...) Of reproducing artist and even of the listener, the inductive (synthetic) method is the only one that enables understanding." (Riemann, 1874, pp. 41–42; translation: the author of the article).

Riemann documented the necessity of a programmatic exploration of musical thinking in *Die Lehre von den Tonvorstellungen* [The Theory of Sound Ideas] (1915).

The complicity of thoughts in artistic experience became the subject of interest of Richard Műller-Freienfels. He refined and developed Riemann's views on musical analysis and synthesis. Drawing on general psychology, he documented the existence of musical thinking with concrete examples in the two-volume *Psychologie der Kunst* [Psychology of Art] (1912, 1923, and 1938). He argued that if the recipient follows the theme's exposition or understands one motif as a variation of another, he uses not only his/her memory but certainly also thinking.

Otakar Zich further analyzed the musical experience. His description of semantic ideas in *Estetické vnímání hudby* [The Aesthetic Perception of Music] (1910) was a significant

contribution to the theory of musical thinking. Zich's theses resulted in the observation that musical images "quite certainly sum up into musical ideas/thoughts according to the laws of musical logic" (Zich, 1910/1981; translation: the author of the article). He divided meaning images into three groups: musical, sound and technical. The first group, typical for music images, is represented by work with musical themes or motifs (named "individua"). Moreover, the music images could be divided also into three groups: melodic, harmonic, and rhythmical. The second group, sound images, were images of the composition material, i.e., tones and their characteristics, such as absolute pitch, timbre, or intensity. The last group, technical images, was an overarching term for musical and sound images, and their system was called music theory. (Zich, 1910/1981, pp. 159–168). Zich used the term musical thinking as "a kind of semantic thinking" whose "essence is the abstraction and combination of the sensory tonal substrate of music" (Zich, 1924, pp. 5–6; translation: the author of the article).

The influence of Zich was manifested in the theories of Vladimír Helfert (1886–1945), who operated with the concept of musical thinking, explaining it as "the mental ability to reproduce and produce distinctive tonal ideas/images. This ability is enriched in its very germ by musical logic, which is the ability of aesthetic organization of tonal ideas/images, from which melodicism, intervallicity, harmony, rhythmicity, and work with dynamics and timbre emerge" (Burjanek, 1970, p. 65; translation: the author of the article).

Zich's theses also inspired Jozef Hutter. Highlighting the abstractness of the cognition process in his predecessor's teachings, he brought a new theory that explains musical thinking as "a specific kind of thinking in a specific substance, which is conditioned by the ability to merge the substance of a tone into a tonal concept" (Hutter, 1943, p. 17; translation: the author of the article). Thus, he created a form of nonfigurative-figurative musical thinking in which he applied the equivalents of Zich's basic general thinking principles: analysis, synthesis, and the recognition of "unity and change." He fundamentally differentiated the lay music experience from musical thinking in his writings.

Simultaneously with Hutter, Ernst Kurth published essential works about harmony, counterpoint, and many others. Although his contribution to the musical thinking theory was little, the link between musical thinking and musical psychology began to crystallize in his *Musikpsychologie* [Music Psychology] (1931).

In sketching the development of the theory of musical thinking, one must mention Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev's specific conception. In *Musical Form as a Process* (1965), he characterized intonation as "an expression of thinking of its own kind," melody as "an intellectualized reflection of the continuity of musical sound," musical form as "the thought component of music," and the artistic, musical experience as "a complex of aural perception accompanied by mental work, speculative thinking..." (Tull, 1977). All of these elements are unstable and ever-changing," ... no single aspect of intoning is evaluated as self-contained, but always as a stage of transition into the following one." (Tull, 1977, p. 195). With his views, he crossed the barrier and combined sensuality (sensory perception) with rationality (thinking). He suggested that understanding a form is understanding the rationality of the flow of sound, and the sound combinations reflect the intonations that appear rational to the composer. "In the assimilation of music, there occurs a constant battle between sound combinations which are crystallized in the memory (usually such sound combinations are perceived as forms, and from them, constructive schemes are derived by which the teaching of 'forms' occurs) and the equally continuous process of organization, i.e., the reduction to some rational unity of a variety of sound relations inspired by creative instinct in the search for new stimuli" (Tull, 1977, p. 214).

A valuable contribution to the theoretical works was Jozef Burjanek's publication *Hudební myšlení* [Musical Thinking] (Prague-Brno, 1970), in which he drew on historical information, opinions, and theories of renowned scientists. He created a more modern theory of musical thinking, in which he determined the contribution of thinking to the musical experience, differentiated its components with a specific musical character, and analyzed its relation to the overall musical experience. He defined musical thinking as "an unmistakable kind and content of the mental activity, as a permanent genesis of abstracts and their structured functioning" (Burjanek, 1970, p. 85; translation: the author of the article). He stated that it is "a real phenomenon conditioned by an abstract disposition which, in the case of music, manifests itself in its specifically own and possible way on the content of consciousness by reworking its figurative components partly into non-figurative" (Burjanek, 1970, ibid.).

Musical thinking is a specific form of artistic, i.e., figurative thinking in "images." Its sensory basis is auditory perceptions and images, which become the subject of abstraction and combination with the use of thinking operations. It is "a complexly conditioned heuristic process in the psyche of the individual during her/his contact with music and musical works, which enables her/him to know music, to experience it, to penetrate its structure, and to provide versatile musical activities" (Sedlák, 1989, p. 142; translation: the author of the article). The more difficult and complex the musical structure of the work that one encounters, the more necessary the involvement of higher rational functions to understand is.

The level of involvement of various rational functions depends on the maturity of the individual engaged in music. Four phases can be distinguished in connection with the ontogenesis stages: latent, elemental, conscious, and hypertrophic. That is also described in the literature as the multi-layered nature of musical thinking, where "the lowest layer is the basic perceptual analysis, stating that the following musical unit is identical or different or even contrasting ... to the previous one... The highest layer of thinking is the application of the logic of challenging musical units, understanding challenging music already in the process of its perception by understanding identity, variability, or contrast of as many comparable components of its overall structure as possible." (Burjanek, 1970, pp. 81–82; translation: the author of the article).

Ivo Osolsobě brought his perspective on musical thinking, in which he emphasized the movement awareness of music. He considered musical thinking only a special kind of thinking through movement (Osolsobě, 1973).

Musical Thinking as an Ethnomusicological Category

When considering the social, cultural, or biological conditionality of thinking as a psychological category, and if it is linked to music as a socially, materially, and culturally conditioned phenomenon, we inevitably enter the field of ethnomusicology.

An essential contribution to the scientific clarification of musical thinking in this context was made by the Slovak scientist Jozef Kresánek, who in 1977 published his extensive work *Základy hudobného myslenia* [The Basics of Musical Thinking]. He approached the topic based on ethnomusicological research from the point of view of a historian (Kresánek, 1977, p. 320). His study focuses on musical language – musical shapes, among other issues. In his attempt to grasp as broadly as possible the concept of musical thinking, he analyzed its two verges:

- the first one accepts the "metahistorical moments and moments abstractable from the expressive-emotional point" (Kresánek, 1977, p. 317; translation: the author of the article); it is heading towards the autonomous nature of music;
- the second one pursues "moments determined by the connection of music with economic, social, cultural development in an emotional-expressive way" (Kresánek, 1977, ibid.); it leads to the artistic connection of music and out-musical reality.

The process of musical thinking results in products that reflect not only the individual himself but also the time and culture in which musical thinking occurs. "In ethnomusicology, this curiosity about the products of musical thinking is satisfied through extensive musical analysis, sometimes using transcriptions or notations produced by the musical culture under study. This type of detailed formal analysis of works and music performances as an art declined after about 1980 in favor of research that used other metaphors to situate music within culture and society." (Rice, 2014, p. 34).

At the end of the 20th century, scholarly attention also turned to questions of musical thinking in non-European countries. An exemplary contribution in this field is the work of Bruno Nettl from the University of Illinois (1994). He analyzed musical thinking and thinking about music. According to him, "the way in which musicians think musically, the ways in which they, as it were, think their music, depends in large measure on the ways in which they think of their world at large. And within that context, the ways in which a society thinks about the concept of music, about music in culture, about musicians, may determine much about the way in which the musicians of that society think their music" (Nettl, 1994, p. 147). He pointed out the difference in the public views of W. A. Mozart (the child prodigy, often misrepresented as a carefree individual composing based on sudden inspiration and enlightenment) and L. van Beethoven (the hard-working composer with amounts of elaborate sketches), the difference between professional musicians (respecting the demands of their employers) and amateurs (having freedom in their choice of playing duration and time, choice of melodies and modality; improvising according to own desires). His study also touched on the tension between authority and freedom in musical thinking.

Musical Thinking in Terms of Aesthetics

A different perspective on musical thinking can be obtained by reflecting on the communicative mission of music. In this case, a musical work could be considered a communiqué – information sent by the author/sender and received by the listener. Communication presupposes the existence of a language capable of encoding a message comprehensible to the recipient – the communicant. In this process, musical thinking plays an irreplaceable structure-creating function because it creates the structure of the musical expression, encodes the information in it, and helps to decode it (Aranovskii, 1974). This theory lacks an analysis of the mental structures and processes involved in the perception of a musical artifact and does not consider psychological aspects of perception.

In aesthetics, musical thinking can also be approached as a phenomenon influenced historically and socially. In this case, it is determined by musical logic, understood as "the laws of a particular, socially historically conditioned system of musical thinking" (Fukač & Poledňák, 1979, p. 75; translation: the author of the article), i.e., by quasi-contemporary musical norms.

When we reflect on the genesis of music, the essence of musical thinking can be expressed in three spheres:

1. sonoristics – soundness – influences musical thinking in the sense of evoking pleasant or unpleasant sensations through consonances and dissonances;
2. dynamism – could be distinguished:
   a) sensomotoric – expresses the nexus with physiological factors;
   b) musical – it is related to the dynamics, agogics, tonality, and tectonics of a musical work;
3. thematicity – shapeliness – is manifested while following motivic and thematic work in composition; it presupposes "the analysis and the synthesis as well as abstraction, which cannot be denied the expert rationality with which human thinking operates in general" (Kresánek, 1977, p. 44; translation: the author of the article).

"A new area in the field of musical thinking is opening up by the study of various modes of thinking (associative logic, logic of Gestalt, logic of language, formal logic, dialectical logic)" (Fukač & Poledňák, 1979, p. 79; translation: the author of the article). Music is connected with other types of thinking by applying the principles of general and special logic and language.

The perception of music as a parallel of language is nothing new. "Language and music share many properties... For example, both domains rely primarily on the auditory modality and involve the perception and production of sound. They require memory capacity for storing representations (words, chords...) and the ability to combine these representations by means of a system of rules or structural schemata." (Jackendoff, 2009 in Rebuschat, Rohmeier, Hawkins & Cross, 2012, p. xvii).

Music and languages represent cognitive systems in which the use of thinking represents a specific cognition. In spoken language, language acquisition is conditioned by the cognitive abilities that the individual uses to make connections within a collective culture. These connections enable him/her to acquire personal knowledge of certain circumstances to interpret different events. "Music involves a myriad of context-dependent phenomena, some of which are specific to music (e.g., consonance) and some of which are not (e.g., expectations and implications, intuitions of coherence and anomaly, and memory). Yet the characteristics of each of these phenomena, as they apply to music, seem to be inextricably tied to constraints on musical structure." (Bharucha, 1987, p. 2). The acquisition of musical language then presupposes making connections that enable the individual to interpret different phenomena and their sequences and connections and to create a schema in which he/she could interpret the heterogeneous information acquired.

Regarding musical language, one has to consider that there are many "dialects." They may differ to such an extent that a person who understands one of them may not understand the other, much less be able to "speak it" or even read/write it. These include, for example, the classical musical languages of Western Europe, the jazz language, the languages of Asian music, as well as written language expressions created for various instruments (lute tablature) or computer-readable protocols.

Contemporary Theory of Musical Thinking

In modern science, musical thinking is most often understood as a specific type of thinking that operates with musical material and is frequently associated with listening to music, performing, or composing music. "Musical thinking, which consists in processing, evaluating and creating new musical information and expressing the ability to understand and analyze what you hear, mentally imagine and operate elements of musical language, evaluate music and the quality of its sound, helps to achieve a good result in interpretation." (Xin, 2021, p. 69).

Musical thinking is tied to musical material, artistic images, and musical images and is thus necessarily linked to some form of musical activity. Depending on the nature of the musical activity, specific musical thinking operations and reasonings can be performed. Musical perception, musical reproduction, and imaginative production of a work of art represent the three modalities of musical experience:

1. Musical thinking of the recipient
   During the reception, the perceptual sensory substrate is abstracted, and the resulting musical ideas merge with each other and with the flowing music. This process can also be identified in the listener – the layman, who knows the onset of familiar themes and motives, their repetitions, and variations, apprehends some form, perceives instrumentation and its changes, etc.
2. Musical thinking of the performer
   In the sound realization of composition, the musical thinking of the recipient is applied in a considerably refined form. The excellent performer must not only understand the meaning of individual notes and tonal units, their metamorphoses, the method of harmonization and functionality, but he/she must also have a clear idea of the content, meaning, and poetic essence of the whole work. That means that he/she must be able to thoroughly analyze and justify all the elements of the performed composition, even from a theoretical point of view. The decisive factor of a good interpretation is understanding the details and creating a meaningful whole from them (Nejgauz, 1963). Memory is an indispensable phenomenon, especially logical memory (besides all types of implicit and explicit memory, such as perceptual, sensory, visual and hearing, emotional, movement, tactile, procedural, semantic...), which enables reproduction according to the meaning links in the structure of the composition.
3. Musical thinking of the composer
   The expedient of a musical work uses during his composing activity operational thinking, which, according to Shochor (1974), includes three complementary and mutually conditioned types:
   - Subject-instrumental thinking is applied when the musical idea arises while musicking quasi-directly from the possibilities of the instrument;
   - figurative-imaginative thinking is used when the composer transforms, varies, modifies the musical idea, discovers its possibilities, verifies its carrying capacity;
   - abstract-logical (conceptual) thinking is applied when the composer, based on theoretical knowledge, chooses suitable possibilities and means from available ones, searches for details to create the intended whole, combines, transforms, and finally creates the whole.

Kulka summarized the most frequent reasoning operations used by the composer: "transformations of musical structures, repetition, the introduction of new ideas, division, shortening, expansion of motifs, condensation, dilution, strict and free inversions, retrograde procedures, permutations, rotations, concentrations, interpolation and selection of motivic elements and surfaces, change of the theme position, dynamics, tempo, contamination, thematic montage, mixing, collage." (Kulka, 1979, p. 121; translation: the author of the article). In addition to operational thinking, it involves non-operational thinking, reflectivity, metacognition, agglutinating and magical processes, and other procedures that cannot be converted into logical reasoning operations.

The presence of conscious processes in composing is essential. However, the subconscious also plays an irreplaceable role in the entire creative process, in several stages defined by Wallas in 1926 (as described in Lehmann, Sloboda, Woody, 2007, p. 133). Already the choice of the topic/subject and the basic inspiration may be based on previous experiences, thoughts, ideas, and inner impulses, which may not be processed and stored on a conscious level. Further, few composers can write their works from the beginning to the end without some pauses, stops, and blocks that temporarily inhibit their creative activity. The incubation stage – when the creative intention matures under apparently reduced conscious control, for example, during sleep or daydreaming – is therefore usually necessary to create new original work. Even during conscious activity, excluding direct composition processes, the composer's mind is influenced by unconscious processes. It focuses (albeit not consciously) on processing the compositional intention (e.g., in the form of perceived stimuli selection and their interpretation, conditioned perception, selectivity of attention and interests, influencing memory...). Likewise, in the inspiration phase, the subconscious plays an important role, from which original ideas and thoughts can spring, further expand, wander, intertwine, appear, and disappear. In the next stage of illumination, subconscious processes are also implemented. "In self-observation, intuitive maturation appears as a sudden insight, an understanding, an idea that sprang up unexpectedly. It is easy to succumb to the surprising experience and understand it as a 'divine' inspiration." (Kulka, 2008, p. 388; translation: the author of the article).

Similarly, unconscious processes are very active in the subsequent stages of elaboration (working out the details) and verification (evaluating and selecting the most appropriate means). Intuition makes it possible to link the composer's knowledge of various composing techniques and his/her mastery to the realm of feeling capacities (Kaschub, Smith, 2009, p. 16). In selecting means, "the composer employs intuition – the knowledge gained in the subjective experience of implicit learning – to inform explicit artistic decision-making. Therefore, as composers make musical decisions in the process of composing, there exists a balance between intuition (feeling based/knowledge within) and intellect (conscious awareness/knowledge about). This balance, in constant flux from a decision to decision, represents the knowledge base for compositional decision-making." (Kaschub, Smith, 2009, p. 16). Moreover, unconscious processes are still present even during the last stage of the compositional activity (corrections and final adjustments). "In those final moments of writing furiously ... you might encounter a small voice—your gut instinct—that questions whether one small part of your piece is exactly how you want it... I urge you, for the sake of your future self: Listen to that voice... That instinct... can be trusted." (Trumbore, 2019, p. 41).

In all modalities of musical activity, musical thinking is linked to ideas involving musical images and their elements, such as melody, rhythmic structure, dynamics, agogics, motive,

musical idea, and harmonic structure. Moreover, it is concerned with connections between music, feelings, moods, ideas, and thoughts. In some cases (especially in compositional or conducting activities), a special kind of imagination is an essential part of musical thinking, so-called "inner hearing," which allows the musician to "hear what he sees, and see what he hears" (Campbell, 1989).

Musical thinking can reach different levels. The lowest is the aesthetic response, which is characterized by passive input. "Lower order musical thinking is when inter-relating, rearranging, and extending musical information does generally not occur. There is little or no problem-solving in operation." (Persson, 2011, p. 8). The higher level of musical thinking is more complex and includes other processes. "The process is active and intentional by creating, recreating, generating, analyzing and/or communicating a musical product." (Persson, 2011, ibid.). Therefore, musical thinking understood in this way leads to a musical product that is absent at a lower level.

Surprisingly, musical thinking does not appear as often in contemporary theory as it did in the past. Theories of musical thinking reached their peak in the late 20th century when it was explored in music psychology, neuroscience, ethnomusicology, aesthetics, linguistics, and, in the early 21st century, computer science. Nowadays, much attention is paid to critical and creative thinking, which are becoming the subject of research primarily in terms of their nature and development, and thus often are the subject of educational psychology, and musical thinking falls behind. It is important to pay attention to musical thinking because its specific nature requires its deliberate and purposeful stimulation in the school environment, similarly to critical and creative thinking.

Pedagogical Implications – Development of Musical Thinking

Musical thinking is a characteristic that can be developed. Music pedagogy emphasizes that it "characterizes the student's ability to use the musical language (to understand the meaning of the artwork, to transmit it in performance, to create and improvise music)" (Xin, 2021, p. 70). From a pedagogical point of view, equivalences between general and musical thinking seem important. In musical thinking, the reasoning operations such as analysis, synthesis, generalization, typification, comparison, and others are applied. In addition to operations with musical ideas, musical thinking also requires abstraction (in deepening perceptions), induction, and deduction (in evaluating a music piece and trying to place it in a particular epoch of musical development). All thinking processes have a rational basis; they are abstractions of the musical work's aural and/or visual sensations. These facts explicitly indicate a progression from sensory perception to rationality.

However, limiting oneself to emphasizing rationality's role in musical thinking would be very misleading. Emotionality also plays a significant role in any musical activity – from the basic feeling of pleasant or unpleasant, through the evocation of associative imagery, to the overall experience of the sounding or produced music based on the excitation of the emotional sphere of the human personality.

Several programs and methods have been developed to support musical thinking development. They are based on the premise that every child can think musically, at least at an elementary level, and with the proper guidance, can master this process at a higher level. Most of these methods involve the development of imagination, aural abilities, performance skills,

and possibly, the basics of composition. In essence, they do not differ from ordinary music education, which includes vocal, perceptual, instrumental, music-motoric (music-movement), and music-dramatic activities.

Considering different approaches to the music art, it is possible to focus on the purposeful development of musical thinking through different components of general music education: listening to music, playing musical instruments, singing, improvising, learning the history of music, means of music expressions, theory of music, essential musical elements, music vocabulary, analyzing and evaluating music pieces, reacting to music by movement, providing reasonable arguments and justifying own opinion, creating elementary/more advanced compositions, performing music dramatization, etc.

Besides general music education activities, specific methods and concepts could be applied in classroom instruction. Some examples are given in the following paragraph.

1. Implementing an alternative discipline into a curriculum.
2. One was prepared by V. Brainin, who identifies teaching musical language with the development of musical thinking. He explains that "the ability to predict the incoming musical information and to 'co-intone' and 'co-compose' will be a sign of the degree of maturity of musical thinking." (Brainin, 1996–2004). In order to develop musical thinking, he requires coverage of all disciplines such as Solfeggio (singing from a music sheet, as well as intonation exercises, acoustic analysis, dictation, and mastering rhythm), theory of music, musical literature, the study of musical cultures such as various interval structures, chords and their inversions, modes, basics of composition, etc.
3. Michele Kaschub is primarily concerned with the development of imagination and participation in composition exercises. Initial activities include exploring sounds by listening, which should be associated with actively imitating what is heard. He equates learning a musical language with learning a mother tongue: the child listens to it from birth, then imitates it, and thus actually learns to use and understand it. The second alternative is exploring sound by composing, using imagination. For the realization of composing activities, one can use exercises described by Kaschub (1997, p. 30–32), such as:
    - "Blind duet" – two students stand back-to-back (to rely more on hearing rather than on visual keys), and one of them starts singing to establish the character of their new composition. After one or two measures, the second student continues to support/compliment the first student. Then the first student adapts his/her song in response to the material presented by his/her colleague. The goal is to practice a related improvisation based on listening and responding to the new musical material (melodies, ideas, motives).
    - "Improvisatory web" is based on speech imitation. The teacher provides students with a short sentence, asking them to repeat it with changes in the dynamics, rhythm, tempo, word order, pitch, range, register, direction, articulation, etc. The graphic manifestation would be a web, in which the phrase is the center, and the other elements are placed around it (similarly to mind mapping). The exercise helps teachers to introduce new musical terms.
    - "Vocaphone" – one student acts as a composer/conductor, who selects the scale/key, and the other eight students represent various grades of this scale.

First, all of them sing the scale a couple of times together to become comfortable with its pitches, and then, the conductor points to students, and they sing "their" pitch using solfège syllables, numbers, or neutral syllable (each student is assigned one pitch of the scale). The conductor experiments with duration, dynamics, intervals, rhythm, and even with harmonies (by pointing at two students at the same time). If more students are in the classroom, these can stand behind the eight students and be assigned the pitches forming a chord to improve ear training, learning chords, and harmony progressions.

- Melodic limits exercise – each student creates his/her own melody, and the other students repeat it. Then the teacher limits the melodies with instructions such as: "Sing an eight-note melody that begins on Do," "Sing a four-tone motive that ends on Sol," etc. Afterward, the limitations could include limited intervals, pitches, steps, etc.
- Internal composing – is suitable for a higher level of music education. It requires thinking in sound and musical memory. The students work internally; they think in music (similarly as if they were thinking in words), i. e. they imagine the short motives, phrases, or songs without making any sounds. Afterward, they start internally imagining and inventing short melodies that are gradually longer and longer. The next step would be adding voices to their melodies. At the end of the exercise, students can use a notation system or sound recording to record their ideas.

4. Another option, according to D. Murodova, is the development of musical thinking based on Asafiev's formula in three stages: impulse, movement, and conclusion. According to her, the initial impulse involves one or two themes (exposure or expression), and then, "after the storytelling begins the development of musical thinking, and one of the simplest examples used here is return and comparison. Change and exchange is another example of the development of musical thinking." (Murodova, 2021, p. 197).

Thus, in order to develop musical thinking, various musical activities based on working with musical materials can be implemented. Through these activities, the pupil is encouraged to understand the musical materials and to work with them in various ways, such as listening to music and conscious reasoning, creating musical ideas using basic compositional processes, consciously reacting to music heard by movement reactions, singing and performing activities with the possibility of engaging imagination, predictive ear, critical thinking, and a wide variety of thinking operations and procedures. Simply said, the pupil should learn to "think in sound."

Nowadays, educators have at their disposal a variety of software and programs that can help develop students' musical thinking, particularly singing programs, Solfege programs, computer-supported listening and improvisation activities, and many others. Solfege programs are designed to help pupils/students learn Solfege and thus increase their musical literacy. They can practice Solfege being guided by artificial intelligence, which will provide them immediate interactive feedback on the correctness of the pitch and duration of the sound, sung syllables, and dynamics. Programs include diverse content and online materials ready to be presented visually and audibly at any time. They allow teachers to assign homework and monitor and coordinate students' activities both in the classroom and outside the class – asynchronously remotely (Koren & Strenacikova, 2021, pp. 92–99). Newly developed

online learning programs that allow collaboration between future musicians are also a significant aid. An exciting program is *CrossSong Puzzle* consisting of mashed-up excerpts from different songs. It is "a novel type of music-based logic puzzle that integrates musical and logical reasoning (...) CrossSong has been designed to encourage 'musical thinking.' The puzzle requires solvers to isolate rhythms, timbres, and melodies in their minds in order to identify connections between the tiles. Such careful listening may flex their musicianship." (Smith, Kato, Fukayama, Percival, & Goto, 2017, p. 214).

Since musical thinking is a complex phenomenon, its purposeful development requires not only to include specific classroom activities, teaching methods, and aids but also the creation of suitable conditions to motivate pupils to actively participate in the educational process and be responsible for their learning. According to Xin (2021), the development of musical and performing thinking could be facilitated by:

- "creation of a special musical-centric situation of development, the center of which is a musical work and through it, music as a phenomenon, as an artistic reality, is objective and self-sufficient;
- stimulation and expansion of cognitive capabilities of students due to metaphorization of the content of the subject of cognition;
- formation of music-aesthetic competence of the student as a special intuitive form of his current knowledge;
- creating an atmosphere of positive emotional support for the student's creative performing attempts" (Xin, 2021, p. 71).

Conclusion

Musical thinking can be viewed from several perspectives. Its psychological, aesthetic, and ethnomusicological aspects, which have been explored and results presented in various scholarly publications, are of particular relevance to pedagogical practice. The music pedagogical approach to musical thinking reflects scientific theories that emphasize different aspects of this complex phenomenon. The purposeful development of musical thinking is thus based on the development of its various components in a specific musical activity. The classroom activities should be sufficiently heterogeneous to cover all the components of music education. Also, teachers should implement various MusicEd programs and ICT.

For pedagogical implications, it is essential that: "Musical thinking is directly related to the birth of an artistic image. The artistic image in a musical work consists of a unity of material, spiritual and logical origin. Note to text, acoustic dimensions, melody, harmony, metrorhythm, dynamics, timbre, register texture, mood, imagination, expression, will, and emotion to the spiritual beginning; the logical beginning includes form, genre, and content. A composer, a performer, a listener can have musical thinking only if he has the beginning of all these musical images in his mind." (Xaydarovich, 2021, p. 23).

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SONGS OF DOMINICK ARGENTO AND THEIR USE FOR THE TEACHING OF VOICE AT FACULTIES OF EDUCATION

Martina Procházková

Abstract
The study will aim to characterize the songwriting of Dominick Argento (1927–2019), a leading American composer and Pulitzer Prize winner, and to outline the possibilities of its application in the education of solo singers in faculties of education. Argento's songwriting is rich (he composed cycles for every voice except bass) but not well known and rarely performed in Europe. It may be due to the difficulty of some cycles and the fact that not all sheet music is readily available. Part of the study presents the musical compositions of Dominik Argento with a focus on songwriting, the characteristics of textual aspects of songs, and the composer's approach to the musical treatment of song cycles. The second part of the study deals with using Dominik Argento's songwriting in teaching voice at faculties of education. This section includes a short musical and interpretative analysis of selected songs and suggests specific compositions for voice study. The topic's treatment benefits Central European vocal teachers and the professional public.

Keywords
Dominick Argento – vocal creation – art song – song cycle – solo singing – tertiary grade of education

Introduction

"I think that music began as an emotional language.
For me, all music begins where speech stops."
(Dominick Argento)[1]

Dominick Argento's music is often described by various adjectives – neo-romantic, lyrical, conservative, eclectic, and conventional because he resisted avant-garde influences. By focusing on human emotion and experience and his preference for vocal music, his work is often compared to that of Benjamin Britten (1913–1976).[2] In his songs, especially in the manner of phrasing, his melodic gift brings him closer to the American tradition and the neo-romantic Samuel Barber (1910–1981) and Ned Rorem (1923–2022).[3] He freely combines

[1] Boosey & Hawkes A Concord Company (2023, January 2). *Dominick Argento. Composer Index. Snapshot*. Retrieved January 14, 2023, from https://www.boosey.com/pages/cr/composer/composer_main?composerid=2691&ttype=SNAPSHOT.
[2] Feldman, M. A. (2005, January 30). *Dominick Argento: Minnesota Romantic*. Retrieved January 14, 2023, from http://music.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/0210_argento/index.shtml.
[3] Kimball, C. (2006). *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*. Hal Leonard Corporation, p. 60.

tonality and atonality, uses repetitive melodic structures, surprising chord progressions, persiflage, musical quotations, or various musical ciphers, "...resisting elements of chance, minimalism, and the influences of popular music (especially rock)."[4] He works creatively with lyrics, composing attractive, melodic music with emotional impact and a dramatic arc. He is aided by a thorough knowledge of the human voice and its interpretive possibilities, a refined sense of language, a deep understanding of how human emotions translate into musical expression, and a perfect command of the composer's craft – harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and form. Music critic Heidi Waleson described Argento's work as "richly melodic... [his] pieces are built with wit and passion, and always with the dramatic shape and color that make them theater. They speak to the heart."[5]

The attributes mentioned above make Argento's songwriting also interesting for vocal pedagogy. Cycles from his younger years are frequent and almost required repertoire in American music schools because they are vocally composed, vocally accessible, artistically valuable, and, even with the benefit of hindsight, fresh. They offer a performance experience of 20th-century music from a different tradition for European singers.

Compositions of Dominik Argento, with a Focus on Songwriting

Dominick Argento[6] worked at the Department of Music at the University of Minnesota for his entire professional life (40 years), specializing in composition and opera. Besides teaching, he focused as a composer on opera and stage works (close association with directors of the Minnesota Theatre Company Sir Tyrone Guthrie and Douglas Campbell led to his composing incidental music for several productions),[7] song cycles,[8] and vocal-instrumental compositions.[9]

4 Feldman, 2005.

5 Source Song Festival (2019, February 1). *Dominick Argento*. Retrieved January 15, 2023, from https://www.sourcesongfestival.org/dominick-argento.

6 Dominick Argento was born in York, Pennsylvania, on October 27, 1927. He studied music at the Peabody Conservatory (N. Nabokov, H. Cowell, and H. Weisgall). After winning a Fulbright scholarship (1951), he further honed his compositional skills at the Cherubini Conservatory under L. Dallapiccola (Argento, D. (2004). *Catalogue Raisonné as Memoir: A Composer's Life.* University of Minnesota Press). In 1957 Argento completed his doctoral studies at the Eastman School of Music (A. Hovhaness, H. Hanson, and B. Rogers) and in 1958 he joined the Department of Music at the University of Minnesota. In 1997 his alma mater awarded him the title of professor emeritus (Feldman, 2005). The composer died in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on February 20, 2019, at the age of 91 (Tommasini, A. (2019, February 25). *Dominick Argento, 'Traditionalist' Composer of Operas, Dies at 91*. The New York Times. Retrieved January 14, 2023, from https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/25/obituaries/dominick-argento-dead.html).

7 Argento's frequently performed operas include *Shoemaker's Holiday* – 1967, *Postcard from Morocco* – 1971, *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* – 1976, *Miss Havisham's Fire* – 1979, rev. 1995, and The Dream of Valentino – 1993 (Feldman, 2005).

8 Argento composed 12 song cycles, including compositions for all voice types except bass and children's voices. The song cycles are as follows: *Songs about Spring* (1954), a cycle of five songs for soprano and piano/soprano and orchestra; *Six Elizabethan Songs* (1957–1958), a cycle of six songs for high voice and piano/high voice and baroque ensemble; *Letters from Composers* (1968), a cycle of seven songs for high voice (tenor) and guitar; *To Be Sung upon the Water* (1973), a cycle of eight songs for high voice (tenor), clarinet/bass clarinet and piano; *From the Diary of the Virginia Woolf* (1974), a cycle of eight songs for mezzo-soprano and piano; *The Andreé Expedition* (1982), a cycle of thirteen songs for baritone and piano; *Casa Guidi* (1983), a cycle of five songs for mezzo-soprano and orchestra/mezzo-soprano and piano; *A Few Words about Chekhov* (1996), a duo cycle of seven songs for mezzo-soprano, baritone and piano; *Miss Manners on Music (*1998), a cycle of seven songs for mezzo-soprano and piano; *Three Sonnets of Petrarch* (2007), three songs for baritone and piano; *Three Meditations* (2008), three songs for solo soprano and *Cabaret Songs* (2011), five songs for mezzo-soprano and piano (The Hampsong Foundation (2023, January 2). *Dominick Argento*. Song of America. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from https://songofamerica.net/composer/argento-dominick/).

9 Argento's vocal-instrumental compositions include, for example, the oratorio *Jonah and the Whale* (1973), *Te Deum* (1987), and the choral work *Evensong: Of Love and Angels* (2007).

Composer Dominick Argento in 2001[10]

He also composed several choral pieces,[11] which were commissioned by regional, university, or other renowned ensembles and had an exciting place in his vocal works. Argento's symphonic works[12] have also been performed by many of America's leading orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic and others.[13]

In addition to the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his song cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* (1975), the composer has received many other honors and awards. He has also been nominated for multiple Grammy Awards, winning the Classical Contemporary Composition category award in 1991 for *Te Deum* and in 2004 for the *Casa Guidi* cycle.[14]

Dominick Argento considers the voice the original instrument and is fascinated by its flexibility, sensitivity, and vulnerability, as well as by creating for it. He claims, "The singer's intelligence, character, technique, and instrument are so intimately integrated that they create a 'persona' readily identifiable."[15]

In his essay, *The Matter of Text*, Argento quotes Gustave Flaubert's idea that "one is certainly not free to write on any subject" and considers artistic freedom in this context to be an illusion. He claims that we do not choose the topic, but it chooses us. He further states that he was always proud of the variety and imagination of the literary subjects in his work until he realized that the individual works are diverse only in the way processing the theme of self-knowledge – comic, farcical, or serious, which pervades and unifies not only his operatic but also his composition of songs.[16]

10 Source Song Festival, 2019.

11 Well-known are, for example, the choral cycles *I Hate and I Love* (1982) and *The Seasons* (2014).

12 Argento's instrumental compositions include the orchestral variations *Masks of the Night* – 1965; the orchestral songs *Praise of Music* – 1977 (Argento, 2004) and many others.

13 Argento, 2004.

14 Feldman, 2005.

15 Argento, D. (1977). The Composer and the Singer. *The NATS Bulletin: The Official Magazine of the National Association of Teachers of Singing., No. 4* (33), 18–24.

16 Argento, D. (1988). The Matter of Text. *The NATS Journal, No. 4* (44), 8–9.

In one of the interviews, the composer states that he loves language and words. Setting a literary text to music is natural for him, and if he had not become a composer, he would undoubtedly have been a writer.[17] His ability to use literary language for the benefit of expressing musical intent is genuinely extraordinary, closely related to the natural shaping of the text – to its prosody, formal side, and emotional and semantic peaks. The composer explains his inclination toward a prose text by the rhythmic freedom of the sentence and the possibility to slow down and emphasize a word. At the same time, he considers composing in English challenging, especially if it is a poetic text with a bound rhythm, from which "... you cannot deviate, you cannot impose your own feeling on it..."[18]

Several of Argento's song cycles are remarkable for their choice of unusual prose, including letters, and diary entries, which in the first place did not offer apparent possibilities for musical settings, but suited him for their intimacy of the prose, allowing insight into the mind of the author, not always outwardly presented in his published works (V. Woolf, E. B. Browning, A. P. Chekhov, letters of composers, researchers, etc.).

In the essay, *The Composer and the Singer*, Argento compare the intimacy of the letter and the diary entry to the intimacy of the song, which he considers the quintessence of the composer's personality, his purest statement, "the most personal being, unadorned, unencumbered, stripped of pose, spontaneous, distilled which (...) gives us the essence of his musical language – pure and simple."[19]

Argento often chose the text based on who would sing his work and adapted the musical arrangement to the performer's character.[20] Almost all his cycles were commissioned, mainly at the initiative of specific singers: *Songs About Spring* for Carolyn Bailey,[21] *Six Elizabethan Songs* for Nicholas DiVirgilio. The most important of them – *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, The Andreé Expedition*, and *A Few Words about Chekhov* – were commissioned by the Schubert Club for Janet Baker and Håkan Hagegård, while the impetus for the *Casa Guidi* cycle was a commission for the mezzo-soprano Frederika von Stade.[22]

The diversity of the composer's approach to the musical processing of literary works within the cycles is also reflected, for example, in the selection of less common groupings – high voice and baroque ensemble; high voice and guitar; high voice, clarinet/bass clarinet and piano; duet cycle for mezzo-soprano, baritone and piano or songs for solo soprano. Like Strauss and Mahler, many of Argento's songs exist in both piano and orchestral versions. In compositions from the 1970s onwards, the composer usually uses prominent prologues and epilogues that reflect a dramatic arc reminiscent of a monodrama or chamber opera. After 1974, his work is dominated by compositions for more colorful voices – mezzo-soprano and baritone.

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17 Douma, J. (2007). Building a Well-made House: An Interview with Dominick Argento. *Choral Journal: The Official Publication of the American Choral Directors Association., No. 12* (47), 28–35.

18 Douma, 2007, p. 32.

19 Argento, 1977, p. 20.

20 Douma, 2007, p. 33.

21 Note: Carolyn Bailey, the composer's wife, premiered all the vocal works he composed for soprano and was an invaluable adviser to him (Argento, 2004, p. 5). In collaboration with the National Opera Association, Argento founded the Carolyn Bailey Argento Vocal Competition in honor of his wife, in which young singers can compete annually to win a generous scholarship that will cover their studies at the master's or postgraduate level at most U.S. art schools (National Opera Association (2023, January 2). *Carolyn Bailey Argento Vocal Competition*. Retrieved January 17, 2023, from https://www.noa.org/vocal.html).

22 Argento, 2004.

To reconcile the musical and textual components, Argento sometimes uses complex rhythms and frequent changes of measure and meter, freely combining places with clear tonality and atonal sections, using repetitive melodic structures and various ciphers. For example, in the cycle *The Andreé Expedition*, he deliberately illustrates the expedition's journey by choosing different keys. The prologue and epilogue are in A major (A as Andreé), songs in the Part I are in major keys and follow a circle of fifths. In Part II, we also find songs in minor "...[they] are a kind of sign that they [the expedition] are leaving, ascending, wandering [...] their bodies are returned to Sweden after the tragedy, so we end up where we started."[23] He also often works with musical quotations and allusions to European musical history. For example, in *Letters from Composers* cycle, he uses his musical language to imitate the musical styles of his favorite composers, from Bach to Debussy (Bach's case uses contrapuntal work with voices and augmentation; in Chopin's case uses a hint of a nocturne, in Mozart's case use of Alberti's bass, in Schubert's case quoted of a phrase from *Gretchen am Spinnrade's* song *Meine Ruh ist hin, Mein Herz ist schwer*,[24] and by the oscillations between Major and Minor, and so on); in *To Be Sung upon the Water,* he works with allusions to Schubert (to the song *Auf dem Wasser zu singen*, with the theme and motifs of wandering, the use of contrasting moods in the order of the songs, the illustration of nature in the way of instrumentation, etc.); in *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, we find in the fourth song anticipated liturgical chants (Requiem aeternam), in the fifth a quotation from Tosca; in *Miss Manners on Music*, e.g., in the song *Manners at the Opera*[25] we find hints of recitative and arioso movements and allusions to Italian opera.

Argento's musical language is lyrical, richly melodic, with broadly arching and cantilena-like phrases, and he composes vocally despite the more complex intervallic progressions. He also exploits the various expressive possibilities of the voice in terms of dynamics and tone production; for example, in the cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, he enhances the intimacy of the text and emphasizes the experience of the main character with an often lower, almost speaking position of the voice, muted dynamics, repetitiveness, and almost a cappella singing. In the song *War*, these means of expression also underline Woolf's fear when she finds herself in a borderline life-and-death situation.[26]

The composer makes considerable demands on the performer, often prescribing many interpretative requirements, but through these passages, he accompanies the singer, and the song thus takes on concrete contours. The vocal and piano or other instrumental or orchestral components are entirely autonomous. The song cycles from the period after 1974 are already demanding, requiring technically and interpretively mature performers who can translate a wide range of emotions and experiences of a person in a difficult life situation.

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23 Argento, 2004, p. 20.

24 The quotation mentioned can be found in the video available online from the 9th minute 34th second. The cycle was performed by Michael Slattery – tenor, and Jeffrey Van – guitar, at the Source Song Festival of Minnesota on August 8, 2016 ([Source Song Festival of Minnesota. An Argento Celebration]. (2020, July 26). *Letters from Composers by Dominick Argento.* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gkQbxSHa5c&t=576s).

25 A live recording of the cycle is available online, performed by Phillis Pancella – mezzo-soprano, and Timothy Hoekman – piano. The mentioned song can be found in the video from the 15th-minute 22nd second ([Emersonsgirl]. (2014, May 27). *Miss Manners on Music by Dominick Argento* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jC60L3lEf4).

26 Wollf's London home was destroyed in an air raid (Kimball, 2005, p. 723).

Example 1: Allusions to Italian opera in the introduction of the song *Manners at the Opera.*[27]

Example 2: Song *War.*[28]

[27] Argento, D. (2006b). *Collected Song Cycles. Medium/Low voice* (p. 219). Hal Leonard, Boosey & Hawkes.

[28] Argento, 2006b, p. 73. Note: A live recording of the cycle from January 5, 1975, at Orchestral Hall in Minneapolis performed by Dame Janet Baker and Martin Isepp can be heard here – [Hal Leonard Listening Library – Art Song]. (2017, April 4). *From the Diary of Virginia Wolf by Dominick Argento* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmUgvQJXfbs&t=897s.

The Use of Dominick Argento's Songwriting in the Teaching of Voice at Faculties of Education

Even though the national singing schools are vastly different, some general requirements become the goal of technical training and interpretation progress. The contemporary singing ideal used in solo concerts and operatic singing expects breath support, covered, mixed, soft, loose, resonant tone with perfect vibrato and capable of dynamic changes.[29]

Compared to music faculties, the vocal training of future teachers for primary music schools tends towards a different aesthetic of tone (a natural-sounding tone without exaggerated vibrato is desired as the most suitable singing model for the pupil). The differences are also in the difficulty of the repertoire,[30] the choice of which must be varied in character and style and lead to the acquisition and deepening of the student's vocal-technical and performing abilities and to a cultivated and artfully valuable vocal expression.

We tried to select songs from Dominick Argento's work that would meet the following requirements:

1. adequate technical and performance demands on a young voice in training,
2. possibilities of qualitative development of the voice (color, range, mobility),
3. mastery of English diction,
4. adequate song length,
5. not too demanding piano accompaniment.

The choice of repertoire is, of course, in the hands of the teacher. It is his/her decision whether, for a particular student, he/she prefers songs that require a more advanced level of singing technique or whether he/she places more demanding requirements on the student in interpretation, and also what language he/she chooses to use. The possibility of reaching for repertoire in English is helped by the fact that the current generation of young people is well-versed in the language, and for many, it sounds very natural.

Argento's compositions often demand some level of technical proficiency and musical sensitivity from the performer, making them a challenge for students of singing. Additionally, his vocal writing often incorporates complex rhythmic and melodic elements that can help students develop their rhythmic precision and melodic control. In terms of teaching, Argento's music can also provide students with valuable opportunities to explore different interpretive approaches. Through careful study and analysis of his scores, students can gain a deeper appreciation for the nuances of musical expression and develop their style as a performer.

Argento's second song cycle, ***Six Elizabethan Songs,*** is most often used in the vocal training of young voices. The composer was aware of this fact and saw its popularity among young singers as a tribute: "*Six Elizabethan Songs* – the very first work I composed after my postgraduate studies – has turned out to be my most performed. There are now at least seven recordings (...), several of which are made with a baroque ensemble (which I prefer).

[29] Šimová, O. (1991). *Teória hudobnej výchovy: Základy vokálnej interpretácie (Theory of Music Education: Fundaments of Vocal Performance).* Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, p. 17.

[30] Žiarna, M. (2015). Inovácia študijného programu Hudobné umenie a spev na Katedre hudby PF KU v Ružomberku (Innovation of the Study Programme Music and Singing at the Department of Music, Faculty of Education, the Catholic University in Ružomberok). *Studia Scientifica Facultatis Paedagogicae Universitas Catholica Ružomberok*, *No. 1* (14), 80.

It turns up frequently in recitals and seems to be popular with singing teachers. (...) I was informed that they are required repertoire in Canadian music schools, which is more significant to me than winning a Pulitzer Prize."[31]

This cycle of six songs set to poetry by Elizabethan poets for high voice and piano was composed in 1957–1958, lasts 19 minutes, and was premiered on April 23, 1958, at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. It featured Nicholas DiVirgilio, tenor, and David Burge, pianist. Argento also orchestrated a version for a baroque ensemble in 1963. The premiere was in Minneapolis on March 8, 1963, sung by Carolyn Bailey.[32]

At the time of the *Six Elizabethan Song*s, Argento was in his early thirties. It is thus the work of a young man, full of energy and lyricism, with rich melody and harmony. The poetic form influenced choice of musical form (based mainly on the bipartition) and the choice of musical devices to illustrate the mood of the songs, combining classical poetry and the compositional techniques of 20th-century music.[33] The song texts are united by the choice of Elizabethan authors, belong to the love, reflective, or nature lyric, and have a different poetic form. The composer sorted texts in the cycle contrastingly, especially in terms of tempo – fast, *Spring, Winter, Diaphenia*, alternating with slow, moderate, *Sleep, Dirge,* and *Hymn.* The vocal and piano lines are equal, and intertwined, the piano accompaniment plays a significant role in creating a poetic mood. Several songs are similar in their dynamic quiet endings (*Spring, Sleep, Dirge*, *Hymn)*.

Although the cycle requires a reasonably capable performer with a light and mobile voice that can meet the composer's recitative demands, a large voice is not required. The songs' different emotional positions, and the choice of timeless texts using various expressive devices (which the composer lists precisely in the vocal part – e. g. dynamic shades from *ppp* to *p* refines the further instructions *pp quasi sotto voce*; agogic changes similarly), also develop the singer's interpretation skills. However, collaboration with a technically proficient pianist is essential. Although he places somewhat higher technical demands on the singers, one can imagine, for example, using a variety of songs in a diploma concert for more mature and mobile lyrical voices. The popularity of the cycle with voice teachers is justified by the technical and artistic demands the cycle places on the performers. The prescribed tempi and length of phrases respect the natural breathing capacity and contribute to the development of cantilena and tone conduction in *legato*, the mobility of the voice, and the elimination of intervallic singing. Chromaticism and intonation leaps develop the singer aurally, and recitative stretches help more convincing expression and precise articulation.

An example of a technically accessible and impressive composition, useful in the vocal training of lyric soprano or tenor voices, can be found in the opening song ***Spring***. The text comes from the allegorical pastoral theatrical comedy *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, written by Thomas Nashe (1567–1601).[34] The lyric poem of the character Spring (Vertum) from the above comedy is a nature lyric celebrating the season, new life, and happiness,

31 Argento, 2004, pp. 29–30.

32 Ibid., p. 26.

33 Kimball, 2006, p. 726.

34 Nashe's lyrics have inspired several composers. In the 20th century, it was heard, for example, in the *Spring Symphony,* Op. 44 by Benjamin Britten (1913–1976), became part of choral compositions and is also set to music in song cycles by Frederick Delius (1862–1934), Ivor Gurney (1890–1937), and Peter Warlock (1894–1930), among others (The LiederNet Archive (2003, September 14). *Spring, the Sweet Spring, is the Year's*... Retrieved February 11, 2023, from https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=120047).

dominated by liveliness, joy, and descriptiveness of images. The beauty of spring is presented through simple pastoral scenery and figurative means of expression. Each stanza concludes with an onomatopoeic series of words depicting a chorus of birds – a cuckoo, a nightingale, a titmouse, and an owl are heard. In the end, by repeating the first verse, the lyric voice in the exclamation accentuates the sweetness and enthusiasm of spring.

The song is in a rather lively tempo, *Allegretto piacevole* (♩ = 96), in F major, 2/4 time, but the key is not defined by foreshadowing at the song's beginning. Its musical form is in three parts, with a tendency towards two parts with abbreviated recapitulation. It enters straightly in *mezzoforte,* without an introduction, as an exclamation, straight through the song's highest note. Despite the dominance of the higher vocal position, it is easy to sing because it falls well within the typical range of a soprano or tenor voice and underlines its mobility. The figurative accompaniment in the piano part in the right hand is articulated *staccato (quasi pizzicati)* in sixteenth-note values and evokes lute or guitar playing.

Example 3: The first phrase in the song *Spring*, mm. 1–6.[35]

The song is energetic, communicates a joyful, vivid image, encourages lyrical expression, undulates with chords, and is more intervallic. The vocal range is e♭^{4}–f^5, *tessitura*[36] ranges from f^4–f^5. Although not challenging, it requires a performer with a light and mobile voice, able to meet the composer's demands for rapid changes in musical articulation and dynamics, as well as a more technically proficient pianist to enable the singer to sing longer *legato* lines and to provide support in the dynamic construction of phrases. The intervallic nature of the melody and the *staccato* in the piano accompaniment can cause the most acute technical problems, as they are tempting to interrupt the *legato* when phrasing. In moving the melodic line downward, it is essential to maintain the desired activity and tonal balance of the voice. Care should be taken to give distinct diction and intonation and to ensure that minor rhythmic values are sung at a given tempo. The beginnings of phrases with deployment on f^5 on the vocal "i" in words *spring, in,* and *street* can be problematic; the prescribed *forte* should not push the singer into forcing the notes in question. Further, some onsets can be problematic in faster tempos. Strict adherence to prescribed musical articulation and dynamics is essential to achieve appropriate expression.

[35] Argento, D. (1970). *Six Elizabethan Songs*. Boosey & Hawkes, p. 2.

[36] *Tessitura* means the range and position of a sung piece. It determines its difficulty and method for technical mastery (Smutná-Vlková, M. (1961). *Metodika spevu I. (Methodology of Singing, 1st part).* Supraphon, p. 57).

An example of an interpretively interesting song can also be ***Dirge.*** Its lyrics come from Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, in Act II, Scene 4, in which Cesario (Viola in disguise) and Orsino converse about women not being able to love as intensely as young men. Then Curio and the jester Feste arrive, and at Prince Orsino's request, Feste sings the song *Come Away, Come Away Death* to remind those involved (Orsino and Viola) of their unhappy love.[37] The lyrics of the lament belong to the reflexive love lyric, are very intimate, have a somber content, and are based on a lived impression. The lyrical subject is heartbroken because he has been rejected by a "fair cruel maid," wallows in self-pity, and sees death as the only alternative end to his grief. He also addresses death directly, invites it to himself, and asks it for a place of peaceful final rest under the treetops (cypress and yew are symbols of sorrow, death, and eternity). With some satisfaction, he wishes that his body, wrapped in a white shroud and placed in a black coffin, be buried in a secret place without flowers and friends present so that the woman who despised his love may never find a grave in which to mourn him.

Dirge is the fourth song of the cycle. It is in the tempo *Largo e semplice* (♪ = 60), in 4/8 time, but again, the key is not defined by foreshadowing at the beginning. The tonal center is obscured, but the song's character is predominantly major; the composer uses *E major, G major, G minor, A major,* and *B major*, and ends in *C major*. The musical form of the song is based on a two-part structure. The introduction evokes a mood of sadness – in the austere and quiet piano accompaniment in *legatissimo*, the composer introduces the musical material of part a (a melodic motif from the right-hand piano part in mm. 1–3) and part b (a harmonic progression based on *E major* in mm. 4–6).

Example 4: The introduction of the song *Dirge*, mm. 1–6.[38]

The vocal line moves independently of the accompaniment and is composed of short motives and sighs, punctuated by dashes, and moves in a smaller vocal range and smaller intervallic steps. The piano accompaniment is austere – only the right-hand plays in thirds in subdued dynamics at the quarter and eighth note rhythmic values.

[37] Stewartry (2010, August 16). *Twelfth Night: Come Away, Come Away, Death*. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from https://agoldoffish.wordpress.com/2010/08/16/twelfth-night-come-away-come-away-death/.

[38] Argento, 1970, p. 14.

Part b comes in at m. 16 in a livelier tempo (*Poco più mosso*), in *mezzopiano,* the vocal part is recitative-like, moving mainly in *tessitura* e^4–b^4. The piano accompaniment also changes – its vertical, chordal character contrasts with the more horizontally composed earlier work.[39]

The song's end is interesting, with a *stentando* and *melisma* in mm. 41–42 on the word "weep" in the vocal part and a descending melodic line in the piano.[40]

Example 5: The *melisma* and *stentando* at the end of the song *Dirge*, mm. 40–42.[41]

The song's vocal range is only e^4–e^5, and the *tessitura* of the vocal part is in the range $f\#^4$ –e^5. However, the song is challenging in communicating boundless sadness and a very intimate atmosphere. The performer can achieve a true expression, especially through his/her calmness and restraint, without pathetic elements. The middle position is more dominant here, so it should be sounded in *piano* and its shades. It is advisable to be aware of the quarter pulsation so that the melody flows in a slow tempo. The *b* and *b'* parts require more contrasting dynamics and good diction. At the end of the song, it is also necessary to observe the other recitation instructions (*poco crescendo, subito pp, stentando*).

The cycle *Six Elizabethan Songs* was also published in 2006 in a collection of song cycles for middle and low voice in a transposition a third lower.[42] This made the songs more accessible regarding the vocal position, but the cycle was primarily written for the high lyric voice, which has different attributes. Songs in a faster tempo (Spring, Winter, Diaphenia) require vocal agility, which is quite a demand for lower, training voices. However, for example, the song *Dirge* has become very accessible to the young baritone due to transposition ($c\#^4$ –$c\#^5$ range in the vocal part).

Among other songs by Dominik Argento, the song ***Spring Is Like a Perhaps Hand*** may be accessible for a technically and interpretively more advanced young lyric soprano at faculties of education from the cycle ***Songs About Spring*****.** Dedicated to Carolyn Bailey, Argento considered the cycle to be his first opus as a composer, although he did not complete

39 Thomas, E. R. (1988). *A Recital of Art and Dramatic Songs* [Master's thesis, Kansas State University]. https://archive.org/details/recitalofartdram00thom.

40 Thomas, ibid., p. 41.

41 Argento, 1970, p. 16.

42 Argento, 2006b, p. 229.

it until he was 23. It is characterized by intense lyricism and a romantic mood, featuring atonal sections and places of clear tonality.[43] A waltz tempo links the first, third, and fifth songs, and the fourth, meditative, is notable for its canonic treatment of the vocal line in the piano's right hand alone. The vocal range of the songs in the cycle ranges from c♭^{4} to c^6, their *tessitura* is high, and they are demanding intonationally and rhythmically in terms of vocal technique and interpretation.

The song *Spring Is Like a Perhaps Hand* is the second in the cycle, it is in the tempo *Larghetto semplice* (♪ = 72), in 4/8 time, and the key is not defined by foreshadowing. The tonal center is not completely clear, the harmony oscillates between major and minor characters, modulates, and the harmonic development goes from *A minor* to *F major*. The musical form of the song is based on a two-part form. In the text by E. E. Cummings, spring is poetically likened to a hand that quietly and carefully changes the old for the new, arranging the world while people look on silently. Its mood is very lyrical and intimate. It is supported by a spare piano accompaniment moving in a syncopated rhythm that only stops at the end of each movement, emphasizing in *ppp* to *pppp* the textual point "... and changing everything carefully..." and "...and without breaking anything..."[44]

Example 6: The descending phrase in the song *Spring Is Like a Perhaps Hand.*[45]

The vocal range of the song is d#^{4}–g^5. The singer technically needs to deal with leading legato descending phrases progressing from a high vocal position in a slower tempo, with

[43] Argento, 2004, p. 5.
[44] Argento, D. (2006a). *Collected Song Cycles. High Voice.* Hal Leonard, Boosey & Hawkes, p. 6.
[45] Argento, ibid.

frequent measure changes and a more rhythmically demanding vocal line independent of the piano accompaniment.

To avoid losing the musical flow of the phrases, it is advisable to perceive a quarter pulsation for the vocal. It is also necessary to intonationally master surprising and less singable intervallic and chromatic progressions. The performer must also master intelligible diction in dynamics from *ppp* to *mp* and the interpretation of the lyrical aspect of the textual narrative. The cycle *Songs About Spring* transposed a third lower is also part of the middle and low voice collection.

Within the preparation of students at faculties of education, they may also find useful the songs from Argento's latest cycle *Cabaret Songs*, which he composed for middle voice and piano to his texts.

The cycle contains five varied but technically and interpretively accessible songs with simpler harmonic structures and poetic love lyrics. The first of these – ***Who Could Have Known?*** – is at a moderate tempo (Moderate and lovingly), in the vocal range d^4–eb^5, with a lower *tessitura* (d^4–d^5), and is interpretively oriented towards a chanson-like expression, requiring from the singer a tender, affectionate delivery, the ability to lead phrases with longer rhythmic values in *legato*, and to master intonationally the less usual intervallic leaps. The second song – ***You Are a Love Song*** – is also in a moderate tempo (Simply and tenderly 𝅗𝅥 = 66), with a vocal range of b^3–g^5, but the vocal line is in a higher *tessitura* (e^4–g^5). Ascending phrases with second progressions towards a transitional vocal position and a downward deepening of the vocal line in the tail can help the tonal balance of the voice, the phrase

Example 7: The first phrases in the song *You Are a Love Song.*[46]

[46] Argento, D. (2011). *Cabaret Songs.* Boosey & Hawkes, p. 8.

leading in *legato*, and the aural development of the singer. The song also requires soft, gentle expression and the ability to build phrases dynamically. The shorter singing surface (38 mm.) also makes it accessible.

The other three songs are technically and interpretively more demanding. *The Luckiest Woman* is the fastest in the cycle in terms of tempo (Sprightly, ♩ = 129); the challenge for the performer is mainly its rhythmic aspect (syncopated rhythm, triplets) and intonational precision. The development of the singer's musicality is supported by the humorous lyrics, conceived with exaggeration, about the adverse circumstances that can befall a person at every turn. Using cantilena phrases in Italian and a slow tempo in *Sai Tu Perchè?* gives the impression of a moody chanson. The last song has three variations – 5a *You*, 5b *Crazy Lady*, 5c *You, and Crazy Lady***.** Because of the variant designations and the closed content of the text, they can also be interpreted separately. The performance of all three songs gives the impression of a cabaret number. Argento states in a note that variant 5b is intended for a singing pianist to enter musically into the applause for the preceding song presenting a declaration of love.[47] Variant 5c combines the two previous songs; the *duetto* retains its melodic lines and lyrics, and only the piano part is newly arranged and simpler.

Conclusion

Dominick Argento's songs are almost unknown in the Central Europe, yet they represent little unsung and dramaturgically attractive concert or competition repertoire. The study aimed to acquaint the reader with it and to outline possibilities of its use in the vocal training of students at the faculties of education. If one is interested in unusual music of the 20th century and is not looking for an explicitly atonal musical language, a selection from the songwriting of D. Argento can be an exciting alternative allowing for the technical and interpretive growth of young trainee voices.

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[47] Note: Because he responds with the lyrics "Crazy Lady losin' her mind" ... Variant 5b requires quite a good tenor (vocal range c^3–$a♭^4$, *tessitura* f^3–f^4).

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CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION FROM THE TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSIC CREATIVE WORK WITH CHILDREN AGED 5–6 IN FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Abstract
This study is a qualitative research project focused on teachers' views of their influences on children's (aged 5–6) musical creativity within the context of formal education in the United Kingdom. The study offers insight into teachers' efforts to develop creativity directly and indirectly and explores other factors which connect to creativity, such as institutional context, teacher training, and musical and pedagogical skills. Participants (seven music teachers working in state and private schools in York, UK, with children aged 5–6) were recruited through snowball sampling and participated in one-to-one semi-structured interviews. The findings suggest that teachers implemented age-appropriate short improvisational and compositional tasks. However, free access to musical instruments was supported in nurseries rather than in Year 1 of formal school education. Interviewees considered themselves creative, musical, and musically creative teachers, although only some of them confirmed that their teacher training helped them develop children's musical creativity.

Keywords
5- and 6-year-old children – children's musical creativity – formal education – teachers' views

Introduction

Not only does content knowledge remain essential, but also certain dispositions to manage to live in an increasingly fluid globalized world (Bauman, 2014). At the same time, a disposition such as creativity may become politically commodified away from aesthetic and educational directions to fulfill economic interests (Craft, 2001; Craft, 2005). In connection to the technological, economic, and social changes in the last thirty years (Shaheen, 2010), creativity "might have been a luxury for the few, but by now it is a necessity for all" (Jackson et al., 2006). With this in mind, it is appropriate to consider the relationship between creativity and education from the "democratic" point of view, which means that it is not limited by talent. On the contrary, it is available to every individual as a basic capacity for future life because everyone has the potential to be creative (NACCCE, 1999; Neelands et al., 2015). According to the National Advisory Committee for Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999), children's creativity as a human character should be developed through formal education. Formal education following

the British National Curriculum was also influenced by Paynter's (1992) ideas of composing as a core creative musical activity in developing the curriculum in the 1990s.

In terms of creativity context, psychologists and researchers have described a distinction between "big C" creativity, having a broader influence on society, and "little c" creativity, defining creativity in terms of everyday problem-solving and benefiting the personality (Craft, 2001; Banaji et al., 2010). Following this, the "four c model of creativity" was structured (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009), and two other constructs were added: "mini-c creativity" and "professional creativity." First, the "mini-c" construct includes creativity inherent in the learning process, which is novel and meaningful for the creator. Second, the "little-c" level of creativity reflects growth and advancement, and the creative product may also be valued by others. Third, the "pro-c" level of creativity means to be creative at a professional level and with a professional value. Finally, the "big-C" level includes one's entire career and work, which makes a valuable contribution to the social-historical context. Within the present research, the first two constructs are appropriate.

Another difference in terminology has been delineated as product-oriented and process-oriented creativity (Smith, 2005). While product-oriented creativity focuses on novelty and appropriateness of the outcome (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999), process-oriented creativity concentrates on mental processes, including problem-solving, generating novel, unusual ideas, or their variety and combination (Esquivel, 1995; Tafuri, 2006). To apply it within the present research, children's musical "mini-c" or "little c" creative efforts flow to creative musical products which are new for the creator, not for the society (Webster, 2002) and have the form of improvisation or composition; the other forms of involvement with music are generally considered to be listening, performance, and composition (Peterson, 2006).

Kratus (1994) distinguished between improvisation, as the process of trying new musical ideas via exploration, and composition, as a process of variations and restructuration leading to a replicable product or as a primary medium of constructing musical understanding (Paynter, 1992). Specifically, a child's musical creative activity in a classroom may look like improvisation with voice, singing, lyrics, movement, musical instruments, and musical apps or writing music down in any way (Koutsoupidou, 2005). As mentioned before, creative musical products do not have to be absolutely new, but they may have a form of transformation, modification, combination, or variation (Tafuri, 2006). Compared with the "big C" creativity, which is the extraordinary work of a few geniuses, children's musical creative process is fundamental, playful, imaginative, spontaneous, and inventive (Craft, 2001; Tafuri, 2006; Cremin, 2009). The most significant benefit for the child is not creating products but the creative mental process itself (Esquivel, 1995). The quality of both "mini-c" and "everyday" creativity may be revealed in any aspect of life, any school subject, or any domain (Craft, 2001). However, creativity is determined by prior domain-specific knowledge and skills (Feldman & Benjamin, 2006; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). Along with all these aspects connected to creativity, it is not possible to judge creativity on any level independently of a specialized domain across time, social and cultural environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The place where creativity and pedagogical practices rarely meet is called the "conventional teaching and learning process" (Lin, 2009), "traditional practices," or "fixed pedagogies" (Sawyer, 2004), where learning and teaching are two parallel processes. Therefore, a new meeting point was found in "fluid pedagogies" (Sawyer, 2004), allowing for discussion, exploring the unexpected, and fostering learners' creative potential. Another perspective highlights the importance of the interrelationship between "creative teaching" or "teaching

creatively" and the term "teaching for creativity," where the first former is inherent and the second leads directly to the latter (NAACE, 1999; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004).

Lin (2011) advances a "creative pedagogy" framework comprising three interconnected elements: creative teaching, teaching for creativity, and creative learning. Creative teaching inspires children via memorable, dynamic, engaging, innovative, exciting, and dynamic approaches (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; Craft, 2005; Craft, 2011). Teaching for creativity is focused on the learner, enabling him or her to explore, to arouse their motivation and their curiosity for learning (Craft, 2005; Lin, 2011), and provides the optimum balance between structure and freedom of expression (Runco, 1990; Craft, 2000). Creative learning is neglected compared to teaching creativity and teaching for creativity (Lin, 2011), and therefore also its components such as imagination, possible thinking, spontaneity, experimenting, playfulness, autonomy, collaboration, and risk-taking (Brinkman, 2010). In this research project, all the elements of creative pedagogy mentioned above are the conceptual framework for research within the musical context.

Several researchers have focused on the musical creativity of young children and their music teachers. For instance, Bilton (2012) and Siraj-Blatchford (2010) highlighted the role of teacher-child interactional quality in promoting children's thinking and developing, extending, and deepening children's musicality, knowledge, and creativity. However, only a few studies (Koutsoupidou, 2008; Rozman, 2009) focused on children's musical creativity from the teachers' perspective, using an interview as a research method. The first, Koutsoupidou (2008), ascertained that teachers believed that a child-centered, creative approach has a positive impact on developing children's musical creativity. The second, Rozman (2009) concluded that teachers were satisfied with creative musical activities in Slovenian classrooms. However, they were not fully acquainted with aspects of musical creative thinking and strategies for teaching composition and improvisation.

In accordance with Lin's (2011) model of creativity mentioned previously, Uszyńka's (1998) quantitative research of 643 6-year-old pre-schoolers showed that the most significant factor determining a child's creative potential is the pedagogic one. This study follows Uszyńska's (1998) conclusion and expands it into formal music education. The main aim is to investigate how the perspective of music teachers in formal educational institutions influences the musically creative potential of 5-year-olds and 6-year-olds. The study addresses more specific research questions; two of them are drawn from the areas in Uszyńska's (1998) conclusion: Which approaches, resources, motivation, and what type of behavior and educational style are used by teachers to develop children's musical creativity directly? How do teachers prepare the classroom atmosphere and musical instruments to develop children's musical creativity indirectly? The third question was added to explore which other factors might influence teachers and their fostering of children's musical creativity: How do factors such as institutional context, teacher training, and musical and pedagogical skills influence the development of children's musical creativity?

Method

For this study, the semi-structured interview as a qualitative method was used. The qualitative-oriented paradigm was deployed in order to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' experience in developing children's musical creativity in their own words and from their

perspectives. Following the extensive preliminary reading, related topics and relevant interview themes were combined into an interview schedule. The semi-structured interviews used open-ended questions to gather data about topics related to teachers' encouragement of children's musical creativity (Job in a school, Music lessons, Children's musical creativity, Teacher's musical and pedagogical skills, Teacher training). The study took place in York, UK, and participants were recruited through snowball sampling. The initial point of contact was emailing all primary schools in York and then observing a few of their music lessons. Following this, invitations to participate in the research were sent to all teachers who agreed to participate in the observation. They were encouraged to inform other teachers about the research and forward them an information letter about the project. Through this process, seven teachers were recruited. The first stage involved going into classrooms and observing the teachers working with pupils, which helped to understand the classroom context. Subsequently, each face-to-face interview with the teachers took around 45–60 minutes. The digital recordings of the interviews were transcribed and sent back to participants to enable them to make any amendments or additions regarding creative musical materials, books, websites, and other resources.

Participants and Ethical Considerations

Seven teachers took part, all teaching children aged 5–6 in formal educational institutions in York. This age group of five- and six-year-olds was chosen for two reasons. First, the children are developing physically, psychologically, and socially. They desire to learn, explore, and experiment, which is a good basis for learning to tolerate essential musical rules and for the development of musical creativity. Second, the pedagogical approach to music education at this educational level is characterized as playful, disparate, practical, sensorial, movement-based, child-led, and crucial for future child's creativity development (Craft, 2000; Craft, 2005; Brinkman, 2010). In addition, children of this age may be taught by both non-specialists and music specialists; these may differ in approaches and confidence in musical and pedagogical skills and may encounter contrasting challenges. Five of the seven teachers included in this research project were music specialists (music teaching for all age groups); one was a freelance music teacher and a music specialist simultaneously, and the last was an Early Years teacher (teaching 4–5-year-old children). All of them were female, with a mean age of 46.1, between ages 28–55, and their teaching experience averaged 21.9 years, with a range of 7–31 years (see Table 1).

Regarding private and state schools, the two different types of schools were considered. However, the fact that only a few participants responded resulted in a mix of schools. With a low sample, the implications of choosing a mix of schools might be that there are differences in resources that have a bearing on the provision of instruments. It was impossible to state whether these also had implications for attitudes towards music from the head teacher, other staff, or parents.

Permission for the interview study was obtained from the Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee at the University of York.

Table 1. *Characteristics of study participants.*

Participants	Age	Teaching experience	Teacher type	Type of school	Educational attainment
P1	55	30	Freelance, music specialist	State	Master Musical Theatre
P2	45	23	Early Years teacher	State	Bachelor of Science
P3	53	25	Music specialist	State	Master Educational Studies
P4	55	31	Music specialist	State	Bachelor of Education
P5	28	7	Music specialist	State	Master in Community Music
P6	39	17	Music specialist	Private	Bachelor of Music
P7	48	20	Music specialist	State	Bachelor of Arts

Data Analysis

The guidelines of Cohen et al. (2011) and Robson & McCartan (2016) were used for analysis. The first step in analyzing data was to transfer audible data into written form. For this interpretative process, transcribing the verbal content alone was chosen. During this step, the researcher became more familiar with the data and the content of the interviews. After that, the inductive process of thematic content analysis started by assigning initial codes to data (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The next step was to collate all the sections with the same code in categories and then search for the broader themes and subthemes (Cohen et al., 2011). The themes, subthemes, and codes were reconsidered during the next step before organizing, defining, and naming the theme. Finally, the structured data as a whole was interpreted, and verbatim quotes were extracted to support arguments. To help with data organization, the computer program NVivo was used.

Results and Discussion

The results are divided into three main themes within the context of teachers' influence on children's musical creativity in formal education: (1) direct influence, (2) indirect influence, and (3) other influencing factors. Each of these themes contains several related subthemes. The first one, teachers' direct influence, consists of the following subthemes: creative musical approaches, teacher's behavior and educational style, supporting motivation, and used resources. The second theme, teachers' indirect influence, involves subthemes such as classroom atmosphere and communication and free access to musical instruments. The last theme, other influencing factors, incorporates institutional context, musical and pedagogical skills, and teacher training.

It might seem that musical and pedagogical skills should exert a "direct" rather than "other" influence on children's creative work. Direct influence is considered to comprise all teacher actions observable in the classroom from the point of view of an impartial observer (e.g., used motivation tools, approaches to foster musical creativity, resources, and

educational style). Musical skills and pedagogical skills might have been observable, too, but on a long-term basis. Analysis of creative, musical, and musical creative skills was conducted based on teachers' own pedagogical experience to date, self-assessment of skill levels, and self-reflection of current needs. That is why pedagogical and musical skills are located in the "other influence factor" section, along with teacher training and school context. The findings are discussed thematically within these groupings.

1) Teachers' Direct Influence on Children's Musical Creativity

Musically Creative Approaches

These music educators use various approaches; the most popular methods are Orff Schulwerk, the Kodály Method (Whitcomb, 2007), and Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Two teachers (P1, P6) followed a Kodály approach to music. One of them (P1) had received additional Dalcroze training. Other teachers did not follow existing creative approaches, though they did use some elements derived from them. Instead, they preferred to implement short improvisational and compositional tasks such as making up sound effects, tunes, rhythmic patterns, rhythmic ostinatos, movement responses to music, changing words in songs, creating words to fit a rhythm, singing responses (call-and-response games, such as improvising question/response musically) and little compositions. For example, P2 mentioned a task where children imitated natural sounds: "Can you find the instrument that could represent the sound of the thunder or can you find which makes the sound of the rain?".

P5 specified more complex musical creative tasks, which she has done recently: "We composed a storybook soundtrack. It was linked with their literacy in their English. They had pictures that they then had to compose and perform and notate their own music to go alongside." These teachers tried to find some possibilities to develop children's musical creativity, even if they did not schematically follow any of the previously-mentioned musical creative approaches. The reasons were that the teachers were not trained to use them. They also thought that they did not necessarily need them because their current teaching included appropriate musically creative tasks. According to several studies focused on creative activities in general music (Koutsoupidou, 2005; Whitcomb, 2007), the most common improvisation activity is the call-and-response game. It contains a rhythmic or melodic motive and instrumental improvising with unpitched and pitched percussion instruments (e.g., Orff mallet instruments). Additionally, movement and dance improvisation activities were also used quite often (Koutsoupidou, 2005.)

Teacher's Behavior and Educational Style

Esquivel (1995) found that teachers who approached music education with a humanistic orientation, who had developed their own creativity and implemented creative methods in their classroom, were more effective in fostering creative abilities than teachers who behave traditionally and often use instructions. Kautsopidou (2008) explored the effect of different teaching styles on the development of musical creativity and found that teachers believed that child-centered approaches positively impact children's musical creative development.

All interviewed teachers followed this humanistic philosophic orientation (Rogers, 1959), focusing on developing children's self-esteem, willingness to learn, and developing autonomy. However, one of them (P1) described a bad experience in previous employment related to a lack of teaching and learning autonomy. According to this teacher (P1), following the humanistic approach also meant "establishing boundaries" and being "firm; otherwise, you just have chaos." On the other hand, the teachers' instructions and classroom rules could not be too strict; otherwise, children would "replace their creativity for social acceptance" (Annarella, 1999, 7); therefore, focusing too strongly on behavior could limit the extent of creative practice.

Teachers described their behavior and educational style as creative (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7), flexible (P1, P2, P3, P7), supporting (P2, P6, P7), practical (P3, P4, P7) and collaborative (P2, P6) in their musically creative parts of lessons. Teachers (P1, P3, P4, P5, P7) tended to make it fun "because in our educational system [...] young children [have] quite a lot of pressure to succeed in English and maths" (P7). Moreover, teachers aimed to encourage children to explore and take risks: (P6) "because it's not that many subjects where they can be completely creative." In terms of flexibility and pedagogical creativity, teachers adapted their lesson plan to children's knowledge: (P1) "because you don't sometimes know how much the children know" or their actual desires: (P7) "they've [children] really got excited about an activity that they're doing." These teachers' approaches in their music lessons correlate with Dacey (1989), who claimed that creative teachers' most important personality traits are their attitude to creativity and their ability to be accepting, open, and flexible.

Supporting Motivation

Interviewees mentioned two opinions regarding the best way to encourage children to do something musically creative. One of the motivational attitudes was that it is sufficient to be passionate and enthusiastic as a music teacher: (P5) "I think if you're passionate about what you're delivering, and you enjoy what you're doing, they're going to get a sense of enjoyment out of it as well. If you have fun doing what you're doing, and you encourage and praise whatever feedback you get from them, they're going to want to do more of it." According to one of the teachers, children will become motivated by themselves (P2): "There's no issue with motivation at all. [...] They're just naturally self-motivated." In literature, this approach to motivation is proposed as Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1989), where the primary influence is a social one (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For children (Bandura, 1989), social influence is represented by the interrelationship between teacher and children. In this case, the teacher may be viewed as an external factor influencing intrinsic motivation. Teachers occupy a special and meaningful place in children's musical creative development, and children seem more motivated when teachers are dynamic, enthusiastic, and vital (Kunter et al., 2011).

Both intrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1990) and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) have unique features to motivate children, are needed in a learning process and have positive consequences for creativity. While intrinsic motivation leads to self-motivation in learning, external motivation gives the purpose to pursue learning. Two other teachers (P1 and P6) agreed with the importance of the teacher's enthusiasm but also emphasized the importance of extrinsic motivation, especially for this age group. Three teachers (P3, P4, P7) mainly relied on extrinsic motivation, in agreement with Ryan & Deci's

(2000) study, where they stated that some forms of extrinsic motivation tools might promote action which can be internalized later on and contribute beneficially to autonomy. Motivation tools mentioned by these teachers included engaging stories (P2, P3, P7), pictures (P3, P4, P7), video clips (P1, P7), topics related to other subjects (P3, P6), puppets (P1) or superheroes (P7). Cameron (2001) added that appropriate external stimuli support children's learning willingness and may stimulate intrinsic motivation.

On the other hand, not all extrinsic stimuli are appropriate in music education because when these extrinsic stimuli disappear, interest may disappear, too. For example, P6 used stickers and expanded her approach: "If they do well, I get the stickers, one might say 'who can tell me what tempo means' and these little things like that." This statement is inconsistent with Deci et al. (2001), who recommended avoiding focusing on awards, marks, points, deadlines, or compliments because they may diminish children's intrinsic motivation to learn; these authors suggested that teachers should be cautious about using them.

Used Resources

The teachers tended to use digital resources rather than printed materials. To foster children's musical creativity, they preferred to use YouTube (P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7) to listen to various pieces of music in a different music context such as historical, interpreter, or genre context. Participants used other digital resources such as curriculum materials, including Charanga Musical School (Charanga, 1997) (P2, P3, P4, P7), the vocal program Sing Up (Sing Up, 2007) (P1, P6), supporting classical music listening and creativity material such as 10 Pieces – BBC (BBC, 2014) (P4, P7) and ABRSM: Classical 100 (ABRSM, 2015) (P1). To foster instrumental creativity, they used Charanga or a website called Ukulele Rocks (Ukulele Rocks, 2015) (P4).

All teachers were familiar with digital material such as Charanga Musical School, a complete scheme to teach the UK's National Curriculum for music. However, they had mixed views, although some felt quite passionate about it. Some teachers (P2, P3, P4, P7) used it regularly, but not for the whole music lesson because they were aware of Charanga's limitations. Participants often used Charanga's creative musical apps on whiteboards such as rhythm grids (rhythmic game with 2, 3, and 4-beat time signatures), percussion writer (playing along with famous pieces on percussion instruments), and music explorer (including pulse, improvising, or listening skills games) collectively within the class, or they let pupils gain inspiration from these creative apps and apply the ideas using objects in the classroom (e.g., using a rope grid on the floor and note length symbols).

However, several teachers (P1, P5) criticized Charanga, feeling that the week-by-week lessons that it provided for each year group in the school were potentially "quite prescriptive and not inventive" (P5) and also "very restricted in terms of creativity" (P1). P2 detected the probable cause of that when she realized that "there's also the problem that I am not as creative in the way I deliver music as maybe I used to be because that's [Charanga] already done it for me." P3 added that "the Charanga has its own plan, so the teachers could just print the plan off, that's done, and just follow the plan." Teachers agreed it could be a helpful tool for non-specialist music teachers but felt it should be used only as an additional resource.

Regarding printed materials, several teachers used religious songbooks (P3, P4, P5) related to school faith. Other publications, such as Voices Foundation (Voices Foundation,

1993) books (P1, P6) and NYCoS (National Youth Choir of Scotland, 1996) publications (P1), were also mentioned. Religious songbooks were intended for church service use in particular but were not used for musically creative tasks. Two teachers (P1, P6) focused on developing children's musical voices using books from the Voices Foundation based on the Kodály creative approach (P1). All teachers tended to use digital resources more often than printed materials because all of the resources are in one place, and it is easier to use them.

Several teachers created musical games and other musical didactical aids independently (P1, P4, P5, P6). For instance, they created rhythm cards (P1, P4, P6), a carousel/musical maze (P5), a notation pyramid (P5), and a grid method (P4). However, two of them (P5, P6) said this was not motivated by their own initiative but by school finance: (P5) "There's no money for it. So, every resource I do have, I make myself." That could also be motivated by a lack of appropriate resources for this age group: (P6) "I've tended to create the resources just because there's not that much other really for that age group." Only one teacher (P1) created cards and games on her own initiative to deepen interest and fun.

2) Teachers' Indirect Influence on Children's Musical Creativity

Classroom Atmosphere and Communication

Teachers should prepare an accepting environment and psychologically safe classroom atmosphere (Elliot, 1995) where they help children to feel comfortable in unpredictable and complex situations and encourage risk-taking. As reported by researchers including Rogers, 1959; Hickey, 2001; O'Connor, 2012, one of the most important conditions for the development of children's musical creativity is to foster environments where the emphasis is on the process of creating, where pupils are allowed to explore and where all attempts are accepted. Otherwise, the development of musical creativity could be slowed down and suffer. One of the interviewees (P4) noticed the benefits of a good atmosphere for children and herself as well: "They are always happy about the atmosphere, you know, when you're singing or when you play. I do feel that even in my own self." All interviewed teachers were aware of the importance of creating safe and non-judging classroom environments, and they considered it an essential starting point for fostering children's musical creativity.

Teachers aim to create an atmosphere where they build up a pupil's self-confidence and self-esteem and where there are no right and wrong questions or responses. Hence, children could not be afraid of a teacher judging their responses. Several researchers (e.g., Wegerif, 2013) stressed the importance of teaching "for dialogue" as well as teaching "through dialogue," where children can determine not only knowledge but also learn from themselves and become courageous to ask and get involved. McGreevy (1990) proposed supporting children's creative thinking by giving attention to their interests, offering choices, using open-ended questions, encouraging questions, and exploring their opinions. Participating teachers' responses suggested that they mostly communicated verbally with children and often asked questions to keep children's attention and allow them to explore. They reported frequently inviting pupil-reflection on a piece of music using open questions where all answers were welcomed. P7 explained the value of these types of questions: "It's trying to teach them that they can explore, and it's not how to do it right." One of the teachers (P1) added that she used questions to consider the quality of what they are doing, to make them

"think about what they are doing" and "challenge them with their thinking as well." This view correlates with Williams and Sternberg (1993), who recommended asking questions and letting children formulate answers and questions to enhance their intellectual development.

Another teacher (P3) used plenary (a session which all pupils attend) "to evaluate how it is gone" and to think about "how we can improve it for next week" to achieve better results collaboratively. That corresponds to Woodward's suggestion to provide children with helpful feedback, which may improve their creative music-making (Woodward, 2005). Two teachers who followed the Kodály creative approach to music (P1, P6) communicated with children also through music. Teachers and pupils used their rhythm or voices to ask and respond to questions. P6 specified this approach in a task: "We always start the lesson with sort of a 'Hello, how are you' and they're going to respond back." Both P1 and P6 added that this vocal communication (P1) "developed [children's] inner confidence" when they had the opportunity to sing on their own and, at the same time, enabled them to improvise, explore and communicate through music.

Free Access to Musical Instruments

Runco (1990) pointed out that the stimulation offered by a child's physical environment is very influential in his or her creativity. In terms of musical creativity, this could include the quality of musical equipment and access to musical instruments. According to all teachers interviewed in this research, in the early years of teaching, the classroom environment was usually prepared to indirectly influence children's musical creativity in the form of a specific music corner or a music basket. Littleton (1991) studied play settings' influence on children's (4- to 5-year-old) music and play behaviors, and it was recommended that more time for free play in music should be encouraged. The Early Years teacher (P2) stated: "There's a basket which is on the floor in the corner. That's got untuned instruments in, and it's got the little xylophone in as well, and there's a book about musical instruments." This teacher (P2) cared about indirect music encouragement, intentionally and regularly changing different instruments or music books in the basket. Another teacher (P1) described her previous experience in a nursery school where was a musical corner with free access, and she "might sort of respond to what they're doing, let them lead and then respond and see what they do have done." Moreover, the Early Years teacher (P2) observed that a prepared environment might indirectly foster social interaction and collaboration and benefit both social and musical creative development.

As reported by some teachers (P1, P3, P4, P6, P7), pupils in Year 1 do not have free access to musical instruments to enhance spontaneous music-making during break time. The reasons for providing restricted access were: (P3) "that it could be damaged" and "vandalized, which is a shame;" musical instruments are "too expensive." P4 was afraid of unsupervised manipulation because "the staff needs their break," and educators cannot "leave the children" while they are playing musical instruments. Another teacher (P7) saw the free access problem as a lack of education system support in spontaneous music making. P3 added that it is because "It gets too noisy" and could be noisy for neighboring classes. Several teachers (P3, P4, P7) suggested a solution for this situation which (P4) "could work towards some outdoor instruments." Only one of the teachers (P5) proved that it is possible to foster musical spontaneity during break time: "I run a music section drop-in, I am in the room, and

they can play the musical instruments." Although all teachers realized that free access to musical instruments could benefit children, only two of them (P2, P5) confirmed that their educational institutions enabled it for their pupils.

3) Other Factors Influencing Children's Musical Creativity

Institutional Context

Most teachers (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7) were employed in state schools, and one teacher (P6) worked in the private sector. Three of these schools were church schools, specifically the Church of England and Roman Catholic. Other schools were slightly unusual in some specific aspects (e.g., community environment, multicultural diversity). Each school tended to offer musical activities for children, such as music clubs, choirs, instrumental ensembles, concerts for parents, and one-to-one instrument lessons led by external teachers. Additionally, one of the teachers (P4) organized a ukulele club, a belle plates (similar to handbells) club, and, in the past, a recorder club. The whole school concerts usually run at the end of each term and on special occasions (e.g., Christmas, Easter). One of the schools offered the opportunity for children to perform their own creative output: (P5) "We have a big half-termly concert which is a sharing evening. So, that's with poetry and also music that kids have written [...] We encourage parents to come and celebrate things like that a lot." Even though institutions tended to support children's musical development, some experts (Torrance, 1963; Meador, 1992) pointed out that children are more creative before they enter kindergarten. These findings lead to questions about what formal education could do to support continued creativity development.

One of the things that an institution may do is to create a productive atmosphere and good relationships (Stein, 1974) between all people involved in the school: employer, staff, children, and children's families. All of the interviewed teachers confirmed that they were satisfied with the schools where they taught music and liked their job. Their satisfaction was mainly caused by (P3) "very nice family atmosphere," by the staff relationships who are (P2) "very friendly and [...] there's a lot of respect, we all get on" and by working with parents (P1) "together in a partnership to help the children." All of these teachers highlighted the school atmosphere and positive relationships, although one teacher (P5) pointed out a negative aspect as well. Her staff colleagues were "really lovely and friendly on a personal basis," but "when it comes to school-related items, their [...] work will come first, and they don't really like collaborating to support." One of the teachers (P2) also appreciated the trust and freedom given to her by the institution: "I'm allowed to teach the way I think is right for young children; not every school would give me that freedom." According to O'Connor (2012), embracing freedom reflects the teacher's freedom in a classroom as a vehicle for creative learning.

Teachers also mentioned the importance of positive views on the value of musical creativity and music as a subject by their staff colleagues and employers. One of the teachers (P3) received moral and financial support from the head teacher, who "values it [music] so much" and therefore "decided to use extra money to give them [children of parents who don't earn very much money] music lessons. So, there are some children learning the guitar or violin." Two teachers (P3, P7) initiated applying music in other non-musical subjects to show their non-specialist colleagues how they (P7) "could use music or singing for teaching math"

or how "to get music more throughout the lessons." However, according to these teachers, not every colleague had this positive view of musical creativity or music as a subject; mixed feelings were predominant (P2, P4, P5, P7). That is because of music's perceived "lower" educational value compared to mathematics or language lessons (P5). All of these teachers considered music a substantial part of general education and realized that it is beneficial in many ways. Nevertheless, their institutional environment was not supportive, collaborative, or understanding in all cases.

Musical and Pedagogical Skills

Many studies describe the conflict between the identities of being a music teacher and a musician-performer (e.g., Isbell, 2008). In this study, teachers viewed themselves in different proportions of being teachers and musicians. Four teachers (P2, P3, P4, P6) reported that they regarded themselves as more teachers than musicians: (P3) "A lot of my own hobbies are music. But I think, first of all, I'm a teacher." Two other teachers (P1, P5) said they were both: (P5) "I wouldn't say I was one of them. I am both." Another one (P7) answered that she was "more a musician than a teacher." Ballantyne (2004) stated that teachers have to be skillful and competent musicians, first and foremost, and educators.

Nevertheless, all teachers considered themselves as musical and musically creative persons regarding teaching. That manifested in attitude toward teaching and further learning (P6). This participant analytically reflected on her pedagogical practice leading to teaching musical creativity as a process of learning from her own mistakes. However, some differences appeared in considering themselves as musical/musically creative teachers, especially in the context of their strengths and weaknesses.

Teachers described their strengths as music teachers and as musically creative teachers. They aimed to make the music units fun (P1, P3, P4, P5, P7), interesting and engaging (P1, P3, P5) and to be enthusiastic (P1, P5, P6) about what they are delivering. P3 added that her strength is to "convey quite tricky ideas to children and make it interesting and fun." All of the music specialists (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7) felt confident as musicians, especially in playing their musical instruments or singing. Appropriate music skills were seen to be linked to their teaching confidence. Hence, they tended to develop their music skills in their leisure time, except for one teacher (P1). Most often, they sang in adult choirs (P2, P3, P4, P5) or performed in orchestras (P3, P5, P7). Less often, they took part in a musical theatre group (P5), conducted a choir (P6), performed duets with a friend (P3), or just played a musical instrument for fun at home (P2).

As for weaknesses, they declared various things. For some music specialists (P5, P6, P7), the most significant weakness was to ensure (P5) "that everyone has understood the basic differentiation of tasks [...] because of how many kids agewise [they have] in groups" and to make sure that they can "maintain engagement and challenge." Additionally, P7 added that her weakness is also "managing children's behavior." The second most frequently mentioned weakness was playing the piano with confidence and sufficient competence, particularly for teachers (P1, P3, P4) whose main instruments were not piano. That was because they did not have time for practicing, and the two teachers' first instrument was the flute, and they were (P3) "very much obsessed with the treble clef."

Regarding musical creativity, one teacher (P1) described her greatest weakness as "a lack of [...] I would say the development of the composition." The Early Years teacher's (P2) weakness was connected with little knowledge of music theory. She preferred to sing with children rather than play a musical instrument that she could play by ear. However, she has never played in front of anybody because she felt unconfident. For teaching trickier music theory, she used the Charanga resources. A lack of confidence in music teaching linked to generalist teachers' sense of self-efficacy; perceptions of themselves as "not musical" has been discussed in many studies (Holden & Button, 2006; Henley, 2016). According to participants and previous observations, all those pedagogical and musical strengths and weaknesses mentioned above influenced their self-confidence in music teaching.

Teacher Training

The highest level of teachers' education is mentioned in Table 1. Moreover, teachers had additional training: Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Most of the teachers (P1, P5, P6, P7) were satisfied with their studies and felt prepared to teach music. Several teachers (P1, P4, P5, P6) described that teacher training also helped them develop children's musical creativity. Additionally, some teachers (P5, P6, P7) confirmed that developing children's musical creativity and also their own musical creativity was a part of their teacher training: (P5) "We were graded obviously on how we interpreted a scale of work creatively to engage children in a different way." Teachers also described some shortcomings of teacher training: it was too theoretical (P6, P7) or not focused enough on music (P2, P3). As a result, teachers relied on the experiences coming through their own practice, sharing ideas with other music teachers or on subsequent specific musical courses. The results are consistent with Koutsoupidou (2005), who found that some teachers in the UK did not include improvisation in their teaching; this resulted from a lack of improvising experience and understanding of how to teach it.

Participating teachers appreciated specific subsequent musical courses, which they were free to choose for their own further development. They preferred this type of course rather than further formal study, except for one teacher (P5) who planned to start a Ph.D. study. For example, teachers mentioned courses such as Sing Up (P1, P3, P6), Dalcroze training (P1), or Kodály training (British Kodály Academy, c.2018) (P1). Moreover, a network called York Music Hub (York Music Hub, c.2017) (P3, P4) was also appreciated; one of its aims was (P3) "to share ideas" among all the music coordinators in primary schools. That corresponds to Whitcomb's (2007) study, where a significant positive relationship between implementing improvisation instructions and teachers' past experiences with improvisation training and workshops was noted.

Limitations

Although this study was carefully prepared, and the researcher tried to avoid biases and shortcomings, some limitations were evident after the study was completed. Even though it was a qualitative study, the sample size was obviously tiny in relation to the number of music teachers working with 5- and 6-year-old-children in the UK. Additionally, the size sample

was not balanced because it included quite experienced teachers and, in most cases, music specialists; further research could usefully probe possible differences between novice and experienced teachers or differences between those with extensive musical training and those who do not play musical instruments. Additionally, using another method (e.g., structured observation of music lessons) and triangulation could expand and validate data from other sources and reduce research weaknesses and biases. Nevertheless, the findings give an in-depth insight into teachers' thoughts and practices for developing children's musical creativity and provide useful considerations for educators.

Conclusions and Possible Implications

The research findings suggest that teachers tended to foster 5- and 6-year-old children's musical creativity directly while using digital and printed resources or creating their own educational aids or games. Interviewees reported flexible and creative approaches and encouraged children to explore and take risks. They reported communicating with non-judgmental and open-question strategies, which helped pupils to feel that there is no right or wrong answer and also helped them to enhance their intellectual and social development. Regarding indirect influence, teachers tried to create a psychologically safe atmosphere where pupils were allowed to explore and make mistakes. Subsequently, teachers could implement some short improvisational and compositional tasks with respect to pupils' musical creative development. They stated that in their experience, children in early years education usually have free access to musical instruments to foster spontaneous music-making during break time, but this may no longer continue in Year 1. Concerning other factors influencing children's musical creativity, teachers engaged in developing children's musical creativity with commitment and enjoyment even though not all of them were supported by their head teachers or staff colleagues. Participants considered themselves creative, musical, and musically creative teachers, but only some of them received teacher training in developing their own or children's musical creativity.

The results of this study could have implications for potential changes on a practical level and a research level. Some practical recommendations could be made from participating teachers' comments. Some tensions between the practice of different teachers and the institutional provision and the teachers' training have implications for children's education. Firstly, the context and framework of their school teaching should allow them the flexibility to be creative and could provide less expensive musical instruments for spontaneous music-making outside during break time or could supervise the use of musical instruments. Secondly, teachers could receive more training in musical creativity and also participate more practically, musically, and musical creatively during their teacher training.

Moreover, during this training, teaching for musical creativity should be highlighted more to make teachers understand the benefits to them and the children in their classroom. The same suggestions were also recommended by Katsoupidou (2009). Finally, enhancing pupil motivation through not only teachers' enthusiasm but also through other motivational tools such as puppets, stories, and pictures is recommended and in line with recommendations from literature (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Cameron, 2001; Deci et al., 2001).

This qualitative study implicated several opportunities for future research to refine and elaborate the findings. Some existing studies (e.g., Rozman, 2008; Katsoupidou, 2009)

explored the teachers' perspectives on children's musical creativity. However, there is a research gap concerning studies on children's musical creativity from the point of view of educators working with 5- and 6-year-old children. There is also scope for qualitative and quantitative studies with larger sample sizes to ascertain how teachers develop children's musical creativity. Future studies could be extended longitudinally to see the effect of fostering children's musical creativity. Furthermore, they could also be extended using comparative ways to examine differences in teachers' influences on children's musical creativity in different schools, educational approaches, or countries to inspire teachers in their teaching practice and to extend possibilities of encouraging children's musical creativity.

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ALEXANDER SHONERT'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO VIOLIN METHODOLOGY

Gabriela Kubátová

Abstract
This article introduces violinist and pedagogue Alexander Shonert and his principles of violin teaching methods, which touch on the correct way of practicing the violin, a specific type of firm staccato, and stage fright. This research and description of Shonert's teaching and practice method are inspired by a workshop that Alexander Shonert held at Základní umělecká škola Ilji Hurníka [Ilja Hurník Elementary Art School] in Prague, Czech Republic on December 7, 2018, and based on interviews that the author of this article conducted with him between 2018–2021. The structured interviews were conducted in Czech (translated into English by the author) in person and by electronic correspondence in the case of clarification of details. This study also follows up on two published author's articles, "Alexander Shonert – Violinist and Pedagogue" and "Firm Staccato Is Born in the Mind, Not in the Hands." Shonert's methodological principles are situated in the context of other prominent violinists from the nineteenth century until now.

Keywords
Alexander Shonert – violin – violin methodology – stage fright – firm staccato – practicing the violin

Introduction

On December 7, 2018, one from a series of Alexander Shonert's violin master classes designed especially for violin teachers took place at the Ilja Hurník Elementary Art School in Prague. As a pedagogical model for demonstrating his methodological principles, Shonert chose Eva Šibřinová[1] from the author's violin class at the Faculty of Education of Charles University, who met the requirements both in terms of technical and musical maturity and in terms of the quality of professional, methodological guidance. As this course was based on detailed work with tone production and its colors, combining the sound of the student's violin with Shonert's was interesting from this point of view. They both play master instruments of a darker tone color (Guarneri model) from the workshop of famous Prague luthier Petr Zdražil.[2] The listeners could hear even the slightest nuances in the tone of the master instruments very clearly. At the same time, the student had the opportunity to imitate the desired color and sound quality. Shonert focused on three themes, which became the subject

[1] Eva Šibřinová (* 1997) is a master's degree student at that time in the field of Music Education – Playing an Instrument (violin) at the Faculty of Education of Charles University in the class of Gabriela Kubátová. She teaches violin at ZUŠ J. Suka Benešov [Elementary Art School of J. Suk at Benešov]. The student agrees with the statement in this study.

[2] Petr Zdražil (* 1963), Prague violin maker with an atelier on Malostranské náměstí [Lesser Town Square].

of this study. The first topic, "How to practice the violin correctly," is addressed by violinists daily. The second topic, "How to learn the upward and downward firm staccato," sounds promising to violinists since Shonert's firm staccato is an element of violin technique Václav Hudeček[3] has described as: "Phenomenal! I have never heard anything like it in my life."[4] The last topic, "How to eliminate the fear of performing," is timeless and attractive not only for violinists.

Why consider Shonert's methodological principles presented at the seminar? In addition to his solo career, violin virtuoso Shonert is an intensive teacher. He is the author of methodology, which aims not only to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching but also to help violinists at all levels, including professional violinists and teachers who turn to him for advice. Reflecting on his views and ideas is interesting in light of this aspiration. Therefore, this study is not a theoretical analysis of topics such as stage fright, about which thousands of pages of studies have been written, but captures Shonert's views on the subject and his ways of teaching. The author either glosses them from her position or places them in the context of the views of the world's most prominent teachers and virtuosi. Shonert's ambitions are considerable. He is at the peak of his creative powers; he had to master, at an advanced age, quite consciously, the reworking of his violin technique, which requires considerable effort; he could confront the views of his first teacher with those of the renowned pedagogues Zakhar Bron,[5] Alexey Gvozdev[6] and Mikhail Turich.[7] Shonert left Russia for abroad, where he compared his methods with Western schools. He teaches students worldwide, so he has a direct opportunity to see the results of different methods. Moreover, he is constantly improving his methodology. He demonstrates his methods with his violin art. His world-unique firm staccato alone is proof of the results.

Alexander Shonert[8] was born in 1972 in a musical family in Irkutsk. In 1989 he moved to Novosibirsk, where he learned from one of the world's best teachers Zakhar Bron at the Novosibirsk State Conservatory of Arts M. I. Glinka.[9] After a few months, however, Bron left for Germany, and Shonert began studying with Professor Alexey Gvozdev, with whom he continued his postgraduate studies. In the last year of the doctoral program in 1999, he was simultaneously in Mikhail Turich's class. However, he did not complete his postgraduate studies because he did not submit his dissertation.[10]

Since 1999 he has been working in Prague. Josef Suk,[11] in the 2010 Czech Television program "Z metropole" [From the Metropolis],[12] said of Shonert and his interpretation of Antonín Dvořák's compositions: "He is a genius artist, gifted by God. I was moved because my

3 Václav Hudeček (* 1952) is a Czech violin virtuoso.

4 Available from https://shonert.com/en_GB/o-mne-menu/o-mne/.

5 Zakhar Bron (* 1947) is a Russian violinist and violin pedagogue from Kazakhstan of Jewish, Polish, and Romanian descent.

6 Alexey Vladimirovich Gvozdev (* 1943) is a Russian violinist and professor of violin at the Novosibirsk State Conservatory of Arts M. I. Glinka.

7 Mikhail Isaakovich Turich (1945–2018) was a violinist, conductor, and professor of violin at the Novosibirsk State Conservatory of Arts M. I. Glinka.

8 "Životní pouť houslového génia" [The Life Journey of a Violin Genius]: Babylon [television documentary]. Aired September 9, 2008. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3r3mXWqIaZc (Translated by the author).

9 In Russia, a conservatory has the status of a university (academy).

10 Author's interview with A. Shonert.

11 Josef Suk (1929–2011) was a Czech violinist, violist, chamber musician, and conductor.

12 "Houslista, který do Česka přišel ze Sibiře" [A Violinist Who Came to the Czech Republic from Siberia]: Z metropole [From Metropolis] [television documentary]. Aired June 19, 2010. https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/10116288835-z-metropole/210411058230025/obsah/147358-houslista-ktery-do-ceska-prisel-ze-sibire (Translated by the author).

famous great-grandfather deserved to be interpreted this way.“ He has performed throughout Europe and the United States. In 2014, he gave a recital at one of the most prestigious concert halls in the US – the National Gallery of Art in Washington. He considers David Oistrakh[13] and Yehudi Menuhin[14] as his musical role models. Oistrakh undoubtedly influenced him in terms of the general system of violin playing, the complete thoughtfulness of violin technique down to the smallest detail, in which not the slightest detail is left to coincidence. Menuhin inspired him with his combination of violin playing and yoga. Shonert also applies elements from tai-chi in teaching, especially in terms of maximum smoothness and continuity of all movements. Shonert uses his brilliant technique not only in classical compositions but also in jazz and folk. Shonert's domain is his improvisations on Jewish themes, in which his spontaneous temperament bursts forth and combines with deep emotions. Professor Ivan Štraus[15] of the Prague Academy of Performing Arts remarked, "[Shonert] has excellent technique, intonation, plays beautifully, and has something extra special – improvisation. In this, he is absolutely phenomenal, where his technique overcomes the laws of gravity!"[16]

Alexander Shonert gives seminars and masterclasses at music academies and conservatories in Europe, Canada, the USA (The Julliard School in New York, Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington, etc.), and Singapore. He often works with his students online. Shonert's methodology for practicing firm staccato is the subject of his e-book *How to Master Firm Staccato Up and Down in 3 Lessons: The Shonert Technique based on the use of Chi energy*[17] and is included in full in the e-book *Advanced Violin Techniques Vol. 1* from 2015, in which he focused on the following topics: How to Learn Firm Staccato, How to Learn to Play the Violin Correctly, How to Learn Beautiful Vibrato, The Philosophy of Violin Playing, and How to Get Rid of Stage Fright. A critique of the chapter focused on the staccato mentioned above was published in February 2016 in the prestigious British magazine, The Strad, where Philippa Bunting[18] wrote of Shonert: "It is admirable that he is willing to use his phenomenal playing ability to illustrate his theories and to share his skill with colleagues in an open fashion."[19] In October 2017, Shonert's article, *Firm Staccato*, was published in the same magazine in the section The Best of Technique.[20]

How to Practice the Violin Correctly

"Nothing is more precious to a performing musician than the ability to work efficiently – to know how to learn the maximum in the minimum possible time. One of the most necessary skills a teacher should teach a student is the technique of practicing correctly,"[21] writes Ivan

13 David Oistrakh (1908–1974) was a Soviet classical violinist, violist, and conductor.

14 Yehudi Menuhin, Baron Menuhin of Stoke d'Abernon (1916–1999) was a violin virtuoso and conductor.

15 Ivan Štraus (* 1937) is a violin virtuoso and a long-time professor at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

16 Schneider, Jan. 2006. "Jak vidím barvy, tak slyším tóny" [As I See Colors, I Hear Tones]. https://shonert.com/o-mne-menu/o-mne/.

17 Shonert, Alexander. 2015. *How to Master Firm Staccato Up and Down in 3 Lessons: The Shonert Technique based on the use of Chi energy*. Kindle Edition. https://www.amazon.com/Master-Firm-Staccato-Down-Lessons-ebook/dp/B00X2PSZFW.

18 Philippa Bunting (https://cz.abrsm.org/en/about-us/structure-and-key-staff/) is a violin teacher and ABRSM's Director of Teaching and Qualifications in London.

19 Bunting, Philippa. 2016. "How to Master Firm Staccato Up and Down in Three Lessons." In: Book Reviews. *The Strad* 2016 (127): 93.

20 Shonert, Alexander. 2017. "Firm Staccato." In: The Best of Technique. *The Strad* 2017 (128, 1530): 79–80. http://cz.shonertacademy.com/.

21 Galamian, Ivan. 2013. *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*. New York: Dover Publications. p. 93.

Galamian[22] in the introduction to the chapter on practice in his book *The Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching.*

Jascha Heifetz[23] commented on the issue as follows: "I do not think I could ever have made any progress if I had practiced six hours daily. In the first place, I have never believed in practicing too much – it is just as bad as practicing too little! And then there are so many other things I like to do," Heifetz confided to an astonished Frederick Martens, who estimated the number of hours of daily practice at six to eight. "I hardly ever practice more than three hours a day on average, and besides, I keep my Sunday when I do not play at all, and sometimes I make an extra holiday. As to six or seven hours a day, I would not have been able to stand it at all. I exercise three hours a day on average, and I still have Sundays off. (...) I suppose that it looks easy when I play in public, but before I ever came on the concert stage, I worked extremely hard. And I do – but always putting the two things together, mental work and physical work. And when a certain point of the effort is reached in practice, as in everything else, there must be relaxation."[24]

Leopold Auer[25] answered the same question: "The right kind of practice is not a matter of hours. Practice should represent the utmost concentration of the brain. It is better to play with concentration for two hours than to practice for eight hours without it. I should say that four hours would be a good maximum practice time – I never ask more of pupils – and during each minute, the brain must be as active as the fingers."[26]

Alexander Shonert also does not lead students to mindless repetition during practice. The secret of success does not lie in practicing for many hours or playing a piece repeatedly. He considers it more important to discover and learn to feel the energies inside our mind and body and, with their help, find the correct position for each finger of the left hand or the movement of the bow led by the right hand. By playing correctly, not only will we remove stiffness and tension, but the change will positively affect the tone, which will sound more sonorous and malleable. He is convinced that the physiology of movement is "burned" into memory as an unmistakable sensation. He compares it to the sensation of discovering a sense of balance when riding a bicycle.

Shonert considers it a gross mistake to start practicing the violin by practicing the violin. Just like in ballet or football, muscles must be warmed up and prepared to prevent injury. He teaches his students several special exercises to strengthen specific muscles, such as muscle awareness exercises needed for relaxed playing, relaxation exercises, and exercises using energy work that he has adopted from tai-chi. As far as yoga is concerned, he follows the tradition of the famous violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who practiced yoga all his life and said that his best violin teacher was his yoga teacher, Guru B. K. S. Iyengar.[27] Yoga teaches how to control the body, mind, and soul, which is very important, and Shonert teaches how to apply the principles to violin playing. It helps to prevent work injuries, protect the cervical spine, etc. It is also necessary to comply with Shonert's methodical principles because the student

22 Ivan Alexander Galamian (1903–1981) was an Armenian American violinist and violin teacher.

23 Jascha Heifetz (1901–1987) was a Lithuanian violinist.

24 Martens, Frederick H., ed. 2006. *Violin Mastery: Interviews with Heifetz, Auer, Kreisler and others*. New York: Dover Publications. pp. 47–49.

25 Leopold Auer (1845–1930) was a Hungarian American violinist, teacher, and conductor.

26 Martens, 2006, p. 11.

27 Bellur Krishnamachar Sundararaja Iyengar (1918–2014), better known as B. K. S. Iyengar, is the founder of the yoga school called "Iyengar Yoga."

cannot relax a muscle he either does not know he has or is so stiff that it blocks other muscles. Twenty to thirty minutes, including warm-up exercises on the violin, should be enough. After the warm-up exercises, however, it is essential to pick something the student already knows or is good at. It needs to be perfected, and only then should the student try to transfer the methods to more challenging material. With students, Shonert often sees them doing the opposite. Playing something difficult with a sense of ease represents a much shorter path to a result than starting with something more challenging. Shonert considers it essential to set a precise goal, not just focus on abstract exercises.

In a lesson devoted to proper practicing, Shonert asked Eva Šibřinová to demonstrate a warm-up exercise: It was based on a détaché in the middle section of the bow with the feeling that the hand was doing everything independently as if it were a pendulum. All concentration was directed towards a clear sound and perfectly smooth and inaudible bow changes. Shonert likened the violin's sound to a ringing bell, which he called the "bell effect." He emphasized that if we vibrate the bow downward and stop the movement with a lousy bow change, we also interrupt the vibration, which must be perceived not only with the ear but with the whole body.

After mastering the short détaché, one can gradually discern the note with the whole bow and increase the dynamics, but with the feeling that the more strongly the violinist plays, the more relaxed they must feel. Then begin to alternate bow lengths, playing two separate quarter notes with the half bow and a half note with the whole bow, again maintaining the quality and balance of the sound as much as possible, using only the weight of the arm, not unwanted pressure.

Shonert recommended and demonstrated the third exercise on his chosen violinist model: "scale meditation." The goal is to disconnect thoughts and feel every note and vibration completely without emotion – two bowings so that the notes are played up and down in the same quality. Shonert, listening with the utmost concentration, stressed that the bowing changes must be indistinguishable even with closed eyes. The important thing is to follow the rules – not to speed up the tempo and not to change the dynamics. Moreover, it is essential to "meditate" at this stage. For violinists, this means playing with maximum calm. The aim is to learn to play a long tone without emotion. Shonert comes from the conviction that if the violinist can do this without emotion, adding emotion is no longer a problem.

He also consistently paid attention to the unification of the color and dynamics of individual notes in the sense of placing the fingers on the string and the possibility of coloring the tone with the fingertips. The teacher's ability to identify the cause of failure and recommend practical exercises also helps the effectiveness of the exercise.

Shonert strives to ensure that students can apply the mindset and knowledge gained in violin lessons to other areas of life that have nothing to do with music. He considers it a mistake for a teacher to teach only violin. He combines violin playing with yoga, tai-chi, and Chinese medicine, which heals holistically. He applies the same principles in his teaching. He uses special physical exercises that teach students to control their muscles, tensing or relaxing them precisely as needed, and psychological and spiritual practices that they can apply in practical life.

Shonert concludes: "As my professor Alexey Gvozdev and professor Jiří Tomášek[28] used to say that it is not the hands that must be tired, but the head (the mind, author's note).

[28] Jiří Tomášek (1942–2017) was a Czech violin virtuoso and a long-time professor at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, the author's professor.

Perfect mastery of any technique is only the beginning. Playing the violin is one of the ways to reach spiritual perfection. It is a philosophy, a way of life."[29]

How to Learn the Firm Staccato

The firm staccato is a unique element of violin technique, which could be considered a parlor magician's trick or momentarily induced illusion. Throughout the centuries, top violin teachers have consistently tried to devise a method of achieving the perfect firm staccato, coming up with entirely different, controversial, often eccentric, and even ridiculous methods that do not shy away from the association with "divine endowment" and "occult sciences" (Dounis).[30] Essentially, it is a sequence of short, sharply separated notes with a bow on the string that contains two elements: an accent at the beginning of each note and a stopping bow at the end of the note. According to Rok Klopčič,[31] whose study I am following up on in The Strad,[32] there are two main kinds of staccato: firm and brilliant, which Dounis describes as different processes. Firm staccato has been given different names: controlled (Hart); martelé, slow or heavy (Dounis); honest (Heifetz); rhythmic (Galamian); mordant (Capet); Spohr (Flesch). Firm staccato is a series of martelé notes in one bow. Different authorities put different maximum speeds on what one can achieve: Flesch has the speed limit for semiquavers as M. M. = 66, and Harold Berkley gives M. M. = 88.

Brilliant staccato also has many names: tense, rapid (Dounis), fast (Galamian), cramp (Mostras), nervous (Applebaum), or Wieniawski (Flesch). It is used for higher speeds, where control is somewhat sacrificed in lieu of speed. Approaches are usually quite individual, and the mechanics are described variously.[33]

Many renowned violinists and teachers agree that a spasmodic hand movement produces high-speed staccato. Carl Flesch,[34] a renowned teacher, discusses the problem of staccato at some length in his book *The Art of Violin Playing*:

> "No doubt, many violinists possess a brilliant staccato, but very few can also control it in tempo. (...) To tell the truth, approximately three-quarters of professional violinists, including artists of the very first rank, have an insufficient staccato. Hence the capable teacher should not only be able to solve the comparatively simple problem of teaching beginners the correct staccato but should have the faculty of curing faulty staccato of every type; be able to undertake staccato correction. (...) There is a type of staccato that bids defiance to all rules of logic in the most insubordinate, savage, and brutal fashion, yet which when rightly understood and conceived, may be brilliantly effective. It is the stiff staccato. (...) Every teacher will remember more or less frequently occurring cases of pupils who, after having tormented themselves

29 Author's personal interview with A. Shonert.

30 Klopčič, Rok. 2003. "Staccato – One of the Most Controversial Elements of Right-hand Technique." *The Strad* 2003 (XI.). https://www.thestrad.com/improve-your-playing/staccato-one-of-the-most-controversial-elements-of-right-hand-technique/13972.article.

31 Rok Klopčič (1933– 2010) was a Slovenian violinist, musicologist, and pedagogue.

32 Klopčič, 2003.

33 Ibid.

34 Carl Flesch (1873–1944) was a Hungarian violinist and teacher.

> for years with all sorts of exercises without the least success, became the happy possessors of a magnificent stiff staccato overnight."[35]

The overnight miracle should be the ultimate rescue method for all violinists who strive for this element of violin technique. Still, Joseph Gingold[36] confessed to another – particularly "scientific" – method of Eugène Ysaÿe,[37] which he described as follows: "He asked me to put the bow on the string, shouted at me to tighten the upper arm, and then roared: 'Play!' He scared it out of me."[38] To understand the scope of the effect, it is necessary to imagine not only Ysaÿe's highly respected musical authority but also the hulking stature that complemented his imposing appearance.

Ivan Galamian also believes that fast, firm staccato is based on tension associated with muscle tremors in the arm, hand, or fingers caused by this tension.[39] Jindřich Pazdera[40] devoted a chapter to this issue in his book "*Vybrané kapitoly z metodiky houslové hry*" [Selected Chapters from the Methodology of Violin Playing]:

> "The firm staccato is a specific problem. One can agree with the opinion that the basis of its rapid and successful mastery lies in an innate motor endowment. It is equally clear that, with the necessary patience, it is usually possible to successfully cultivate this bow, even in those who do not show a similar gift. The criterion is not only speed but also control in all areas. The 'inherent' firm staccato is often the so-called Wieniawski staccato. (...) In performing it, the right arm (the upper arm) is brought into a state of such tremendous fixation 'that it is really like being crushed' and takes advantage of the resulting trembling. The virtuosic effect tends to be very convincing; in addition to speed, this staccato has a considerable degree of specific expression and is usually equally fast in both directions of the bow stroke."[41]

Alexander Shonert disposes of another type of firm staccato that is not limited in speed and, at the same time, does not arise from cramps. Shonert's composition "The Wind," in his interpretation, can serve as evidence.[42]

Shonert's staccato is genuinely phenomenal. The violinist has perfect control over the speed, the staccato is regular, both up and down, and it does not arise from cramps. The author counted 178 to 180 notes on the slow-motion image of Shonert's piece "The Wind."[43]

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35 Flesch, Carl. 1924. The Art of Violin Playing. New York: Carl Fischer, pp. 69–71.

36 Joseph Gingold (1909–1995) was a Russian-born American classical violinist and teacher.

37 Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931) was a famous Belgian violinist, composer, and conductor.

38 Klopčič, 2003.

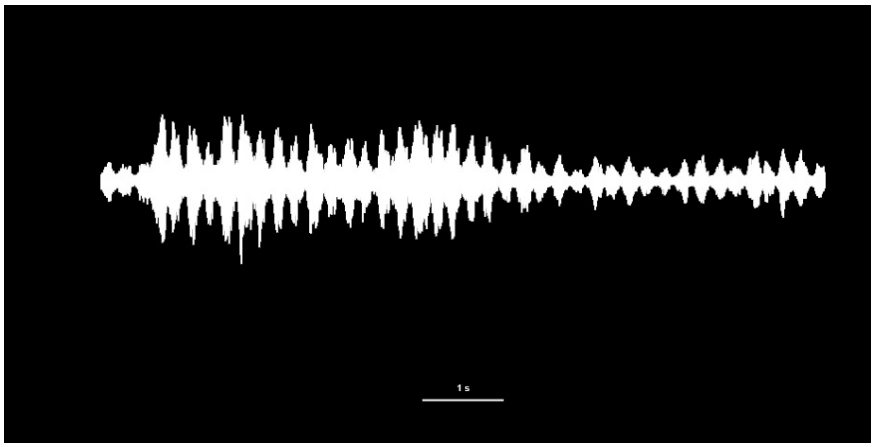
39 Galamian, 2013, p. 78.

40 Jindřich Pazdera (* 1954) is a Czech violinist and long-time pedagogue at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

41 Pazdera, Jindřich. 2007. *Vybrané kapitoly z metodiky houslové hry* [Selected Chapters from the Methodology of Violin Playing]. Praha: AMU, p. 221. (Translated by the author).

42 Two versions: 1. Shonert, Alexander. "The Wind." https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=70wyeCNmCwE.
2. Shonert, Alexander. "Dedicated to Paganini: Alexander Shonert plays A. Shonert's 'The Wind.'" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uzysthbm4zU.

43 Shonert, Alexander. "The Wind." https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=70wyeCNmCwE.



Example 1: The part of the graphic form of Shonert's firm staccato from the composition *The Wind.*

One way to calculate the individual notes of a firm staccato is to convert the sound into a graphical form. Here is part of one of Shonert's firm staccatos performed downward from a YouTube recording (A. Shonert – "The Wind") slowed down to half of the standard frequency and captured with a microphone into spectrogram software (oscilloscope.sciencemusic.org). This sample represents a small part of the cut – about a fifth.

During a personal consultation,[44] Shonert managed to play a 4-octave scale up and down, with each note repeated four times on one bow. He can add one more octave with the upstroke. That means that with his 224 notes downwards and even upwards 250 notes, which he can play in one stroke, he has surpassed the legendary firm staccato of the Czech virtuoso Josef Slavík,[45] who, according to Chopin's written testimony, could play 96 staccato notes in one stroke.[46]

Equally exciting and valuable is how Shonert achieved it. He was already thirty years old and mastered the firm staccato using his method in about one month, to which he remarked: "The process could have been quicker, but I was in the process of finding exercises that would help me to teach. Mostly I understood the principle myself."[47] It is not "magic." Shonert can methodically describe how to learn this unique element.

The most interesting of these is that it is not a staccato produced by spasm, as is the case of many violinists and often described in professional publications, but a staccato that is born of perfectly relaxed playing and comes from consciously controlled muscle parts. A Shonert's firm staccato is not born in the hands but in the mind. According to Shonert, for a violinist to master a firm staccato, it is first necessary to eliminate incorrect habits

44 The author's personal consultation was held on March 20, 2023.

45 Josef Slavík (1806–1833), a Czech violinist and composer, was also called the "Czech Paganini."

46 Voynich, Ethel Lilian, ed. 1931. *Chopin's Letters*: Collected by Henryk Opienski and translated from the original Polish and French by E. L. Voynich. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 130.

47 Author's personal interviews with A. Shonert.

because no element of violin playing occurs in isolation. The fundamental problem with firm staccato, which he has observed in many violinists, is that the muscles of the right hand go into spasm and become uncontrollable, especially in the downward bowing. He discovered a method that allows the right-hand muscles to relax and work together smoothly.

The main secret of Shonert's firm staccato is that the fingers on the bow do not lead the staccato movement, but the movement originates in the relaxed hand. The movement of the fingers is just a spontaneous response to the movement of the hand – it does not initiate staccato. He can demonstrate this phenomenon with a simple example. According to his method, staccato can be played by holding the bow with only two fingers while changing them in a flowing way, each one always with the thumb, by sliding up and down. Shonert can even play a firm staccato using only the thumb and pinky.[48] However, as many violin schools teach, he does not simultaneously rotate the wrist from the index to the pinky. According to Shonert's analysis, this principle might work for a slow staccato in the middle of the bow. Still, it would be challenging for a fast staccato throughout the bow and almost impossible for a downstroke. Each violinist has their own feelings, but in principle, physiologically and psychologically, a firm staccato must start in the hand, not in the fingers. According to Shonert, achieving a fast, firm staccato with conscious use of the fingers in every movement is impossible. He sees staccato not as a series of many small movements but as a single movement of the whole hand that is "interrupted" by the staccato (as if we were stringing pearls on a necklace). In this sense, it is possible to achieve a result where the movement of the hand is uninterrupted, and the hand remains still, almost motionless, for the entire duration of the staccato.[49]

Ivan Galamian (as well as Carl Flesch and many others)[50] mentions the two biggest problems in practicing the firm staccato. One is the movement itself; the other is the coordination with the fingers of the left hand and the transitions across the strings, which Jindřich Pazdera also analyses in detail.[51] According to Shonert's analysis, the hand becomes momentarily uncontrollable at this point. Sometimes there is even a momentary cramp, which significantly impairs the quality of a firm staccato because the muscle spasms are usually uncontrollable. The bow then begins to bounce on the string and loses its rhythm. In this case, one must be able to consciously relax the arm and put a little more weight of the whole arm. It is necessary to learn to add weight to the arm sensitively. That is why Shonert not only teaches staccato but focuses on the technique of the whole right arm, using staccato as an example. As a bonus, this will give the student a beautiful, sonorous, balanced tone and improve all other bowings. It is one of the causes of failure. The other, according to Shonert, is panic. Even a staccato that started well may not repeatedly succeed in the downward direction. Usually, the problem occurs in the middle of the bow, or the students have an individual spot on the bow where the staccato is more challenging for them. The violinist must know that place and practice it separately. Each step must be honestly practiced so that the next can follow. Shonert points out that care should be taken not to overload any muscle part when practicing.

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48 Incredible Staccato on the Violin Using Only Two Fingers, played by A. Shonert. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gXrW_1vec4.

49 Author's personal interview with A. Shonert.

50 Galamian, 2013, pp. 78–80; Flesch, 1924, p. 72.

51 Pazdera, 2007, pp. 222–223.

During the masterclass, Shonert demonstrated the practice of firm staccato on his pedagogical model: The basis of Shonert's staccato lies in the perfect control of the long bowings. At first glance, the exercises look simple, but the opposite is true. Achieving a perfect sound with a relaxed arm while maintaining a constant speed without a trace of forcing and with absolutely inaudible bow changes requires excellent mastery. Refined aural control and cultivating a sense of the violin's natural resonance under the supervision of a teacher play a vital role.

For Shonert's specific staccato, keeping the bow grip as loose as possible is essential. So, before starting the actual practice, he recommended the following exercise – holding the bow at the frog with the tip pointing toward the ceiling.

The student then played *détaché* – one bow up and one down bow in the most comfortable part of the bow (from around the middle and towards the top). The exercise was to be performed four times using a different combination of fingers on the bow: 1. thumb and index finger, 2. thumb and middle finger, 3. thumb and ring finger, and finally, 4. thumb and pinky finger. The position of the hand on the bow should remain almost unchanged. Shonert emphasized control of the sound, which should stay constant and smooth. The movement originates in the forearm, and the role of the fingers is only to guide the bow without being the initiator.

The next step was a continuous détaché with random alternation of fingers, the changes to be performed as imperceptibly as possible. The ring finger and the pinky finger are prone to tensing up. At this moment, it must be switched to the index and middle fingers. Shonert recommended playing each half note at least once using a bow up and down at a quarter note speed of M.M. = 50–60. The middle strings are the easiest to play, so he always starts practicing on the D string, then on the A and E strings, and finally moves to the G string in the same exercise aimed at maximum control when playing long notes.

The student should concentrate entirely on making each half-note sound exactly the same from the frog to the top. Neither the sound nor the speed of the bow stroke can change, even when reversing the bow. Shonert constantly checked that the student's right thumb was relaxed and that the weight of her arm rested on the bow and string. He guided the student's arm to move naturally during the stroke change. Once she got the correct movement and sound, she could switch to the new string without changing the grip on the bow.

The goal is to play it with a focus and concentration on the sound without distracting thoughts. This level of concentration and relaxation is essential when playing a firm staccato and helps find the most natural movement for the violinist. This exercise aids in proper bow posture while improving the area of bow control.

Shonert further recommended playing a half note with a short pulse in the middle of the bow. He preferred speed to pressure and used the smallest possible bow segment for the pulse. The movement comes from the forearm with the same sound and feeling of relaxation before and after the pulse. The number of pulses gradually multiplied according to the metronome up to 4 pulses.

In the following exercise, Shonert added an inertial movement. The student started with a long note in the first half of the bow and played four pulses but this time two times faster in the upper part of the bow. The pulses should originate from existing inertial movement as if continuing the hand's movement from the bow's first half. The pulses are to be added in an accurate metronome rhythm with constant hand control before going into a spasm. If the violinist finds the exercise difficult or the sound jerky and uncontrollable, they should set the metronome to a slower tempo and gradually increase it again.

Once the student had mastered the pulse, she moved on to replacing the impulse with a form of a slight sway into the martelé. Shonert uses an extremely loose right hand. This allows the movement to come from the shoulder and the fingers on the bow to move naturally. In Shonert's methodology, focusing on the muscles and their cooperation, a relaxed arm and the elbow is essential. The first step to successfully mastering staccato is conscious preparation.

He recommends continuing with the metronome set at M.M. = 45 or slower if it feels more comfortable and playing two short martelé per stroke. Again, listening carefully and ensuring that the long note still sounds balanced is essential. A release must necessarily follow every martelé. Shonert uses the weight of his arm instead of pressure and lets it hang off his shoulder. The number of martelé movements should be gradually multiplied precisely according to the metronome while maintaining the feeling, as in the playing of the long tone. The faster the tempo, the quicker the release must follow each martelé movement.

The moment the hand begins to stiffen (usually on the downstroke), Shonert recommends playing the long note immediately, thinking about the difference between the long note and the staccato, and then trying the martelé again with the feeling of playing the long note. Shonert finds Kreutzer's etude No. 4 very useful for practicing staccato up and down and recommends practicing the martelé using only the weight of the arm, not the pressure needed for the martelé bowing. It should be enough to create a (lighter) staccato movement without tension.

Gradually, no longer using a metronome, the tempo and number of staccato notes should be increased, returning to the long note whenever necessary while maintaining a constant bow speed. The goal is to gradually increase the number of staccato notes and gain the ability to play them during the stroke of the entire bow.

All presented Shonert's exercises are perfectly arranged from the instructional point of view and logically follow each other. However, they are challenging to perform and require maximum concentration. The main difference of the Shonert method is that the fingers are not involved in the bow exchange. It is necessary to relax the whole hand from the wrist to the fingers so that the movement comes from the hand, with the fingers moving by inertia. The structure of the hands is different for each violinist, so the movement of the fingers will be slightly different for everyone.

Shonert is willing to pass on his method. However, learning staccato in one seminar or from the web is impossible. What is essential is direct contact with the teacher and regular guidance. Even if the violinist does not achieve a dizzyingly fast staccato, individual exercises can contribute significantly to forming right arm work and technique. Even here, however, correction of sound under the supervision of an erudite teacher is necessary if the pupil is not yet sufficiently mature and accustomed to listening to the maximum extent possible. It is also essential to check that the movements are relaxed and correctly executed.

How to Get Rid of Stage Fright

On the devastating effects of stage fright, Shonert stated: "I remember from my childhood having crazy stage fright before every performance. Sometimes it was almost panic with increased body temperature and rapid pulse. The fear used to be so great that I wished

something would happen – anything – just so I would not have to play, and unfortunately, the stage fright took away from the quality of the performance."[52]

Shonert sees stage fright in anyone who performs in front of people – musicians, actors, politicians – as a normal phenomenon. He even believes that if a violinist came to play without stage fright, it would be boring for him and others. He finds it challenging to eliminate stage fright in a way that benefits the cause. It is necessary to work with stage fright consciously. He, therefore, tries to find ways to befriend stage fright so that it helps him. He developed his own technique to deal with stage fright and overcome blocks. First and foremost, he sought to eliminate the fear in his mind and then transfer the feelings to the body so that his hands could also relax and control the instrument. Today he teaches that learning to control the conscious and subconscious mind is essential. A revelation for him was the Pinchas Zukerman masterclass, in which he was highly impressed and inspired by the example of controlling emotions and the instrument.

Shonert recalls: "Zuckerman was playing Vitali Ciaccona – his violin was crying, and he was telling jokes as he played. It was an amazing experience for me. Controlled work – a hot heart and a cool head. Emotions must be controlled; otherwise, emotions will control you, and the violin playing will lose quality. Fear is hard to eliminate completely, but it must be controlled so that the technical quality of the performance does not suffer."[53]

Shonert summarized his idea within *The Shonert Technique*[54] into twenty-one tips for controlling stage fright, which he discussed in detail at the seminar. It might be worth rearranging the tips in a logical order. In terms of the focus of this study, only the most exciting opinions are mentioned.

Shonert considers frequent public performing as an essential ingredient, the importance of which is also stressed by David Oistrakh. Even though he was not immune to stage fright, explaining: "If one plays less than twice a month, it could crack anyone's nerves," he recommended constant public playing as the only sure antidote. He admitted: "In most cases, I feel a tremendous inner tension," but warned against the danger of being "too calm."[55]

One of Shonert's tips is to transform and redirect the feeling of fear into inspiration. He recommends learning to improvise and clarifies: "Improvisation protects against the fear of forgetting what to play. If one can improvise for a moment in the spirit and style of a given piece, the average listener will not know it."[56]

The preparation, both instrumental and mental, immediately before the performances is undoubtedly crucial. Many teachers advise what to focus on when performing on stage. Yuri Yankelevich,[57] a renowned pedagogue, considered the best mental preparation before going on stage to be the feeling of absolute control of one's instrument. Before a performance, he recommended playing through the piece without stopping at a slightly slower tempo and following all the nuances. He further recommends:

> "It is important to be able to exaggerate the musical idea but without ever becoming too excited or flustered. This also helps to grasp the form, consolidate the transitions

[52] Author's personal interviews with A. Shonert.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Available from http://cz.shonertacademy.com.
[55] Roth, Henry. 1997. *Violin Virtuosos from Paganini to the 21st Century*. Los Angeles: California Classics Book, p. 146.
[56] Author's personal interviews with A. Shonert.
[57] Yuri Yankelevich (1909–1973) was a Soviet violinist and teacher.

> and sequences, precisely control all the details, and improve the coordination between mental conception and physical realization. It is important not to lose oneself on stage. The performer should think only about the music and not notice anything else. Nothing unexpected should interfere with the violinist's fundamental goal, which is artistry and musically convincing whole... Emotion must be already created when first studying the piece. A musician must always be engaged and live the music without waiting for 'inspiration' on stage. I cannot remember Victor Tretyakov[58] ever playing anything in a lesson without being wholly involved, he never 'saved' anything extra for the stage."[59]

Moreover, Shonert states that violinists should be in control of everything they do on stage. Stage fright comes from insecurity.[60] Shonert advises perceiving the concert as a series of tasks that must be completed and recalls: "David Oistrakh once had an extremely successful performance. After the concert, a journalist approached him and asked him what he could say about today's particularly successful performance. Oistrakh replied, 'I managed to do almost everything I wanted to do today.'"[61]

To a large extent, these are well-known lesson principles whose positive impact depends on many factors – the violinist's mental resilience, personality, pedagogical guidance, etc. In Shonert's conception, we can see an eclectic mix of approaches that focus on influencing the psyche of the individual affected by stage fright. The problem is the considerable – at least so far – "unpredictability" of these practices. Shonert describes them in relatively general terms, with the practical implementation in his hands in the class with the student and in his perception of the particular student. It is thus an exceptionally meritorious activity, but it can hardly be called orderly methodology. The importance of the improvisation would be alone as a subject for a separate study. Shonert can be credited with his efforts to describe and further develop his methodological procedures, which he continues to improve with the ambition of having student-teachers in the future who would take up his procedures and teach them further.

Conclusion

The three themes chosen are timeless and have always been topical regarding modern violin-playing principles. The text draws on many interviews conducted with Alexander Shonert. It is outside the scope of this article to discuss the issues in detail, but pointing out the diversity of opinions may benefit many violin teachers. Shonert's ideas can help violinists (and teachers) on their journey to violin artistry. Of course, mastering such a complex element of violin technique as the firm staccato without direct contact with a teacher in the case of book-based study is debatable, as is mastering the firm staccato in a single seminar. However, the methodological principles and examples can inspire further development in the field of violin playing. The positive aspect of Shonert's approach is the respect for the individuality of the pupil and the attempt to make the playing freer by way

58 Viktor Viktorovich Tretyakov (* 1946) is a Russian/Soviet violinist and conductor.
59 Lankovsky, Masha. 2016. *The Russian Violin School. The Legacy of Yuri Yankelevich*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 227–228.
60 Author's personal interview with A. Shonert.
61 Ibid.

of corrections or refinements, "cleaning up" the basic principles of violin technique so that the individual elements come together in the most freely developed system, at any level of playing. It would certainly be interesting to watch the pupils that Shonert himself guides.

It is a meritorious activity to raise awareness in the field of physical exercise, which is often neglected, yet plays a pivotal role in preventing and developing professional injuries. One of the most remarkable contributions is the emphasis Shonert places on the pupil learning to listen to themselves and to perceive sound quality. Auditory control is an essential issue without which further improvement in violin playing cannot occur.

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