



# MUSICA

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2/2025

# **STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ-BOLYAI MUSICA**

**2/2025  
DECEMBER**

ISSN (print): 1844-4369;  
ISSN (online): 2065-9628; ISSN-L: 1844-4369  
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Published by Babeș-Bolyai University  
<https://studia.reviste.ubbcluj.ro/index.php/subbmusica>

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## Front cover:

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*Studia UBB Musica* will be indexed and abstracted in *Emerging Sources Citation Index*.



**YEAR  
MONTH  
ISSUE**

**(LXX) 2025  
DECEMBER  
2**

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PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2025-12-24  
PUBLISHED PRINT: 2026-01-30  
ISSUE DOI:10.24193/subbmusica.2025.2

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# **STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ-BOLYAI MUSICA**

**2**

## **SUMAR – SOMMAIRE – CONTENTS – INHALT**

### **MUSIC PEDAGOGY**

- ILDIKÓ FERENCZINÉ ÁCS, What Kind of Song is Pouring Out from the Classrooms. Part 1: Warm Up in the Classroom ..... 9
- IRYNA HRYNCHUK, NATALIYA OVOD, LINA ILCHUK, PAVLO YALOVSKYI, LUDMYLA KONDRATSKA, Music Educational Practice at School as a Space for Developing Students' Creative Self-Expression and Creative Abilities ..... 35
- RITA KEREKES, Student Typologies in Music Teacher Education ..... 57
- YANA KYRYLENKO, YULIYA MEREZHKO, OKSANA PETRYKOVA, OLHA PROTSYSHYNA, YEVHENIYA PROVOROVA, Modern Vocal Techniques as a Tool for Improving Vocal and Vocal Ensemble Skills of Art Education Students ..... 71
- OLHA LIASHENKO, YEVHEN KURYSHEV, LYUDMYLA HARKUSHA, TETIANA BUTENKO, VALENTYN KASIANOV, Individual Trajectory of Forming a Pianist's Performance Style in the Context of Personalised Learning in a Higher Arts Institution ..... 95

MARHARYTA MALAKHOVA, STANISLAV HUMINIUK, OKSANA RYNDENKO, MARIIA PUKHLIANKO, ANTON KUSHNIR, Developing Instrumentalists' Interpretive Freedom through Pedagogical Support in their Professional Studies .....	115
MD JAIS ISMAIL, MOHD ROHAIZAD MOHD RADUAN, RAFIDAH SAHARUDIN, KAMAROLZAMAN ABDUL RAHMAN, SHARIFAH HANIZAH SYED JAAFAR, Integrating Music Items in Gifted Screening Test: Validation Strategies in Malaysia .....	139
DIANA ELENA SÂRB, YIANNIS MIRALIS, Breaking Barriers in Music: Diversity, Inclusion, and Special Educational Needs .....	163
ANCA SIMION, Transferability in Music Education: from Practice Routines to Performance-Based Learning and Evaluation Across Disciplines .....	177
KATERYNA YURYEVA, ALLA SOKOLOVA, MARYNA TKACHENKO, IRYNA PARFENTIEVA, TETIANA IEVTUKHOVA, Training Future Teachers of Music and of the Integrated Course "Art" to Create Original Educational Media Products .....	195

## **MUSICAL PERFORMANCE**

CIPRIAN PARA, Observations on the Concept of the Sound Plane and the Development of the Overall Musical Structure .....	227
MARIANNA CHERNYAVSKA, SVITLANA ANFILOVA, YAKIV VOSKOBOINIKOV, Media Representation in Contemporary Academic Piano Performance: <i>Alexandre Tharaud's</i> Phenomenon .....	241
KHAIRUNNISA DIYANA MD NOOR, MARZELAN SALLEH, Self-Exploration and Artistic Expression: Reflective Journaling in Malay Art Song: 'Enigma Hati' by Marzelan Salleh.....	265

## **RELIGIOUS MUSIC**

MIHAELA BUHAICIUC, LÁSZLÓ-LEVENTE SZABÓ-SIKLÓDI, Performance Practices of Transylvanian Latin in Ecclesiastical Music .....	283
ANETTE PAPP, Gregorian Chant in the Practice of the Saxon Unitarians in Transylvania, Part 1 .....	299
DANIEL MOCANU, The Acoustics of Orthodox Churches between Byzantine Tradition, Liturgical Experience and Musical Challenge .....	315

## **MUSIC ANALYSIS**

YULIA FURDUY, IHOR HUTNIK, Comparison of the Evolution and Reconciliation of the Romantic Bagatelle Genre in the Piano Works of B. Smetana and C. Saint-Saëns.....	335
RALUCA IRIMIA, Perspectives Regarding the Quartet in the Works of Giuseppe Verdi.....	347
VALENTIN MUREȘAN, An Analysis of the Genre, Style, and Interpretative Aspects of Francis Poulenc's Piano Sonata for Four Hands .....	363
TETIANA FILATOVA, Astor Piazzolla's "Tango Suite" for Two Guitars: Genre and Style Aspects.....	375
XU XINGZHOU, BAIXUE MA, JINGTAO ZHAO, The Image of Joan of Arc in the Oratorio by A. Honegger «Joan of Arc at the Stake» .....	391
MARYNA VARAKUTA, DARYNA KUPINA, MARYNA VOTINTSEVA, Valentyn Silvestrov's String Quartets Within the Dynamics of Genre Tradition: from Modernism to Metamusic .....	405
OLENA YAKYMCHUK, "To Victory" for Vocal Sextet and Symphony Orchestra by Olena Ilnytska: Mythopoetics of the Work.....	421
<b>CONTRIBUTORS</b> .....	433
<b>SUBSCRIPTION</b> .....	439
<b>AGREEMENT OF CHANGE BETWEEN THE INSTITUTIONS</b> .....	441
<b>INVITATION FOR PUBLISHING</b> .....	443



## WHAT KIND OF SONG IS POURING OUT FROM THE CLASSROOMS PART 1: WARM UP IN THE CLASSROOM

ILDIKÓ FERENCZINÉ ÁCS<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** This study explores the methodology of vocal warm-up in the context of Hungarian classroom music education, emphasizing the importance of age-appropriate, conscious voice training practices. Drawing on historical pedagogical texts and the author's extensive teaching experience, the paper distinguishes between voice training and warm-up routines, advocating for structured yet flexible warm-up sequences at the start of every lesson. Key methodological principles are presented, including body posture, breathing techniques, resonance development, and articulatory awareness. Rather than focusing on theoretical explanations, the study offers practical strategies to help children develop good singing habits.

**Keywords:** classroom music, voice training, warm up, practical examples.

### Introduction

In Hungary, the first complex curriculum and instructions of elementary public schools were published in 1905, following the 1868 law<sup>2</sup> on public education, which established *compulsory education* (compulsory school attendance). The *Aims and Tasks* section of the subject called *Singing* was as follows: “*The formal aim of teaching singing in elementary public schools is to awaken and develop the sense of music and to cultivate the singing voice.*” (Curriculum and Instruction 1905: 235) The *Method* section also states that “*The most important task of the teacher is to guard the pupils’ voice with due care and as far as possible, to improve it.*” (Curriculum and Instruction 1905: 248)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=86800038.TV#Ibj0id48b2> Last accessed: 2 January 2025



Even 120 years ago, *singing* was the most important basic principle of Hungarian music education, which has achieved considerable progress. The most important methodological publications related to the subject<sup>3</sup> usually devoted a special chapter to the development of singing skills and voice training. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, studies mainly by classroom music teachers provided the basis for the knowledge of voice training, but there were also writings and books by classical singing teachers. The literature of the subject offers several exercises and types of exercises, discusses anatomical issues and voice training problems, thus providing ample explanation of *what* and *why*, but is relatively reticent as to the question of *how*. Thus, considerably less information is provided on methods of practical application, choosing the right text, conscious planning for the classroom, or the interaction between choir leader/teacher and singer.<sup>4</sup>

The present paper is an improved version of my earlier writings, based on many years of professional experience.<sup>5</sup> Its aim is not to describe the apparatus involved in sound training or the vocal problems but rather to describe the mechanism of operation and the methodological practices involved.

### Voice Training vs. Warming up

*“When shall we start voice training? As soon as possible! [...] as soon as the use of the intellect has been acquired, then we can begin systematic*

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- <sup>3</sup> Chronologically: Kerényi György-Rajeczky Benjámín. Éneklő iskola. Vezérkönyv az Énekes ábécéhez. [Singing School. A Guide Book to the Singing Alphabet.] Magyar Kórus, Budapest, 1940; Ádám Jenő. Módszeres énektanítás. [Methodical Classroom Music Teaching] Turul Szövetség Könyv- és Lapterjesztő Kft. Budapest, 1944; Csillag Lászlóné-Kerecsényi László. Az ének-zene tanítás módszertana. [The Methodology of Classroom Music Teaching] Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1966; Perényi László. Az énektanítás pedagógiája. [The Pedagogy of Classroom Singing Teaching] Tankönyvkiadó Vállalat, Budapest, 1957; Hegyi József. Az ének-zene tanítása. [Teaching Classroom Music and Singing.] Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1972; Péter József. Zenei nevelés az általános iskolában. [Musical Education in Primary School.] Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1973; Osvay Károlyné. Az ének-zene tanítás módszertana. [The Methodology of Classroom Music and Singing Teaching.] Krúdy Könyvkiadó, Nyíregyháza, 2007.
- <sup>4</sup> The publications that most help the vocal training work of classroom music teachers in Hungarian are the following: Georgette Sinkovics's reprint book (Kórushangképzés – jóízűen. [Choral Voice Training – in a Good Mood.] Interkultur Hungaria Közhasznú Kft. Budapest, 2011.) and Bruckner Adrienne's writings (Énekelni jól! [Singing Well!] Kodály Intézet. Kecskemét, 1999.; Egy kis technika. [A Little Bit of Technique] LFZE Budapest, 2019.)
- <sup>5</sup> Ferencziné Ács Ildikó. Hangképzés az iskolában. [Vocal Training in the School]. Bessenyei György Könyvkiadó, Nyíregyháza, 1997; Ferencziné Ács Ildikó. (Be)éneklési készségfejlesztés. In: Tanulmányok a levelező és részismereti tanárképzés tantárgypedagógiai tartalmi megújításáért. [Developing Warm-up Skills. In: Studies for the Subject-Specific Pedagogical Renewal of Part-Time Teacher Training] Szaktárnet-könyvek 8. (ed.): Maticsák Sándor. University of Debrecen – College of Nyíregyháza, 2015. pp. 37-72.; Ferencziné Ács Ildikó – Pintér-Keresztes Ildikó. Pótvonalak – adalékok az ének-zene tanításához. [Ledger Lines: Supplements for the Teaching of Music] SZAKTÁRNET. College of Nyíregyháza. 2015. pp. 13-17.

*voice training*", writes Alajos Werner in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kerényi-Rajeczky 1940: 86). László Perényi emphasizes that "*not a single class should pass without a few minutes of voice training.*" (Perényi 1957: 205).

As a methodological book by Károlyné Osvay's states: "*voice enhancement is a task that runs through the whole singing lesson unnoticed*" (Osvay 2007: 43). Furthermore: "*Regardless of the constant voice correction and enhancement during the singing lesson, it is very useful to spend 4-5 minutes at the beginning of the lesson on independent sound production*" (Osvay 2007: 43). In the chapter entitled "Starting Songs and Folk Song Medleys", we can read the following: "*The classroom singing class should always start with singing together. The purpose of ensemble singing is to set the mood for the lesson, to solidify the songs learned in previous lessons, but it is also a kind of warming up; it is a way of getting the vocal organs working, of 'singing them in'*" (Osvay 2007: 49).

To move forward, it seems necessary to clarify the two basic definitions. Most of the literature uses the term "voice training", but it is also necessary to define "warm-up":

- Voice training: continuous, conscious control throughout the entire lesson or rehearsal process.
- Warm-up: an activity at the beginning of a lesson (or choir rehearsal) to warm up the apparatus involved in the sound production; preparation for the work process.

Warm-up should be done through exercises that develop children's voices according to their age, preserve the ringing and freshness of the voice, and help to teach clear intonation. The present paper focuses on methods of implementing warm-up activities related to the material of classroom music lessons.

In the methodology, singing together at the beginning of the lesson has a main function of repetition or preparation. A problem only arises if the previous lesson material was a melody with a large vocal range, such as *Dona nobis pacem*<sup>6</sup> or *Nachtigallenkanon*,<sup>7</sup> which have a range of ninth or twelfth. In such cases, the class is confronted with a powerful sound, or, on the contrary, the class is mute, being simply unable to produce the desired pitch. The teacher begins to encourage the singers, but does not think, as Adrienne Bruckner aptly put it (Bruckner 1999: 8), that this is like starting a gymnastics lesson with a tightrope walk or a locker jump without warming up. The parent notices immediately after PE class if his child goes home with an injury, but if his or her voice is hoarse or slurred, he or she may think it is caused either by having been too noisy or a respiratory illness.

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<sup>6</sup> Example of sheet music: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dona\\_nobis\\_pacem\\_\(round\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dona_nobis_pacem_(round))

<sup>7</sup> Example of sheet music: <https://musescore.com/user/16478/scores/4824736>

It is, therefore, strongly recommended that warm-up should start lessons with due consideration and a gradual approach. This may have a different structure at different ages, but it can be varied enough without becoming too mechanical or boring.

### Major Principles

When warming up, an important factor is *what* we demand, *and why* and *how* we demand it from the singer(s). The practice sequence should not be formal, but should be based on class, age, and ability, and should be thoughtfully planned and put together. It is natural to adopt and try out new exercises, but creating a good mood should not be the primary measure of good practice.

What should be kept in mind, regardless of age group:

- warming up should not be accompanied by a piano, as this obscures the real sound and works against clear intonation;
- do not sing with the class, listen to the turns of phrase;
- move from simple, short exercises with a narrow vocal range to more complex exercises with a higher range – keep in mind the gradualness of the technical sequence of exercises;
- raise pitch only in semitones, and step backwards in semitones at first; after a phrase or two, you can descend in whole tones;
- for older students (especially for choral singing), use “join-in scaling”: starting at the same time, everyone should step out and then in where their own range is appropriate; for young children, delimit the desired range precisely;
- introducing a different exercise each time should be avoided, it is advisable to have a few basic exercises to which you can link the new ones;
- always start from the middle position (from a starting point around  $e^1$ , or from a  $g^1$ - $a^1$  base in the case of small children);
- present the exercises at the required tempo, intonation and with a perfect technique;
- a medium, natural volume should be used both when presenting and singing;
- give the right amount of breath at the start, both when we set off with a command or a hand gesture;
- lead the exercises with movements of appropriate character and meaning.

For choral voice training, the following types of exercises are recommended for warming up for about 10 minutes at the beginning of the rehearsal:

WHAT KIND OF SONG IS POURING OUT FROM THE CLASSROOMS  
PART 1: WARM UP IN THE CLASSROOM

1. Exercises for body movement and breathing exercises
2. Exercises for improving resonance
3. Articulatory exercises
4. Legato and staccato exercises for expanding the vocal range
5. Exercises for relaxation

Exercises of types 2, 3, 5 can be combined with polyphony.

Of course, not all types can be used in a sequence in classroom music lessons, but it is optimal to schedule 2-3 phases in the first 3-5 minutes of the lesson.

Warming up and getting into function go hand in hand with preparing the body, developing correct breathing and voice building to promote the technique of speaking. It is recommended to concentrate on these areas first.

## **THE METHODOLOGY OF WARMING UP**

### ***Body Movement***

Singing is not just vocal work; the whole body is involved in the process. Since only a body saturated with fresh oxygen can perform well mentally and physically, start warming up with a stretching exercise by an open window or in a well-ventilated room, standing up. When planning the sequence of movements, it is advisable to follow the principle of gradualness: after the muscles of the legs, trunk and shoulders, the arm work should be followed by the neck and head. Due attention should be paid to relaxing the muscles of the chin, mouth, tongue, lips and face.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Correct Posture***

#### STANDING POSITION

The correct posture is for singers to stand in a “small straddle” (the feet aligning with the hip) position, shoulders and arms relaxed, and holding their heads straight. It is also correct to have the hands slightly raised and interlocked in front. However, if the rib cage narrows because of the hands clasped together at the front or tightens because of the hands behind the back, this will negatively affect relaxed, deep breathing.

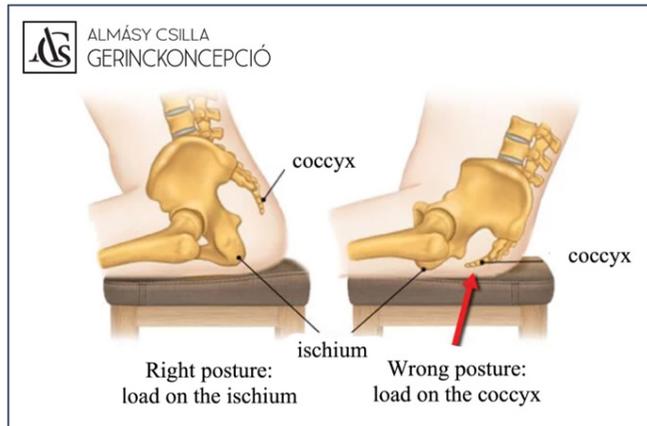
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<sup>8</sup> Examples for this practice type can be found in: Ferencziné Ács Ildikó. Hangképzés az iskolában. [Vocal Training in the School]. Bessenyei György Könyvkiadó, Nyíregyháza, 1997.

SITTING POSITION

Perényi’s methodology book advises the following: “*When children sit in singing class, make them place their hands on their knees or next to the body, or on the desk*” (Perényi 1957: 201). Make an effort to get the position automatic during singing. If children sit leaning backwards and slightly slouched, as if on their spine, loading the coccyx, this can lead to low back pain in the long term and, in addition, breaks the air column for singing. The following illustration on the topic of spine protection shows the importance of choosing the right seating position.

Figure 1



Seating positions<sup>9</sup>

So, try to keep the children sitting upright when singing (but also in general), in the middle or in the front of the chair, depending on the size of the seat. They can put their hands on the tabletop or lift the book, score or notebook.

**Singing and Breathing, Breathing Exercises**

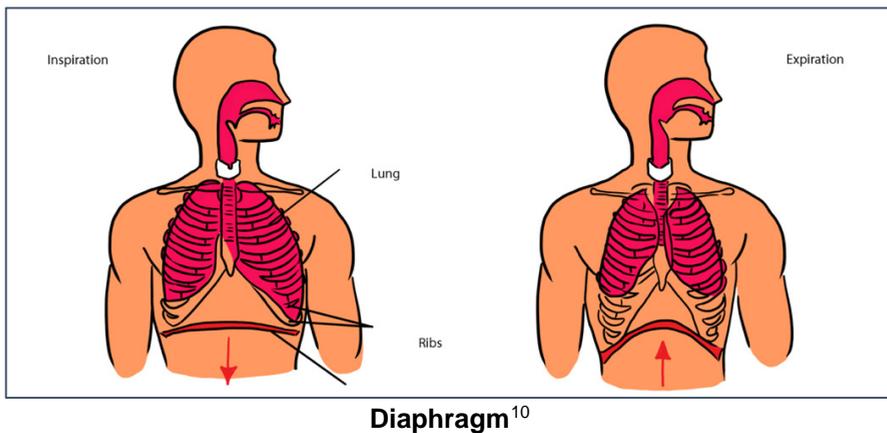
Ideally, correct breathing needs not to be taught, as it is something that one is born with. The teacher’s most important task is to help children who breathe in visibly different ways and with the wrong habits in finding the right feeling.

<sup>9</sup> Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=473912128116016&id=100064916971648&set=a.413554457485117> Csilla Almásy, spine therapist, physiotherapist, health teacher (MEd), TripleX master trainer. Homepage: <https://gerinckonceptio.hu/> Last accessed and edited: 29 May 2025. Text translated by the author.

WHAT KIND OF SONG IS POURING OUT FROM THE CLASSROOMS  
PART 1: WARM UP IN THE CLASSROOM

The physiological ratio between the time of inspiration and expiration at rest is 1:1. The ratio of the phases of breathing alters in the case of singing and speaking (vocalisation). The inspiration is shorter, faster and has a new characteristic compared to normal breathing, it becomes “deeper”. The right amount of air is “just enough” to vocalise a phrase. By increasing the volume too much, we can have a particularly damaging effect on the vocal cords. Inspiration is good and natural when the shoulders are not elevated, the chest is relaxed, the ribs are raised to the sides, so that the lower parts of the lungs are filled with air.

**Figure 2**



For the waist area to expand circumferentially, another condition must be met: The diaphragm separating the chest from the abdomen is arched in the relaxed state, and the heart rests in the middle. In the inspiration phase, the vault flattens and descends towards the abdominal cavity, with the natural consequence that the abdominal wall protrudes slightly. After the active action of the muscles, the passive process of expiration is dominated by the relaxation phase. The diaphragm relaxes and rises, the protrusion of the abdominal wall ceases, the force holding the lungs out is reduced, and the lungs contract and the air in them flows outwards.

The following instructions should be avoided during teaching: take the breath “into your belly” / “into your diaphragm”; push/press your belly forward! Our breathing organ is the lungs, and we do not push/press anything when singing.

<sup>10</sup> Source: <https://sing-like-a-star-courses.mykajabi.com/blog/what-is-singing-from-the-diaphragm>  
Last accessed: 29 May 2025

The expiration phase of the singing breath is essentially the same as the physiological exhalation, but the duration is increased according to the length of the vocal delivery. This means that the correct allocation of the available air volume is the goal to be achieved, and the means to achieve this is to “ration” the air as needed. This is called *support or breath support* in the language of singers. The use of this term in practice, in teaching, can lead to a lot of misunderstandings and incorrect mechanisms. Without explanation, it can lead the singer to take an extra action (an undesirable effort): he or she is trying to press or squeeze, and he or she is reserving air and is not supporting breath. A misinterpretation of the term can lead to a few unnecessary actions, such as the belly-press.

We should rather not use the term “support” in the initial stages of vocal learning, but only describe its function: when exhaling, let the air flow freely, try to keep the air column loose and sufficient for the desired length of time. A steady flow is a prerequisite for a rich, well-toned sound.

After an initial body exercise, it is a good idea to continue the class with breathing exercises. Concentrate on two major phases: relaxed, deep inhalation through the nose (momentary hold with open glottis, see later), consciously controlled expiration (the raised ribs should not collapse, only the abdominal wall should flatten).

The aim of breathing exercises is to control the time interval of the actual (singing) breath release, so only do exercises that improve in this regard. Exercises aimed at holding or retaining air will not help.

Examples:

### *1. Controlled Breathing*

The teacher signals not only the beginning of the breath and the expiration, but also the end, carefully preparing the way. After a slow, deep inhalation and a momentary hold, the task is to release the air evenly. The expiration should be made with the phonemes [s(ə)], [[(ə)] or [f(ə)]<sup>11</sup>. The aim is to practise the active expulsion of air for increasing lengths of time.

Technical advice:

It should be stressed that the aim of singing breathing exercises is not to hold/retain air. It is not swimming underwater. The task is to practice the conscious use of a sufficient amount of air to sing a given phrase or melodic progression. Hissing for a long time with parted lips does not achieve the goal, as it does not represent the use of air during the singing process.

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<sup>11</sup> The notations follow the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

To get the right feel, it is best to practise with the lips relatively wide open and rounded. Accordingly, I myself use a rounding of the lips that is appropriate for the sound of the [ə]. For consonants, I first use the [ʃ]-sounding exercises, which make it easier to feel the intense blowing with a loose chin and rounded lips, and also give the teacher good control of the sound. If there is a steady, intense hiss, there is air underneath and an active outflow. If the sound is too soft and too light or switches off and on, it indicates inadequate lip position or insufficient air quantity. As soon as air is felt to be running out, stop the exercise, because further “squeezing” will result in forced muscle work.

During the breathing exercises, it is advisable to count approximately every second, gradually increasing the duration. However, it is not advisable to go beyond eight counts, as the available air is used up in the course of a tune lasting about eight beats, or, at higher pitches, even half the time when played intensively. For smaller children, it is advisable to work with 3-4 counts from the outset, i.e., it is recommended to finish the exercise on beat three or four. Closing requires more attention to technique: release on a signal (beat) and a soft sigh (h)[ə].

Blowing out with the [s] sound is recommended only after the stable use of [ʃ].

E.g., [ʃʃ] \_\_\_\_\_ (h)[ə]  
[ss] \_\_\_\_\_ (h)[ə]

## II. Staccato Exercise – Echo Play

Additional consonants can be included in the breathing exercises. The following example is intended as a kind of “diaphragm training”, a path towards staccato. The method is like the one above: intense consonant sounding with relaxed muscle tone – double-intensity pronunciation of the consonant with a rounded lip (with slight pursing) and a slight [ə] at the end, only indicating it. The chin, tongue and neck are relaxed.

Suggested consonants for this exercise:

[pp] + (h)(ə), [tt] + (h)(ə), [kk] + (h)(ə), [tss] + (h)(ə),  
[ttʃ] + (h)(ə), [ʃʃ] + (h)(ə), [ss] + [h](ə), [ff] + (h)(ə).

It is fun to combine the exercise with an increasingly complex rhythm. It is not recommended to stop and explain what you are hearing during the exercise. To ensure continuity of attention, immediately after the pronunciation, the students repeat the motif in an echoing manner, even several times, with

the teacher giving cues to draw attention to areas for improvement. To ensure that the response is easy to follow, the last element of the beat should preferably be a quarter note. For example:

**E.g. 1-2**<sup>12</sup>

4/4 tth(ö) tth(ö) cch(ö) cch(ö) pph(ö) pph(ö)

4/4 kkh(ö) kkh(ö) cch(ö) cch(ö) cch(ö) cch(ö) cesh(ö) cesh(ö)

Syncopating movement will make the play even more exciting:

**E.g. 3**<sup>13</sup>

4/4 tth(ö) cch(ö) cesh(ö) pph(ö) tth(ö)

If the articulation is intense enough, you are actually doing staccato exercises without explaining how the diaphragm and other organs work.

To summarise:

- If you follow the above process of breathing exercises, it is almost certain that the correct breathing technique will set itself over time. It is unnecessary to explain in detail the movement of the diaphragm, the rise of the floating ribs, and other – otherwise real – processes to students. With concise, concrete instructions and good presentation, the correct sense of function can be established immediately.
- The consonants used in breathing exercises should only be *voiceless*. Vocal cords *should not* be involved in this phase. Also, for breath-holding exercises, [t] and [s] are the most recommended of the voiceless fricatives.

<sup>12</sup> See above for pronunciation according to IPA.

<sup>13</sup> See above for pronunciation according to IPA.

- For staccato exercises, voiceless stops ([p], [t], [k]) and the affricates ([tʃ] and [tʃs]) can be included. The inclusion of the consonant [k] should be monitored more closely, as it is backformed. The place of articulation of the other vowels is in front or more front and they are closer together.

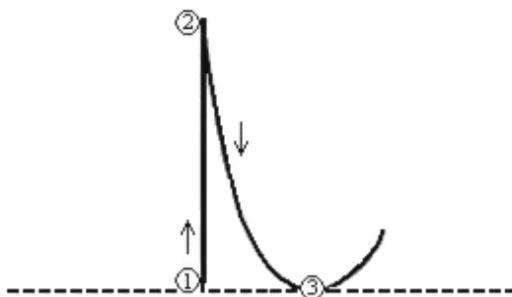
### **Vocalisation**

Between the inspiration and expiration phases, there is a moment that has not yet been mentioned. This is a tipping point, best illustrated by the movement of the pendulum when it pauses for a moment before moving again. In terms of breathing of singers, this means that we should take a transition into consideration from expiration to inspiration and another switch vice versa. It is this latter moment that singers should pay particular attention to.

After inhaling, we do not immediately produce a sound. During a momentary period of holding the air, we prepare (in our mind) for the vocal delivery, we imagine the sound. The glottis is open, the vocal cords start to make a sound from this open position, gently resisting the starting airflow. The result is the only pedagogically correct way to start the sound, a soft start.

This is another factor which does not need to be over-explained to the pupils, and which should only be included in the teacher's implicit knowledge. It is easy to achieve with the right cue.

**Figure 3**



**The phases of cue<sup>14</sup>**

The position indicated with number 2 in the diagram above is the common moment of conducting and singing, i.e., the preparation for the vocalisation. However, holding one's breath momentarily is not the same as keeping back air. In the latter case, the vocal cords are compressed tightly before the outgoing air could reach them, so that the air mass accumulated

<sup>14</sup> Source: Ferencziné Ács Ildikó. Breathing and choir conducting. International Choral Bulletin. Volume XXXVII, Number 2 – 2nd Quarter, 2018. pp. 56-58.

in the windpipe exerts great pressure on the vocal cords, causing them to snap open. The result is a hard vocal start. This mechanism is wrong and should be avoided when singing and corrected if detected. Forced sound emission overloads the muscles participating in vocalisation, and prolonged misuse can lead to disorders of articulation.

The opposite of a hard start is when the volume of air flowing out does not immediately hit the glottis. If a large amount of air is expelled through the still open glottis before the actual sound is made, the tone initiation will be too “airy”, or “aspirated”, as defined in the literature.

### ***Timbre***

After the air exhaust causes the vocal cords to vibrate, the resulting sound changes significantly as it passes through the cavities of the vocal tract.<sup>15</sup>

This tract, a cavity system, is also a resonator, which affects the colour of the sound and amplifies it. The anatomical variation of the cavities explains the different shades of colour in the singers’ voices and the variety of tone types. Another important consideration is the register in which one sings easily and naturally. This means a limited vocal range in which the singer can produce the same quality of notes without effort, thus excluding low or high notes that could still be produced in the full physiological range but have no longer that much vivacity.

The individual’s vocal type is determined mainly by the size of the vocal cords: shorter vocal cords imply higher pitches; longer vocal cords imply lower pitches. In addition to the shape of the resonant cavities and the size of the vocal cords, body shape also influences the type of sound.

At school age, boys’ and girls’ voices can be classified according to soprano or alto, or possibly soprano-mezzo-alto. Gender classification is less common in primary school but is justified in secondary school.

### ***Exercises to Develop Resonance***

Instead of breathing exercises, you can start with a so-called lip trill exercise, which makes the correct use of air (intense support) audible. A lip trill is like when horses snort. Place the fingers next to the lips, move the face slightly sideways and upwards and begin to exhale evenly, starting with [p]. Too little or too much air will not trigger the lip trill, so this is a particularly good exercise for controlling the correct airflow. It can also be sounded without or with the vocal cords. The latter can be done by sliding up and down or by playing a given tune.

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<sup>15</sup> The parts of the vocal tract are the larynx, the oral cavity and the nasal cavity.

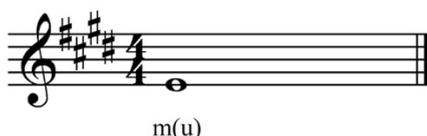
WHAT KIND OF SONG IS POURING OUT FROM THE CLASSROOMS  
PART 1: WARM UP IN THE CLASSROOM

The consonants [m] and [n] are, due to their resonant position (nasal consonants), also excellent for sound development by themselves, helping to sound to resonate in front.

Always start from the middle pitch when sounding them. This means close to the speaking pitch. Only by building on this can you develop the high and low registers. The middle voice is typically around  $e^1$ , but when working with young children, the centre should be around  $g^1$  and  $a^1$ .

Practice should begin on a single note. When forming [m], the lips are softly touching, the denture is loosely opening, the tongue is relaxed, and the soft palate is loosely rising in a yawning manner. But instead of listing all these and searching for the position, I suggest the following: start the sound with the consonant [m], while thinking and opening loosely to long [u]. It is a short but effective instruction. Breathing should only happen at the same time at the start, then everyone breathes at their own pace. After a few seconds, a round, unified sound is heard.

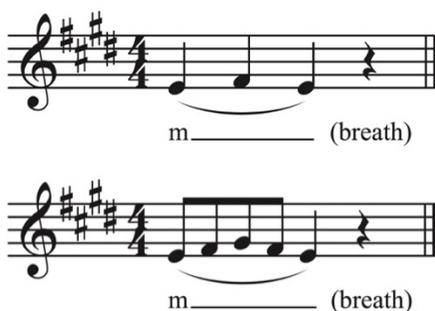
**E.g. 4**<sup>16</sup>



When singing in a group, it is particularly important to pay attention not only to technical factors, but also to the colour and power of the sound. It also requires practice to start and finish at the same time, and to get the pitch exactly right. The basic aim is to achieve a unified sound.

After a sustained voicing exercise aimed at equalising and sounding the middle tone (one note), it is recommended to switch between seconds or go in a range of thirds.

**E.g. 5-6**



<sup>16</sup> Source of the musical examples: Ferencziné 2015.

Do not go beyond a fifth interval in range for the resonance-building exercise. It is important to note that this type of exercise is not suitable for group voice training to learn pitches and increase pitch range. There is no individual control behind it.

One can also try descending melodies, but in this case, it is not always sufficient to give the initial or root note. It is important to make students feel the tonality securely, in which case the use of an instrument and giving harmony as a reference point may be justified.

### ***Linking Vowels with Resonance Exercises***

Initially, vowel shaping should be linked to the consonants [m] and [n], resonating at the front. There are three types of exercises and degrees. In the first phase, the syllables start from and return to a consonant. Examples at the same pitch:

**E.g. 7**



In the second phase, the consonant only precedes the vowel. In this type of exercise, choose from a selection of short vowels. E.g., in a range of third, with jumping intervals:

**E.g. 8**



Proceed on to the linking of the sounds, that is, the legato singing, in the third stage of learning only. The vowels can be alternated freely:

WHAT KIND OF SONG IS POURING OUT FROM THE CLASSROOMS  
PART 1: WARM UP IN THE CLASSROOM

E.g. 9



It is recommended to take a gradual approach initially. Do not increase the vocal range of the exercises much beyond fifths, sixths, when singing in groups, and pay attention to pitch. Approach the two-line octave register with caution and avoid singing high notes with a voiced consonant start. At a more advanced level, the vocal exercises of Phase 3 can be used to increase range.

Technically, the exercise starting with the cluster [ŋg] is very useful. In English, the phoneme connection is most noticeable when pronouncing the words **si**ng, **to**ngue, **thi**ng, **lo**ng, etc. Compared to the normal [n], the tip of the tongue is aligned with the lower denture, the blade of the tongue rises towards the soft palate as it approaches the position of the [g] sound. A typical singing exercise is:

E.g. 10



After the [m], only the lips should open according to the [a] vowel, trying to maintain the training position of the [m] as described above. Actual opening (the elevation soft palate) only occurs at the change to [a]. Here the lips hardly move any further. On closing, the position of the lips remains unchanged at first, and the change to [ŋg] occurs inside. Finally, the lips also come together. The exercise is excellent for feeling the movement of the soft palate (the soft palate rises, the tongue flattens).

For nasal speakers or singers, we also recommend a version of the soft palate movement exercise with ascending and descending tunes to thirds or fifths. Starting position: mouth open to [a]. During scaling, the mouth and tongue do not move:

ng - a - ng - a ng - a - ng - a ng - a - ng - a ng - a - ng - a ng

### ***The Articulatory Base - Sound Production***

The sound produced in the larynx is amplified in the resonator cavities and becomes intelligible through articulation, the formation of the phonemes. The organs involved in the formation of the phones are the lips, the tongue, the chin, the facial muscles, the soft palate, i.e., mainly the oral cavity and the nasal cavity area. The result of the articulatory organs working together is speech, the utterance of words.

When singing, great attention must be paid to the correct formation of the phonemes. The vowels play a key role, as they are the carriers of the melody. The basic principle to remember is that we sing on the vowels.

The sequence of (Hungarian) vowels according to the opening and forming of lips:

*i í é e á a o ó ö ő u ú ü ű*  
 [i] [i:] [ei] [e] [a:] [ɒ]\* [o] [o:] [ə]\* - [u] [u:] - -

\*the marked ones do not match exactly, but are close to the sound of the corresponding vowel of the Hungarian language

In this way, you go from a small lip opening to the largest and then gradually narrow back down.

In practice, it is not practical to sing this all the way through, and most frequently, only a section (4-5 notes) and the logic of the sequence should be retained when composing vowel shaping samples. For example, the following line can be used to form vowels in a chain:

(m)<sup>17</sup> *í – é – e – á – a* using phonetic symbols: [m] [i:] – [ei] – [e] – [a:] – [ɒ]

<sup>17</sup> Start the exercises with a vowel and leave out the voiced consonant if we are sure if a soft, mellow sound start is able to be produced.

WHAT KIND OF SONG IS POURING OUT FROM THE CLASSROOMS  
PART 1: WARM UP IN THE CLASSROOM

E.g. 12

(m)í - é - e - á - a

It is more common and more appropriate, however, to choose a sequence of vowels according to tongue position or tongue position and the degree of the opening of the lips:

(m) á - a - e - é - i	or	i - e - á - o - u
[m] [a:] - [ɒ] - [e] - [ei] - [i]	or	[i] - [e] - [a:] - [o] - [u]

We can practice a harder version as well, when we juxtapose vowels that are far from each other according to their place of articulation:

(m) i - a	i - á	
[m] [i] - [ɒ]	[i] - [a:]	etc.

Attention to vowel shaping is already necessary in resonance exercises. The level of difficulty can be varied according to ability but make sure that the exercises do not involve a range beyond a fifth. Naturally, the slower movements are sung with long vowels, the faster ones with short vowels.

It is consonants that make speech meaningful and articulate. Their role is to separate vowels. Their pronunciation is determined by the precise functioning of the organs and muscles involved in articulation. In addition to [m] and [n], which contribute to the improvement of resonance, the other labial and labiodental sounds are also used to advantage in the formation of sounds. These consonants help to “front” the singing voice. They can be used to further enrich the range of resonance exercises, such as the popular “bimm - bamm – bomm” and “dinn – donn” exercises.

E.g. 13

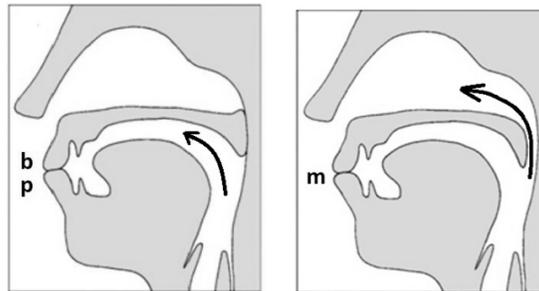
bimm bamm bimm bamm bomm



*Bilabial (plosive and nasal) sounds: b - p - m*

The phoneme [b] can only be sounded by voicing, so it is a voiced (a sound produced with vibrating vocal cords), whereas [p] requires harder labial work and is voiceless. The sound [m] is also formed with the lips, but while the former two are formed in the same resonant location, [m] resonates in the nasal cavity. This phenomenon is possible because the uvula, unlike the formation of the other consonants, where it blocks the air path to the nasal cavity, leaves it open here, so that the air leaves through the nose (nasal vowels also include [ŋ], and the cluster [ŋj]). The two different functions of the uvula, with the same place of articulation, are illustrated in the two figures below:

**Figures 4-5**



**The two different functions of the uvula** <sup>18</sup>

*Labiodental phonemes: v – f*

The sound [v] is voiced, [f] is voiceless. The gap is a little narrower when forming f, but both are excellent for starting a sound.

<sup>18</sup> Source: <http://www.azlifa.com/pp-tute-2-answers/> Last accessed and edited: 29 July 2014

WHAT KIND OF SONG IS POURING OUT FROM THE CLASSROOMS  
PART 1: WARM UP IN THE CLASSROOM

E.g. 15



vi - (j)a vi - (j)a vi - (j)a vi - (j)a joo

The musical notation for E.g. 15 is a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 2/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4 (with a dot), A4, B4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, and a final quarter rest.

*Alveolar (plosive and nasal) sounds: d - t - n*

Like [m], [n] is a nasal sound. An excellent means to improve sound. However, when associated with certain consonants ([g], [k]), it sounds at the back, in the area of the soft palate.

*Alveolar sounds (trills and approximants), but the barrier is positioned slightly further back: r - l*

Both are voiced. In Hungarian, [r] is a rolled consonant, activating the tip of the tongue and relieving the root of the tongue and the larynx, from tension. At the end of a piece requiring much volume, or at the end of warming up or after a choral rehearsal, a glissando [r] or a few seconds of sustained, rolled [r] may be requested as a relaxation. The latter is also excellent for breath control, as it requires a steady supply of air. It is immediately audible if the airflow is interrupted. The following can be a vocal exercise with [r]:

E.g. 16



re - ri - la

The musical notation for E.g. 16 is a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, and a final quarter rest.

The looseness of the tongue is ensured by the syllables beginning with [l]. The tempo of these exercises should be as fast as possible, but the syllables should not be choppy, because the aim is to use the tongue in a relaxed manner (see example 23).

*Some other alveolar sounds worth mentioning: s - z*

The unvoiced, hard counterpart of the soft, voiced [z] is [s]. The air expelled when pronouncing [s] makes a hissing sound, and its audibility and observability can help to develop breathing technique. The following is a practice example with [z]:

E.g. 17



In singing exercises, the consonant [z], or maybe [s] also, may be accompanied by a [j]: zja, sja. These sound combinations are an excellent way to start exercises climbing to higher registers:

E.g. 18



*Some of the palatal sounds worth mentioning: j*

The use of the approximant [j] is common in relaxing singing exercises (see example 24).

Last in the sequence is the **glottal** sound [h]. It is a consonant formed in the larynx and is produced when the vocal cords are 10 degrees apart. Its use is not recommended in singing, except for staccato exercises, as it can make the sound airy and involves a lot of unnecessary air emission.

The consonants [g], [k], [ŋ] [ʒ] and consonant clusters [dj], [nj], [tj], [ts], [tʃ] should not be used directly for sound production due to their formation in the back and the position of the tongue.

It is important for singers to remember that if a syllable in the written text ends in a consonant, try to pronounce it at the beginning of the next syllable. This will ensure that the vowel is filled in as fully as possible and that the singing is beautifully shaped and legato.

E.g., in writing:

„*Sta- bat ma- ter do- lo- ro- sa iux-ta cru- cem la- cri- mo- sa*”

in singing:

„*Sta- ba- tma- te- rdo- lo- ro- sa iu- xta cru- ce- mla- cri- mo- sa*”

WHAT KIND OF SONG IS POURING OUT FROM THE CLASSROOMS  
PART 1: WARM UP IN THE CLASSROOM

Consonants are not only crucial for correct separation of syllables. Their resonant positioning also affects the sound quality of the vowel that follows them. Each consonant has a different effect on the quality of the vowel that follows it. Let us pronounce and try to sound the following words at the same pitch: *bee – key*.

It can be observed that the [i] in the word “bee” sounds more front than the [i] pronounced after the [k]. This shift in tone is due to the back position of the [k] and the front position of the [b]. This gives the [i] two different shades, resonating in different places.

It is the teacher’s responsibility to choose the sounds consciously. A selection of practice and sound types can be chosen according to the lesson material.

***Increasing the range***

This is a less applicable type of practice for class-level work, as there are no high and low pitches to prepare for in monophonic singing. If there are, try to find an exercise for the higher parts of the melody that is lively and easy but does not exceed the range of fifths or sixths. The vowels used should preferably be without the rounding of lips, so preferably the [i], [e], [a] sounds.

**E.g. 19**



Staccato exercises are also very useful:

**E.g. 20**



The use of dotted rhythm is always beneficial because it livens the class and gives momentum:

E.g. 21



To reach deeper registers, one is advised to use descending legato movements:

E.g. 22

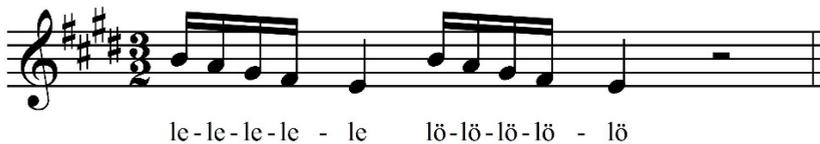


Exercises that move within the octave or beyond the octave for a class or children's choir should be used with great care. Starting from a high note should be left to solo singers.

### ***Relaxing section - text exercises***

Introduce a warming up containing the expansion of range with relaxing exercises. The aim is consonant pronunciation with relaxed speech apparatus. The range does not play a role here, and there is no need to try to reach the same heights as before. It is advisable to stay between  $d^1$  and  $h^1$ . The volume is medium or even less. A quick-rhythm exercise is e.g.:

E.g. 23



An example for legato movement:



When choosing texts for text exercises, pay attention to the properties of the sounds. Not all tongue twisters – just because they are funny – may be useful. In group sound training, as well as in resonance-building exercises, do not use text exercises to introduce high pitches.

### ***Polyphonic Singing Exercises***

These are intonation exercises and can be adapted according to the levels of skill. When do we talk about adequate intonation? By definition, we mean the immediate and accurate voicing of the given sound at the prescribed pitch. The first task is to consolidate monophonic singing. It is a matter of harmonising the sound from several sound sources at the same time so that it sounds uniform to the ear. When musical tones of the same pitch are played simultaneously, the resulting vibrations reinforce each other, and those of different pitches weaken each other.

Exercises improving resonance and the forming of sounds can help you to achieve equalisation. Conscious attention must be paid to the direction of successive melodies: a note that moves upwards is threatened by a braking force if it lacks sufficient intensity, and a note that moves downwards or jumps down may be brought deeper by some kind of inertia (Kardos in Péter 1973: 100).

The use polyphonic singing exercises is recommended only after the starting note is safely taken and the equalised, unison sounding is achieved. *“Even pure unison singing can only be fully learned in two voices. The two voices adjust and balance each other”* (Kodály 1941: Foreword). In his 1941 work *Énekeljünk tisztán* (Let us Sing Correctly), Kodály publishes and recommends a series of exercises based on the sound structure of the acoustic overtone.

Pál Kardos (Kardos 1969: 22), however, considers the third, more specifically the minor third (in relation to *sol - mi*), to be the most suitable initial interval for the development of children’s two-voice hearing, since it is the most frequent turn in the melodies sung by children. In the next phase,

the *mi* can be combined with the *do*. The intervals should be accompanied by music without a melody, i.e., at one pitch, e.g. with the text *bimm, bamm, bomm*. The singing of the interval perfect fifth is only used if there is sufficient mastery of intonation. After a well-established *do*, the *sol* is imagined and then gently voiced. The *do* should always be the more compact, more pronounced of the two, trying to place the *sol* on top of the base.

It requires more concentration to introduce the three voices. The major triad is the starting point: the *sol* is placed softly on the root note of *do*. The third that comes in between should be the most delicate, the most sensitive.

### **Dynamics**

*“When singing with the class, especially when teaching new songs, we tend to force more power and tone out of the children to achieve an illusory success and we think that then they can sing better. But we are wrong. Children who do not know how to sing will not get better at singing, but only those with better hearing and stronger voices will sing harder and stronger, at the expense of good style and good sound formation. To sing well and to make it sound well, it must mature in time and with patience”* (Kerényi-Rajeczky 1940: 88).

The definition of *forte* singing: the use of a relatively large volume of high speed of air with maximum engagement of the resonant cavities and increased pronunciation. In turn, *piano* singing is intense pronunciation with slower than usual air flow, maximum use of position and a lot of head resonance.

Decrease of volume and amplification is a technically difficult process, depending on the air supply and the use of the resonant cavities. The movement of the soft palate also plays a major role in ensuring the continuity of the transition. For a *piano* voice, it assumes a position like that of the production of nasal sounds, i.e., it descends. During *forte* singing, it rises sharply, providing more resonant space in the oral cavity. Thus, during the transition from *forte* to *piano* and vice versa, the soft palate moves intensively.

In school and in the early stages of voice training, the starting point should always be the natural, medium-strength voice. As long as the sound does not even out and produce homogeneous tones with the same colour, it is not worth expanding the dynamic set.

*Forte* singing, if identified with the word “loudly”, can cause straining of the laryngeal muscles in young children, instead of intensifying the impetus of breathing. In fact, the term *forte* is only a graphic indication of the emotional charge attached to the meaning of the work. A *forte* can mean an angry, agitated state of mind, but it can also indicate resolution, combat, heroism, glory, joy, etc.

It may be useful to recite the text beforehand, to give a sense of the momentum of the words and the intensity of the recital. However, be careful not to let the speech turn into shouting. It should not be difficult to implement the well-formed text into intense singing.

Singing *piano* is an equally difficult task. A low voice reduces the child's, and even the adult's, mental alertness, and often involves loss of intonation, slowness of phrasing, slurring of speech, and a certain degree of physical restraint. Try to keep children interested while singing *piano*: ask them to breathe properly, to speak intensively and to form their voices intact. I suggest that the emphasis here should not be on the *softness* of the sound, but on its quality. A musical turn in *piano* music can be intimate, painful, mournful, but also hopeful, mischievous, playful, mischievous, playful, etc.

When using dynamic levels, it is necessary to emphasise the given character and not the degree of force.

Practices for 6–8-year-olds need to be addressed separately.  
See more about this in the next volume:  
(STUDIA UBB MUSICA, LXXI, 1, 2026)

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## MUSIC EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE AT SCHOOL AS A SPACE FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION AND CREATIVE ABILITIES

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**SUMMARY.** Music education promotes students' creative development, as it is focused on a variety of approaches to the perception of music (performing melodies, creating arrangements, improvisations, etc.). The aim of the study is to determine the effectiveness of music education at school for building students' creative self-expression skills and creative abilities. The study employed the following methods: pedagogical modelling, the empirical method of collecting primary information, the methods of E. Torrance and C. Orff, and calculations of the Wilcoxon Test. During the study, music education focused on the perception of theoretical and practical knowledge using the EarMaster application, as well as in-depth perception of materials through a game format. Creating musical improvisations using the interactive Chrome Music Lab was also provided. It was found that creating improvisations had the greatest advantage in the development of students' creative skills, according to teachers (38%) and students (37%). It was established that the expressed criteria of students' creative self-expression were originality (4.8 points) and fluency (4.7 points); of the development of creative abilities – improvisation (4.8 points). During training, students achieved a high level of motivation (88%), which contributed to their self-expression. The practical value of the article is associated with the possibility of using the proposed learning mechanisms for

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the creative development of secondary school students. Promising research directions may be associated with taking into account the features of the repertoire during musical educational practice at school.

**Keywords:** interactive applications, creative thinking, creative activity, Torrens method, Orff method.

## 1. Introduction

Music education in schools is important for the overall development of students and their self-expression. It affects the possibility of active development of logical and abstract thinking, which contributes to the understanding of inherent emotions, the expansion of the inner world, and aesthetic perception.<sup>6</sup> The quality of the educational process depends on the features of the selected musical practice, which determines the relevance of the chosen topic.

Musical educational practice at school is necessary to reveal the children's potential, which can be realized through singing or instrumental playing. This is due to the ability to choose one's own style of performance, focusing on coordination and memory skills.<sup>7</sup> So, it is possible to form creative self-expression, which is associated with the use of music to convey one's own ideas, emotions and thoughts based on non-standard thinking. It also ensures the development of students' creative abilities, which are associated with making non-standard decisions in the educational process.<sup>8</sup> It is possible to achieve the development of creative abilities and creative self-expression through flexible thinking and developed imagination.<sup>9</sup> It teaches students to

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<sup>6</sup> Sembiring, Piter, Muqri, Al, & Nurfalaha, Asep Rizwan. "From Instruction to Inspiration: Pedagogical Approaches for Teaching in Private Music Education". In *DIAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2025, pp. 177-184. <https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v4i2.4203>

<sup>7</sup> Gagica-Rexhepi, Flutura, Breznica, Rreze K., & Rexhepi, Burhan R. "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Using Digital Technologies in Music Education". In *Journal of Educational Technology Development and Exchange (JETDE)*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2024, pp. 273-289. <https://doi.org/10.18785/jetde.1701.16>

<sup>8</sup> Sofianos, K. C., Michael, S., Manolis, M., Alexios, K., Anastasia, G., & Linas, B. (2025). "Integrating Artificial Intelligence and Digital Tools to Enhance Learning and Accessibility in Music Education". In *IFIP International Conference on Artificial Intelligence Applications and Innovations*, ed. by Ilias Maglogiannis, Lazaros Iliadis, Andreas Andreou, Antonios Papaleonidas, Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, (2025), pp. 169-181. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-96231-8\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-96231-8_13)

<sup>9</sup> Hermans, Carolien. "The Storyline Approach as a Didactic Tool to Promote Efficacy Beliefs of (Student) Teachers in Creative Music Activities with Young Children". In *Research Studies in Music Education*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2024, pp. 74-88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X241236420>

use different sounds and rhythms to interpret compositions.<sup>10</sup> Interaction between students allows them to implement joint projects, which contributes to the development of social skills and the ability to develop hearing.<sup>11</sup> During learning, the process should include gaining emotional experience, which contributes to memorization and positive perception of art. The use of the traditional learning system does not provide the opportunity to develop students' creative abilities and creative self-expression.<sup>12</sup> This is due to the emphasis on theoretical classes and the study of general musical topics (study of notes, general musical works, etc.). The development of these skills is possible on the basis of ensuring the accessibility of classes for all students and the possibility of using interactive approaches to reveal the general students' potential. Interactive technologies affect the ability to implement ideas, learn materials at one's own pace.<sup>13</sup> Interactive classes focus on individual musical elements, teaching to distinguish melodies by pitch, timbre, and mood. It also provides the perception of musical compositions based on logical and associative approaches, ensuring the aesthetic perception of compositions.<sup>14</sup>

The British practice — Musical Futures — can be singled out as international educational practices in music learning. The educational process involved the creation of study groups, providing for the distribution of students depending on the pace and style of learning. In Australia, the Performing Arts practice is used, which is aimed at studying music by senior students.<sup>15</sup> Learning takes place through demonstrations of musical performances,

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<sup>10</sup> Lukovska, Svitlana. "Exploring the Composer-Performer-Teacher Role Complex in Fostering Creativity in Music Education". In *Convergences-Journal of Research and Arts Education*, vol. 17, no. 33, 2024, pp. 105-122. <https://doi.org/10.53681/c1514225187514391s.33.242>

<sup>11</sup> Yaoquan, Jin, Ruiping, Huang, Yang, Zhang, & Marchenko, Valerii. "Polyartistic Approach in Music Education: A Tool for Teaching and Developing Creative and Critical Thinking". In *Rupkatha Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2023, pp. 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v15n2.09>

<sup>12</sup> Shcholokova, Olha, Skopych, Alla, Zhurska, Nataliia, Khomenko, Leonid, & Rastruba, Tetiana. "Music Education and Digital Culture: Interaction of Integrative Thinking and Creative Technologies". In *Per Musi*, vol. 26, 2025, art. e252617. <https://doi.org/10.35699/2317-6377.2025.58891>

<sup>13</sup> Nagaoka, Miyako. "Creative Musical Self-Expression Programs for Students on Teacher Training Courses for Childcare and Education". In *International Journal of Creativity in Music Education*, vol. 8, 2021, pp. 66-92. [https://doi.org/10.50825/icme.8.0\\_66](https://doi.org/10.50825/icme.8.0_66)

<sup>14</sup> Zhu, Mila, Morrison, Sarah, McAlester, Kalyn, Morrison, Susan, Nottingham, Maribeth, & Stout, Jerry. "From Detention to Expression: A Case Study on Fostering Adolescents' Artistic Liberation". In *Critical Questions in Education*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2024. <https://academyforeducationalstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/01-zhu-et-al.-final.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Hermans, Carolien. "The Storyline Approach as a Didactic Tool to Promote Efficacy Beliefs of (Student) Teachers in Creative Music Activities with Young Children". In *Research Studies in Music Education*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2024, pp. 74-88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X241236420>

which involves the reproduction of music by schoolchildren. In the USA and Canada, common ways of studying music are to combine the subject with other disciplines. The process affects the acquisition of basic knowledge through a creative approach.<sup>16</sup>

The study of the theoretical aspects of the issue under research showed a general personification of the process of studying music, which is not related to understanding the specific mechanisms of developing students' individuality. Gaps are also associated with the lack of a sufficient number of empirical studies to understand the features of the development of students' individuality depending on the practical approach to learning. Attention should also be paid to the teacher's role in the educational process. The novelty of the study is the choice of a comprehensive approach to studying music, which involves the perception of educational information through the students' active participation. Research hypothesis: the emphasis on practical study of music through an interactive and game format contributes to the development of students' independence, which ensures the development of students' creative skills and abilities.

The aim of the research is to study effective strategies for conducting music educational practice at school to develop creative self-expression and creative abilities of students.

The aim was achieved through the fulfilment of the following research objectives:

- Develop ways to implement music practice at school using interactive applications EarMaster, Chrome Music Lab;
- Determine the learning block that, in the students' and teachers' opinion, had the greatest impact on the development of creative skills;
- Determine the level of developed students' creative self-expression and creative abilities using the methods of E. Torrens and C. Orff, respectively;
- Determine the level of students' motivation to study music taking into account the possibility of developing students' self-expression and perception of a sufficient level of musical knowledge.

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<sup>16</sup> Sofianos, K. C., Michael, S., Manolis, M., Alexios, K., Anastasia, G., & Linas, B. (2025). "Integrating Artificial Intelligence and Digital Tools to Enhance Learning and Accessibility in Music Education". In *IFIP International Conference on Artificial Intelligence Applications and Innovations*, ed. by Ilias Maglogiannis, Lazaros Iliadis, Andreas Andreou, Antonios Papaleonidas, Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, (2025), pp. 169-181.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-96231-8\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-96231-8_13)

## 2. Literature Review

The analysis of the most common music teaching strategies for the development of students' creative skills is considered in the study of He et al.<sup>17</sup> The development of children's musical creative competence is possible on the basis of practical activities. Combining music classes with other creative subjects promotes the development of schoolchildren' creative thinking. Teamwork is of great importance for the creative development of students, which contributes to the diversification of classes and the acquisition of emotional experience by students. Hendriks et al.<sup>18</sup> present other views in their study. The authors noted that individual learning contributes to the development of students' motivation for creative activity. In learning, it is necessary to focus on verbal interaction (facial expressions, gestures, etc.) for individual support of students and developing confidence in their own knowledge. We agree with the above conclusions of the researchers that attention should be paid to diversifying classes and gaining practical experience. However, they have not sufficiently studied the ways of integrating selected teaching methods in the educational process.

Most studies focused on the benefits of interactive technologies in music education for developing students' creative skills. The development of students' creative skills is influenced by current approaches to teaching music, which include aesthetic perception, cultural understanding, and artistic self-expression. However, such a learning process should be combined with interactive approaches that will help to differentiate learning according to students' knowledge and motivation for self-expression.<sup>19</sup> Virtual reality (VR) helps to model students' convergent and divergent thinking. The training provided for modelling different situations for solving problems. Such a model influenced the development of creative thinking, which provided an increase

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<sup>17</sup> He, Jiang, Wing, Cheong Ku & Hoe, Tan Wee. "The Cultivation of Children's Musical Creative Practical Competency: A Literature Review". In *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, vol. 48, 2023, art. 101309. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101309

<sup>18</sup> Hendriks, Linda H., Steenbeek, Henderien W., Bisschop Boele, Evert H., & van Geert, Paul L. "Promoting Creative Autonomy Support in School Music Education: An Intervention Study Targeting Interaction". In *Frontiers in Education*, vol. 7, 2023, art. 1102011. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.1102011>

<sup>19</sup> He, Yudong, & Suttachitt, Narutt. "The Development of Music Teaching Strategies for Promoting Music Learning Competency for Elementary School Students Under the Core Literacy of Music Academic Subjects". In *Journal of Ecohumanism*, vol. 3, no. 8, 2024, pp. 3049-3061. <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i8.4950>

in average scores from 41 to 67.<sup>20</sup> A similar positive value of online multimedia technologies was considered in the study by Yao and Li.<sup>21</sup> The use of Vivace, Flow, Functional Ear Trainer applications contributed to the development of rhythm and hearing, analysis of musical works. The high quality of such training was associated with the correct distribution of the load, which improved the independence and consistency of the acquisition of knowledge by students. In the educational process, it is necessary to ensure the freedom of perception of materials by students.<sup>22</sup> The use of the concept of Merdeka Belajar contributes to a change in traditional educational attitudes and provides a connection between music and the artistic approach. The process is associated with the use of a creative approach, which affects the development of brain and spiritual creativity. Interactive technologies have a positive impact on the development of students' self-expression, which is associated with the possibility of performing diverse tasks for learning the material. However, the issue of choosing specific applications for studying individual musical topics is not well studied.

Another group of studies is aimed at determining the methodology of musical education of schoolchildren depending on the teachers' competence, which involved the development of existing teaching strategies. The authors Merezhko et al.<sup>23</sup> noted that the level of musical and pedagogical culture of future music teachers and understanding of approaches to conducting classes improve the pedagogical process. So, it is possible to rely on the methods of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and Carl Orff, which are aimed at the relationship between movements and music. Orientation to the Jaworsky method will allow developing creative thinking based on the accumulation of impressions, spontaneous expression of creativity, improvisation, and the transmission of music through drawings. Stimulation of students' creative activity is possible

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<sup>20</sup> Peng, Rui. "Enhancing Creativity in Music Education through VR: Development of Convergent and Divergent Thinking". In *Interactive Learning Environments*, 2025, pp. 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2025.2472284>

<sup>21</sup> Yao, Bing, & Li, Weiwei. "The Role of a Teacher in Modern Music Education: Can a Student Learn Music with the Help of Modernized Online Educational Technologies without Teachers?". In *Education and Information Technologies*, vol. 28, no. 11, 2023, pp. 14595-14610. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11786-6>

<sup>22</sup> Andaryani, Eka Titi, Armaid, Indriana Eko, Wantoro, Wantoro, & Widjanarko, Paulus. „The Concept of Independence Learning: Increasing the Creativity of Elementary School Students in Learning Music Arts". In *Journal of Research and Educational Research Evaluation*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2024, pp. 85-94. <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/journals/jere/article/view/4945>

<sup>23</sup> Merezhko, Yulia V., Medvid, Tetiana A., & Sbitneva, Olena F. "Methods of Music Education of Schoolchildren in the Twentieth Century". In *Scientific Innovations and Advanced Technologies*, vol. 46, no. 6, 2025, pp. 1095-1105. <https://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/id/eprint/52187/>

using the approach selected by teachers, which is based on original and meaningful musical works. This can be achieved through content analysis of compositions and active students' participation, which promotes their artistic self-expression.<sup>24</sup> The competence of teachers is important for ensuring the quality of the educational process. However, research should focus on the possibility of combining teaching with the use of non-standard approaches and teachers' activities.

The emphasis on the need to choose a different repertoire in teaching to develop students' creative skills is considered in the following group of studies. The development of students' creative skills is possible on the basis of listening to music. The choice of a different repertoire provides a subconscious influence on human feelings and the development of emotionality. This is due to the subtlety of music and the possibility of influencing the psychological states of an individual, which enable perceiving the main content of music.<sup>25</sup> Musical education should be aimed at enhancing students' motivation, which can be realized through a different repertoire.<sup>26</sup> It is necessary to ensure the selection of folk, classical, popular compositions in the educational process, which will allow for a holistic perception of the cultural musical environment.

The analyzed studies are aimed at the possibility of developing students' creative skills through music. However, the gaps in the research are associated with the lack of detail in the training program and the focus on certain creative skills that could be formed during vocal or instrumental interpretation. To eliminate possible gaps, it is necessary to focus on the choice of specific mechanisms for conducting musical practice at school and ensure an emphasis on methods of students' creative self-expression and creative abilities.

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<sup>24</sup> Puri, Tia Destiana, Hutapea, Clarisa Jesika K. T., Aprianti, Yanti Nur, & Milyartini, Rita. "Creative Strategies in Music Composition Learning: A Literature Review on Stimulating Student Creativity". In *Jurnal Paedagogy*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2025, pp. 842-855. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v12i3.15397>

<sup>25</sup> Djalilov, Ergash K. "The Role of Music Training in the Comprehensive Development of Schoolchildren". In *American Journal of Pedagogical and Educational Research*, vol. 32, 2025, pp. 49-51. <https://www.neliti.com/publications/607913/the-role-of-music-training-in-the-comprehensive-development-of-schoolchildren#cite>

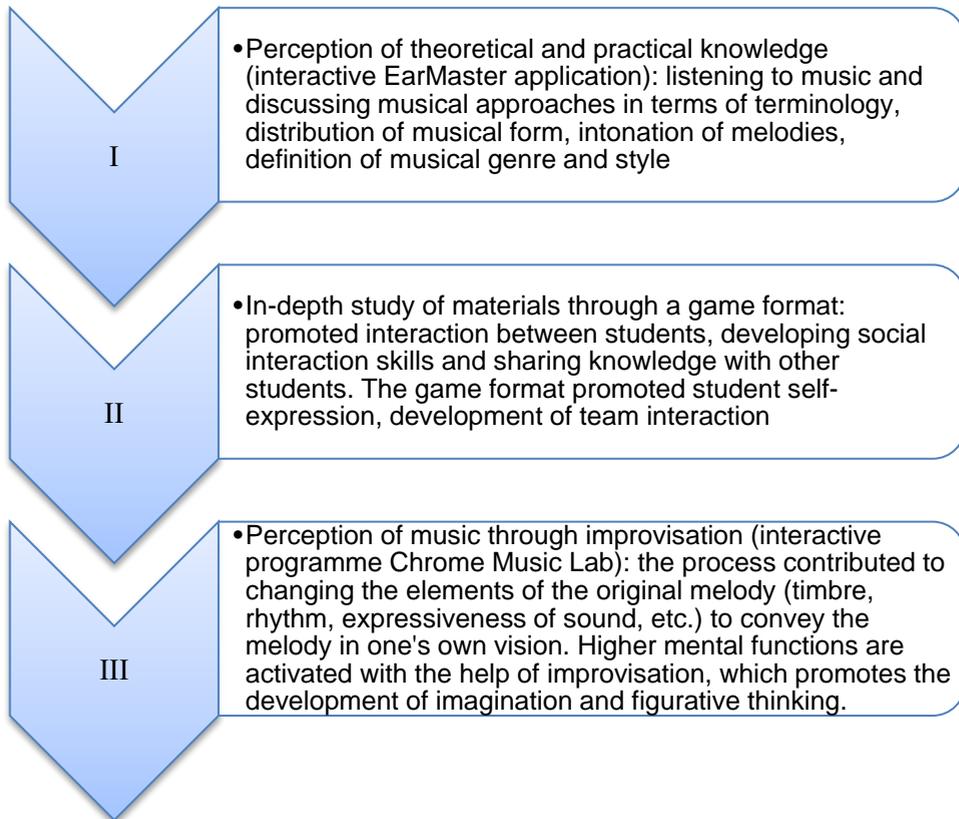
<sup>26</sup> Sattar, Gulnur, Rustemova, Saltanat & Nebessayeva, Zhanar. "Socially Interactive Approaches and Digital Technologies in Art Education: Developing Creative Thinking in Students During Art Classes". In *Open Education Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2025, art. 20250096. <https://doi.org/10.1515/edu-2025-0096>

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Research design

The first stage of the study involved the development of students' creative self-expression and creative abilities was implemented through the development of mechanisms for musical educational practice at school. The possibility of using interactive technologies during practical and theoretical classes was provided. The learning mechanisms included three main blocks (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**



**Educational blocks for conducting music educational practice**

**Source: developed by the authors**

The second stage of the study involved determining the teaching approach that had the greatest positive impact on the students' ability to implement creative musical activities. The effectiveness indicators were determined by students and teachers.

The third stage of the study was determining the level of developed students' creative self-expression and creative abilities. The results were compared before and after the study for assessing the impact of the chosen approach to learning. The third stage of the study also involved determining the level of students' motivation to perceive materials and study music in general.

### *3.2 Sampling*

The study involved 7<sup>th</sup> grade 125 students of secondary schools in Kyiv. The age of the students was 12-14 years, which included 57% of girls and 43% of boys. The sample was limited to students from the same year of study, as they had almost the same level of musical knowledge, focusing on similar topics in the educational process and the results obtained in the subject. The limitations of the sample students were related to their lack of experience of studying in music schools. The lack of specialized music education was necessary for its influence on the final results and the possibility of determining the impact of music educational practice on students' creative self-expression and creative abilities. The formation of the sample was purposeful, which excluded the involvement of students from random grades in the study. This was due to the creation of mechanisms for studying music for students who have terminology and the ability to recognize notes. 8 music teachers were also involved, who contributed to the conduct of classes and control over students. Written confirmation of voluntary participation in the research program was obtained from the students' parents and teachers. Approval was also obtained from the school administration for the students' participation in the experimental part of the study.

### *3.3 Methods*

The study employed the following research methods:

- the method of pedagogical modelling contributed to the development of music teaching mechanisms, which made it possible to choose learning strategies that were aimed at developing creative self-expression and creative abilities of students. In accordance with the method of pedagogical modelling, the goal and content of training were analyzed, as well as possible methods for achieving them. Attention was also paid to teaching aids and forms that were aimed at obtaining the expected results.

- a survey was used as an empirical method for collecting primary information. The survey identified pedagogical practices that had the greatest impact on the development of creative skills during musical activity. The process involved determining the learning block that ensured a creative learning process: obtaining theoretical and practical knowledge / game format of learning / creating improvisations. The use of the survey contributed to reflecting the teachers' and students' experience that was gained during learning. During the survey, it was necessary to take into account not only the advantages, but also the possible risks of such a learning process. The survey was also used to determine the level of development of students' motivation.

- Torrance's method was used to determine the level of development of students' creative self-expression. The method takes into account the criteria of originality, fluency, flexibility, and detailing. The method determined the level of students' acceptance of non-standard solutions, the number of ideas, and their quality. The level of students' creative self-expression was assessed by teachers, who assigned points from 1 to 5.

- Orff's method was used to determine the level of development of students' creative abilities.<sup>27</sup> According to the method, the criteria for the development of improvisation, the creation of a motor response to the music of vocal mini-compositions, and the reproduction of melodies on simple musical instruments were taken into account. These criteria were aimed at assessing students' creative manifestations, which was associated not only with the development of musical skills, but also with emotional intelligence and imagination. The teachers also assessed the level of development of creative abilities.

- Calculations were carried out using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test<sup>28</sup> to find a connection between dependent samples. It is a non-parametric statistical test that facilitates ordinal calculations of student performance before and after the study, which takes into account the null hypothesis (students' knowledge before the study) and the alternative hypothesis, which is formed under the influence of the selected learning process. If the obtained values do not exceed the tabulated values, the alternative hypothesis is ignored:

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<sup>27</sup> Sun, T. "The Research on Educational Strategies for the Cultivation and Development of Multicultural Music Literacy". In *Journal of Modern Education and Culture*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.70767/jmec.v1i3.439>

<sup>28</sup> Malykhin, Oleksandr, Aristova, Natalia, & Dybkova, Liudmyla. "Developing Computer Science Undergraduate Students' Communicative and Self-Expression Skills: Digital vs. Traditional Storytelling Methods". In *Environment. Technology. Resources. Proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Conference*, vol. 3, 2025, pp. 219-224. <https://doi.org/10.17770/etr2025vol3.8559>

$$Z = \frac{T - \mu_T}{\sigma_T} \quad (1)$$

T – test statistic;

$\mu_T$  – mathematical expectation;

$\sigma_T$  – standard deviation.

### 3.4 Instruments

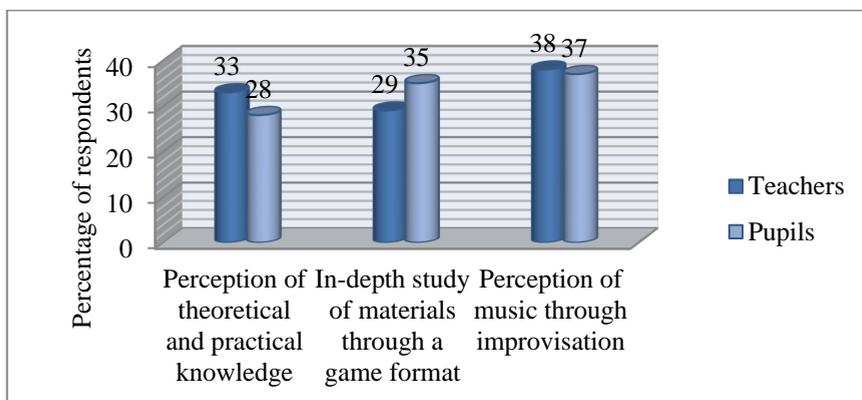
The interactive applications EarMaster and Chrome Music Lab were used as teaching tools to conduct the study. The EarMaster application was used to conduct theoretical and practical classes, which facilitated the analysis of musical compositions. Using the application promoted ear training, working with notes and rhythm. The Chrome Music Lab application facilitated the creation of musical improvisations, focusing on experiments with musical elements.

The Survio platform was the tool for conducting the survey. Creating questionnaires through Survio involved the use of ready-made templates for the logical construction of questions. Distributing questions among students and teachers was associated with time constraints, which required completing the survey within 4 hours. The service provided the ability to track responses in real time, which was displayed in graphical and tabular form and facilitated the response processing.

## 4. Results

After the training, it was determined which pedagogical practices had the greatest impact on the level of student engagement in creative musical activity. The results were compared between students and teachers, which facilitated a more detailed assessment of the selected pedagogical practices. The data was obtained based on the students' and teachers' survey (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**



**Assessment of the impact of pedagogical practices  
for the implementation of creative musical activity**  
*Source: developed by the authors*

The results of the survey showed that students and teachers give the greatest preference to improvisation. Improvisation promoted self-expression based on the development of initiative, creativity, which also consisted in the ability to convey one's own emotions through music. Improvisation also contributed to the development of musical intuition, which is associated with the formation of a connection between musical images and imagination. Students noted that the perception of music through a game format also had a significant impact on enhancing the motivation in creative musical activity. The use of games contributed to the avoidance of patterns and the possibility of developing sensory-figurative thinking for musical learning through constant action. The advantage of the game format was also associated with the possibility of active interaction with other students, developing emotional and cognitive skills.

Unlike students, teachers believe that it is necessary to focus primarily on the development of theoretical and practical knowledge, as they are the basis for understanding music. The use of the interactive EarMaster application contributed to the possibility of personalized study of the topic and the expansion of students' ideas, the development of thinking, and individual understanding of music. Therefore, obtaining theoretical and practical knowledge is the basis for the possibility of studying musical materials through action.

The studied process provided for determining the level of development of students' creative self-expression and the development of their creative abilities. Comparison of the results before and after became the basis for

determining the advantages of music educational practice at school. The final data are presented using the Wilcoxon test calculations (Table 1).

**Table 1**

Evaluation criteria	Before training, points	After training, points	Wilcoxon test (normative value at 0.05 is 1.96)			
			T	$\mu_T$	$\sigma_T$	Z
<i>Creative self-expression</i>						
Originality	3.3	4.8	2	8.1	3.802	2.04
Fluency	4.4	4.7	5	7.3	1.926	1.89
Flexibility	3.8	4.5	3	8.5	3.792	1.98
Detailing	3.7	4.3	3	8.8	3.801	1.97
<i>Creative abilities</i>						
Improvisation	3.4	4.8	2	8.2	3.805	2.02
Creating a motor response to music	4.5	4.7	4	7.0	1.912	1.73
Creating vocal mini-compositions	3.9	4.5	4	8.7	3.659	1.83
Playing melodies on simple musical instruments	4.2	4.4	5	6.8	1.902	1.71

**The level of development of students' creative skills and creative abilities before and after the study**

*Source: developed by the authors*

After the students underwent musical practice during the study period, they were able to achieve higher results in creative self-expression and creative abilities than before the study. The students' creative self-expression was primarily manifested in the development of originality and fluency, which was associated with the choice of diverse and unexpected ideas. Originality skills allowed students to combine atypical sounds, use unusual tempo, symbolic elements, etc. Based on the gained knowledge, students could create different ideas for musical interpretation, for example, creating musical rhythms or phrases according to one task. Students also developed flexibility, which allowed them to perform various musical tasks. Detailing skills contributed to the possibility of transforming an abstract idea, which affected the structuring and completeness of musical images.

After training, improvisation was the most pronounced among the creative abilities, which is associated with the reproduction of spontaneous musical ideas. The process involved the use of various means of musical expression (rhythm, harmony, intonation, etc.), which influenced the non-

standard sound of the compositions. So, students creatively expressed their own capabilities, which influenced the creation of not only text, but also melodies, focusing on their own imagination and musical ear. The skills of playing elementary musical instruments were also improved, which contributed to the ability to control sound, developing rhythm, and musical coordination. The motor response to music was associated with the possibility of emotional self-expression, understanding rhythm, and the ability to reproduce mirror movements. The creation of vocal mini-compositions was associated with the reproduction of a single plot, musical image, which ensured the development of a creative personality and communication through music.

Using the proposed approach to studying music the level of students' motivation for learning was established. The results were based on a comparison of the students' expected results with the actual data obtained during the study. The final data are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Evaluation criteria	Before training, % of students	After training, % of students	Wilcoxon test (normative value at 0.05 is 1.96)			
			T	$\mu_T$	$\sigma_T$	Z
High level	27	88	2	9.3	3.825	2.17
Medium level	58	12	3	8.5	3.819	2.09
Low level	15	-	-	-	-	-

**The level of students' motivation for practical music learning**

*Source: developed by the authors*

Musical educational practice using interactive technologies contributed to the development of a high level of student motivation. Students' interest was formed under the influence of constant creative development, which promoted the manifestation of their own individuality. Freedom of self-expression contributed to reducing the fear of making the wrong decision and presenting learning through creative play. This approach to learning contributed to the development of students' uniqueness and understanding of the value of developed musical skills for creating their own compositions. Students were motivated in the learning process, as the use of interactive technologies was provided. They contributed to the non-standard perception of information through individual exercises, games, and improvisations. The training also provided the opportunity to activate various areas — the development of musical knowledge, communication skills, emotionality, and the expansion of visual perception.

## 5. Discussion

Music classes contribute to the development of students' creativity, which should be associated with the factors of musical completeness, musical richness, individuality, and culture. This approach is a reliable tool for improving practical skills and abilities for musical creativity.<sup>29</sup> Artistic subjects are the development tool in teaching creativity. Performing creative tasks in groups contributes to the development of team creativity, which is associated with strategic thinking and the ability to find non-standard approaches to solving problems.<sup>30</sup> The development of creativity through music is possible based on the use of artistic instruments, the development of self-expression, and orientation on the emotional and social content of musical compositions. It is important to provide comprehensive training that contributes to the expansion of the individual horizons of the personality and the socialization of students.<sup>31</sup> The analysed studies are aimed at developing students' creative skills through a creative approach, but how to ensure an effective training programme is not specified in the studies. The results of our study were achieved through the development of specific training blocks, which included the development of theoretical and practical knowledge, studying materials through a game, and perceiving music through improvisation. So, our research contributed to the selection of more specific practices for studying music.

Music education in schools can be implemented using the STEAM approach. This contributes to obtaining rich musical experience, the ability to work in a team and focus on existing problems of music education. The use of Chrome Music Lab, Scratch Music, earSketch, UPISketch, iMuSciCA programmes contributes to the development of music education and enhancing students' interest. The use of modern technologies allows the implementation of multimedia projects and experiments with sounds. So, it affects the development of critical thinking and the possibility of using new approaches to musical performance,

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<sup>29</sup> Jiang, He, Cheong, Ku Wing, & Tan, Wee Hoe. "Development and Validation of a Measure Assessing Children's Creative Practice Ability in Music". In *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, vol. 51, 2024, art. 101446. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101446>

<sup>30</sup> Savchenko, Yuliia, Savchenko, Rehina, & Sokhan, Maksym. "Development of Creativity in Future Teachers of Musical Disciplines". In *Amazonia Investiga*, vol. 14, no. 86, 2025, pp. 90-102. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2025.86.02.8>

<sup>31</sup> Sternfeld, Galit Zana, Israeli, Roni, & Lapidot-Lefer, Noam. "Creative Education or Educational Creativity: Integrating Arts, Social Emotional Aspects and Creative Learning Environments". In *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2024. <http://doi.org/10.26209/ijea25n3>

ensuring creative self-expression.<sup>32</sup> Virtual applications Flowkey; Skoove; Music Everywhere can improve students' musical experience. This contributed to better memorization of musical terminology (89%), which increased the quality of reading music. In general, 70% of students were able to improve their musical performance skills and expand their creative self-expression skills.<sup>33</sup> The analyzed studies involve the use of digital applications in music education. However, the studies do not specify for which grades of students the applications can be used. This will allow us to determine the complexity of students' work with applications and the possibility of their adaptation to the study of individual musical directions. Our study involved 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, which allowed us to develop musical knowledge based on existing basic musical skills.

The students' creative skills can be developed on the basis of systemic thinking by using interactive technologies. Creative thinking can be developed on the basis of group learning, which allows for the active use of information technologies. This is due to the students' ability to make independent decisions and take responsibility for their realization.<sup>34</sup> The use of modern technologies contributes to the development of students' creative abilities in vocal music education. This ensures the development of students' cognitive skills, improvement of vocal singing, and enhancement of motivation. However, an insufficient level of theoretical musical knowledge can have a negative impact on the perception of practical information.<sup>35</sup> Students' creative skills can be formed using mnemonic techniques, which help to memorize musical fragments. It is necessary to develop visual, auditory, logical memory during studies, which will reduce the number of errors in musical performance, while preserving the structure of the melody. Memorizing melodies affects the development of musical ears and the quality of performing compositions.<sup>36</sup> Studies have provided evidence of the development of students' creative skills through

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<sup>32</sup> Özer, Zeynep, & Demirbatir, Rasim Erol. "Examination of STEAM-Based Digital Learning Applications in Music Education". In *European Journal of STEM Education*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2023, art. 2. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1377876>

<sup>33</sup> Cui, Kangxu. "Artificial Intelligence and Creativity: Piano Teaching with Augmented Reality Applications". In *Interactive Learning Environments*, vol. 31, no. 10, 2022, pp. 7017–7028. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2022.2059520>

<sup>34</sup> Wen, M. "Interactive Online Classes in Music Education: The Impact of Online Technologies on the Level of Creative Thinking of Students". In *Current Psychology*, vol. 43, no. 15, 2024, pp. 13619-13629. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05411-5>

<sup>35</sup> Lin, Siming. "Cultivation of Innovative Ability of Vocal Music Education Based on Big Data Analysis". In *Journal of Computational Methods in Sciences and Engineering*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2025, pp. 2732-2744. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14727978251321638>

<sup>36</sup> Mei, Lijuan. "The Role of Teaching Solfeggio Considering Memory Mechanisms in Developing Musical Memory and Hearing of Music School Students". In *Current Psychology*, vol. 43, no. 11, 2024, pp. 10005-10015. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05109-8>

music lessons. However, the issue of detailing creative abilities and skills that can be developed during music lessons is not well studied. In our study, the definition of creative self-expression was implemented through the use of the Torrance method, and the development of creative abilities – the Orff method. This allowed us to determine in more detail what skills were developed in students and to identify the possibility of solving the musical tasks set.

The use of the new educational model — Stimulation of Music Education — contributes to the improvement of musical creativity. The creation of musical improvisations aimed at improving students' literacy is of great importance in teaching. This technique is based on the use of the Orff method, which promotes the development of creativity based on fluency, originality, flexibility, and detailing of interactive performance.<sup>37</sup> The development of a creative personality in music lessons is possible through the perception of compositions through a general cultural process. Studying a variety of repertoire contributes to the understanding of various techniques of vocal and instrumental performance, the creation of improvisations, and ensemble playing. This stimulates students to develop their creative potential and individual self-expression.<sup>38</sup> Our article also developed specific strategies for the practical implementation of the music learning process. However, the proposed approach to learning was more interactive, which involved an orientation towards the development of students' motivation.

The study of existing academic research has shown the important influence of music practice classes on the development of students' creative skills. However, the research does not sufficiently study the information on the relationship between the level of students' initial knowledge and the development of creative skills that can be achieved during musical training. Our research was aimed at choosing specific approaches to music teaching that can be implemented using interactive technologies (EarMaster, Chrome Music Lab). The study found that students in training for the development of creative skills prefer the creation of improvisations and a game format, while teachers prefer the creation of improvisations. It was also established that a high level of development of students' creative self-expression using the Torrance method and the achievement of a high level of creative abilities using the Orff method. Such training provided the opportunity for students to

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<sup>37</sup> Purnomo, T. W., Aulia, S. M., & Hirza, H. "Music Education Stimulate: An Innovative Orff-Based Learning Model to Stimulate Students' Creativity". In *International Music and Performing Arts Conference*, vol. 2, 2024, pp. 33-55.  
<https://eprosiding.upsi.edu.my/index.php/Pro-IMPAC/article/view/22>

<sup>38</sup> Gabdulmanova, Ilnura M. "Formation of the Creative Personality of Students of Comprehensive Schools in Music Lessons". In *International Journal of Pedagogics*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2025, pp. 192-193. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ijp/Volume05Issue03-54>

achieve a high level of motivation, which contributed to the development of musical knowledge and the expansion of visual perception.

The obtained results correspond to the hypothesis of the study, which confirms the effectiveness of using practical approaches to studying music for the development of students' creative skills and abilities. The practical use of the study is the possibility of improving the educational process of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. This provides the opportunity to use specific educational approaches and applications by teachers, which is associated with a change in the educational process.

### *5.1 Limitations*

In the conditions of the study, the limitations were associated with the involvement of students of one age category (grade 7), which was limited by the level of cognitive and emotional readiness for the perception of music. The involvement of students of other grades will allow to expand the understanding of the possibility of developing skills of creative self-expression and creative abilities by students. The process will allow to determine how creative skills are formed and motivation development depends on the use of interactive technologies in learning. The training was implemented among students in urban areas, which excluded the involvement of students from rural regions.

### *5.2 Recommendations*

Changing the approach to the practical implementation of music education at school contributes to better involvement of students and broadening their horizons. The use of modern interactive technologies in teaching contributes to the creative self-expression of students and the development of creative abilities. The emphasis on enhancing students' motivation for the educational process will enable them to perceive music meaningfully and focus on expanding their own abilities. Analysis of the presented experience will allow teachers to focus on choosing non-standard approaches to transferring theoretical and practical musical knowledge to students. This will contribute to the development of not only professional, but also digital skills.

## **6. Conclusions**

The development of creative thinking in schoolchildren has a positive impact not only on the perception of musical knowledge, but also on overall development. This has the potential to develop students, determine the ways of their creative self-expression, which affects emotional relief during learning,

and confirms the relevance of the chosen topic. The aim determined in the study was achieved in the course conducted research. The process enabled determining the effective value of music educational practice at school for the development of students' creative self-expression and creative abilities. The mechanisms of music education were associated with an emphasis on theoretical and practical knowledge, in-depth study of musical materials through a game format, and the creation of musical improvisations. Interactive programmes were used to learn educational materials (the EarMaster application) and create improvisations (Chrome Music Lab). It was found that, according to students, the game format of perception of materials (35%) and improvisations (37%) had the greatest impact on their creative development. Teachers noted that improvisation (38%) had the greatest impact, as it contributed to the students' individual development and facilitated the ability to independently experience music. The use of Torrance method made it possible to establish that the criteria for creative self-expression developed by students were originality (4.8 points) and fluency (4.7 points). Their development influenced the creation of non-standard approaches to performing music and providing a large number of different ideas for solving educational tasks. It was found that the most pronounced creative abilities identified using the Orff method were improvisation skills (4.8 points), which enabled students to reproduce their own musical ideas. This approach to learning contributed to ensuring a high level of student motivation (88%), which contributed to achieving high results.

The practical significance of the article is determining the possibility of developing students' critical self-expression skills and creative abilities through an emphasis on the development of practical skills and the creation of musical improvisations. The prospects of the study are the possibility of involving students in grades 4-6 in studying music using the mechanisms developed by the authors and assessing the level of their creative self-expression and creative abilities.

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## STUDENT TYPOLOGIES IN MUSIC TEACHER EDUCATION

RITA KEREKES<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** The monitoring of student perspectives and preconceptions of teacher candidates has become an area of growing interest in educational research. Through such investigations, teacher education can more effectively support the processes of professional socialization and actively shape the development of professional identity. In our research, we examined university students enrolled in music teacher education programs. By analyzing their career conceptions, we identified various attitudes and explored the underlying characteristics that define distinct student profiles. This study presents a segment of our broader research project, focusing on career factors that influence teacher candidates' orientation and the student typologies emerging from them. Based on our findings, we identified five student types, the recognition of which highlights the need for more supportive and personalized approaches in addition to the development of professional competences, in order to strengthen the effectiveness of music teacher education and foster long-term commitment to the teaching profession.

**Keywords:** music teacher education, career conception, student typologies

### Introduction

Our research was primarily inspired by observations made in the course of mentoring activities, during which we found that music teacher candidates demonstrated varying degrees of success in implementing their preliminary conceptions in actual music lessons. Even students whose subject-specific knowledge could be considered above average often faced difficulties in classroom management and in the experiential transmission of values associated with music education. The tension between the application of knowledge acquired in higher education and the realities of teaching

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practice, as well as the challenges related to the effective management of classroom situations, prompted us to investigate broader, global causes beyond professional competences and the structural framework of teacher education.

To increase the effectiveness of music teacher education, we deemed it essential to understand the diversity of students, as there has so far been little targeted research concerning this group. Typologies can contribute to revealing individual differences and may provide a basis for the differentiated development of teacher education.

Our investigations were also justified by the fact that the National Core Curriculum, introduced in 2020<sup>2</sup>, prescribes two weekly music lessons from the first through the fifth grade, and one weekly lesson from the sixth grade onwards. Compared with the previous decade, this constitutes a favorable change in the field of school music education. Consequently, it is of particular importance for music teacher education to prepare young professionals who possess both pedagogical and professional competences and who are committed to the teaching vocation in the long term. Music education, as a sensitive domain of public education, primarily influences the inner world of personality. Since its marketability cannot be measured in tangible terms, the personality and mediating ability of future music teachers are of key significance for the long-term perception of the subject and for fostering children's active engagement with music.

In this study, we aim to present the five student types identified in our research, described along career-related factors. Data collection was carried out in 2023 with the aid of our self-developed "Career Profile" questionnaire, administered both online and in person. The resulting database was named ÉZETAK (Ének-Zene Tanárok Kutatása (Research on Music Teachers)).

## **Theoretical background**

Research aimed at exploring student populations displays considerable diversity and has become widespread across many fields of higher education.<sup>3</sup> The results of studies examining the views, preconceptions, and characteristics

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<sup>2</sup> Nemzeti Alaptanterv 5/2020 (I.30) kormányrendelet (National Core Curriculum Government Decree 5/2020 (I.30))

<sup>3</sup> Ballantyne, Julie and Retell, James. "Teaching Careers: Exploring Links between Well-Being, Burnout, Self-Efficacy and Praxis Shock," *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 10, 18 Feb. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02255> Ballantyne, Julie and Canham, Nicole. "Understanding Music Teachers' Perceptions of Themselves and Their Work: An Importance–Confidence Analysis," *International Journal of Music Education*, vol. 41, no. 3, 28 Oct. 2022, p. 025576142211249, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614221124966>;

of university students are relevant not only from the perspective of the labor market but also provide an important point of departure for the renewal of the content and structure of higher education programs. Uncovering the specificities of young people may contribute to strengthening career-choice motivations and to supporting long-term commitment to the chosen vocation.

From the perspective of the teaching profession, the selection of suitable teacher candidates and the quality of experience acquired during higher education are of crucial importance, as these largely determine commitment to the vocation. Numerous studies emphasize the necessity of renewing both the content and structure of teacher education, since the knowledge acquired during training does not necessarily contribute to successful professional performance, a shortcoming that may manifest in declining self-esteem, increased risk of attrition, and the quality of interactions with students. Due to the teacher shortage apparent at the international level, alternative models of teacher preparation have also emerged, questioning the necessity of higher education training in this field.<sup>4</sup> Reforms aimed at renewing teacher education have placed practice-oriented approaches at the center, requiring closer cooperation between universities and schools. The phenomenon of entry shock<sup>5</sup> arises from the contradictions between teacher training and classroom reality, particularly in the area of discipline management.<sup>6</sup> Coping with the difficulties of beginning teachers is greatly facilitated by the supportive attitudes of the teaching staff<sup>7</sup>, as well as by personal counseling and the examples set by colleagues.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Darling-Hammond, Linda. "Constructing 21st-Century Teacher Education." *Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 57, no. 3, May 2006, pp. 300–314, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487105285962>.

<sup>5</sup> Veenman, Simon. "Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers." *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 54, no. 2, June 1984, pp. 143–178, <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543054002143>.

<sup>6</sup> Venter, György and Buer, Jürgen. „Tanárnak lenni: Szerepeltvárások, terhelés, coping-stratégiák — empirikus neveléstudományi kutatások német nyelvterületen" (Becoming a Teacher: Role Expectations, Workload, and Coping Strategies — Empirical Educational Research in German-Speaking Countries) Stúdium Kiadó, 1996

<sup>7</sup> Sági, Mária and Szemerszki, Mária. "A pályakezdő pedagógusok szakmai fejlődési igényei és azok megvalósulása," in *Pedagóguskutatások. Merre tart a pedagógusszakma?* ("The Professional Development Needs of Beginning Teachers and Their Implementation," in *Educational Research: Where Is the Teaching Profession Headed?*), ed. Anna Fehérvári (Oktatóskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet, 2016), 53–93.

<sup>8</sup> Marion Jones, "Supporting the Supporters of Novice Teachers: An Analysis of Mentors' Needs from Twelve European Countries Presented from an English Perspective," *Research in Comparative and International Education*, vol. 4, no. 1, Jan. 2009, pp. 4–21, <https://doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2009.4.1.4>. Ben-Amram, Miri, and Nitza Davidovitch. "Novice Teachers and Mentor Teachers: From a Traditional Model to a Holistic Mentoring Model in the Postmodern Era." *Education Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1 Feb. 2024, p. 143, [www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/14/2/143](http://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/14/2/143), <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14020143>.

Successful professional socialization may be reinforced by internal motivation, flexibility, conflict management, and the early provision of practical experience.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, contradictions between training and practice may lead to crises during the initial career phase.<sup>10</sup> In the case of music teachers, the challenges of career entry primarily arise from the discrepancies between expectations and experiences<sup>11</sup>. Although self-efficacy may increase over time, further development is still required in areas such as communication.<sup>12</sup> Overall, in addition to professional socialization and a supportive environment, workplace atmosphere<sup>13</sup>, career advancement, financial security, and flexibility are also critical factors influencing retention in the teaching profession.<sup>14</sup>

### Research and sample presentation

The aim of our empirical research was to gain a holistic understanding of students enrolled in music teacher education programs, for which we applied quantitative research methods. It is important to emphasize that our investigation focused exclusively on students enrolled in degree combinations qualifying them to teach music; students of instrumental performance, vocal performance, or other music pedagogy or performing arts majors were not included. Only those teacher candidates were involved in the study who, upon graduation, are entitled to teach music in primary and secondary schools.

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<sup>9</sup> Prather-Jones, Bianka. "Some People Aren't Cut out for It": The Role of Personality Factors in the Careers of Teachers of Students with EBD." *Remedial and Special Education*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1 Mar. 2010, pp. 179–191, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932510362195>. Schön, Donald A. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London, Temple Smith, 1983. Schon, Donald A. *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. Jossey-Bass, 10. Feb. 1987

<sup>10</sup> Tschannen-Moran, Megan, and Anita Woolfolk Hoy. "The Differential Antecedents of Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Novice and Experienced Teachers." *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 23, no. 6, Aug. 2007, pp. 944–956, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.05.003>. Draves, Tami J. "Teaching Ambition Realized: Paul's Beginning Music Teacher Identity." *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, vol. 29, no. 1, 29 Apr. 2019, pp. 41–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083719844211>.

<sup>11</sup> Ballantyne, Julie, and Zhukov, Katie. "A Good News Story: Early-Career Music Teachers' Accounts of Their 'Flourishing' Professional Identities." *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 68, Nov. 2017, pp. 241–251, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.009>.

<sup>12</sup> Ballantyne and Canham, "Understanding Music Teachers' Perceptions.

<sup>13</sup> Korthagen, Fred. "Inconvenient Truths about Teacher Learning: Towards Professional Development 3.0." *Teachers and Teaching*, vol. 23, no. 4, 31 July 2017, pp. 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1211523>

<sup>14</sup> McKinsey, Philipp and Santiago Paulo, eds., *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (OECD Education Committee, 2005), OECD, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264018044-en>

Information on the number of active students in music teacher education was obtained from the Higher Education Information System (FIR). Instead of relying on admission figures, we requested the total enrollment numbers for all study years directly from the Educational Authority. In the spring of 2023, 232 students were enrolled in music teacher education programs in Hungary, of whom 145 (62.5%) completed our questionnaire voluntarily and anonymously. The sample ensured nationwide coverage: students from all higher education institutions offering music teacher education participated, proportionally representing the student body of their respective universities. Data collection was conducted both online and in person at the following universities: University of Debrecen, Faculty of Music (DE-ZK); Eszterházy Károly Catholic University (EKKE); Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE); Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music (LFZE); University of Nyíregyháza (NYE); University of Pécs (PTE); and University of Szeged (SZTE).

For our study, we used the self-developed “Career Profile” questionnaire, which was designed on the basis of focus group interviews. These interviews addressed the tensions and dilemmas between the experiences acquired during teacher education and the challenges encountered in classroom practice. Conducted in a semi-structured format, the discussions allowed for free exchange of ideas and lasted for approximately two hours, taking place in Budapest and Debrecen. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to ensure that our instrument was grounded in real and relevant topics, while also helping to refine our research hypotheses and to adjust the phrasing of the questionnaire items.

The “Career Profile” questionnaire (Pályakép-kérdőív) covered four main areas: (1) sociodemographic background, (2) study pathway, (3) professional motivations and career conceptions, and (4) attitudes and life skills dimensions. The main objective of our research was to establish a typology of students enrolled in music teacher education and to explore the specific characteristics of each student profile. In this paper, we present the student types distinguished along career-related factors and professional attitudes, while other dimensions are not discussed here due to limitations of scope.

In this study, we present five clusters of music teacher candidates. The data from our Career Profile questionnaire (N = 145) were analyzed using the SPSS software package.

## **Results and discussion**

### *Career Profile Factors*

In our study, we examined students’ career-related views on the basis of their self-reports. We grouped them into clusters according to their professional

attitudes and analyzed the specific characteristics of each cluster along the identified career profile factors.

Based on our focus group interviews, we developed a list of 34 statements related to career conceptions, which respondents evaluated on a five-point Likert scale. In order to reduce the number of dimensions, to uncover the underlying structures, and to examine potential content correlations among career conceptions, we applied principal component analysis with promax rotation.<sup>15</sup> The final factor structure, comprising six factors, accounted for 58.13% of the total variance, while the applicability of the variable groups was confirmed by the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) criterion with an index value of 0.75. For reasons of scope, in the present paper we summarize the attitudes and groups of characteristics associated with each factor, and we illustrate the deviations of teacher candidates from the mean values in Diagram 1.

1) „*Creative, child-centeredness*” (6 items). This factor includes statements that express the integrated realization of the professional and pedagogical functions of the teaching vocation, in accordance with the values of music education. Beyond subject-specific elements, the items reflect complex investment of energy, versatile thinking, creativity, and a drive for creation, all serving the development of students. The highest factor loadings were associated with values, tradition, creative activity, and the realization of conceptions. Although to a lesser extent, alongside statements expressing professional fulfillment, the motif of commitment to students is also present, which justifies the child-centered perspective reflected in the name of the factor.

2) „*Pedagogical competence*” (5 items). This dimension comprises statements that describe pedagogical qualities forming the prerequisites for the effective management and coordination of classroom situations. The items of this dimension outline a personality profile that consciously and confidently positions itself within the pedagogical role.

3) „*Prestige orientation*” (5 items). This variable group emphasizes a career trajectory and professional advancement built along the lines of the profession, with a particular focus on teaching musical specificities, effectiveness, and performance orientation. Prestige is further reinforced by the significance attributed to the type and status of the school. In contrast, the educational function of the vocation is absent from the statements belonging to this dimension.

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<sup>15</sup> Cureton, Edward E., and Stanley A. Mulaik. “The Weighted Varimax Rotation and the Promax Rotation.” *Psychometrika*, vol. 40, no. 2, June 1975, pp. 183–195, <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02291565>. Hendrickson, Alan E., and Paul Owen White. “Promax: A Quick Method for Rotation to Oblique Simple Structure.” *British Journal of Statistical Psychology*, vol. 17, no. 1, May 1964, pp. 65–70, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8317.1964.tb00244.x>.

4) „Professional uncertainty” (6 items). This factor encompasses feelings and attitudes such as fear, inhibition, and frustration, which also manifest in the difficulties of engaging with the classroom community. The items describe a more withdrawn disposition, a tendency toward gradual progress from the bottom up, and a need for slow unfolding.

5) „Search for inspiration” (2 items). The item with the strongest factor loading expresses an inner need and drive that encompasses open-mindedness, the intention to learn from the work of others, curiosity, and motivation.

6) „*Confident action*”. This factor captures confident performance and self-representation. It shows a strong content-related connection with the dimension of pedagogical aptitude, while also displaying elements characteristic of prestige orientation. It can be interpreted as a kind of synthesis between these two factors, since, for example, the role of choir conductor presupposes leadership attitudes, long-term planning of professional (musical) creative work, organizational and managerial skills, as well as outstanding interpersonal competences.

### *Student Clusters*

With the help of the six identified career profile factors, we obtained well-defined attitudes. One of the main motives in exploring the characteristics of music teacher education students was to focus on the strengths and shortcomings of teacher candidates. The factors are standardized variables, with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1; thus, in the case of respondents, positive factor values indicate that a given attitude is more characteristic than average, while negative factor values signify that it is less characteristic than average.

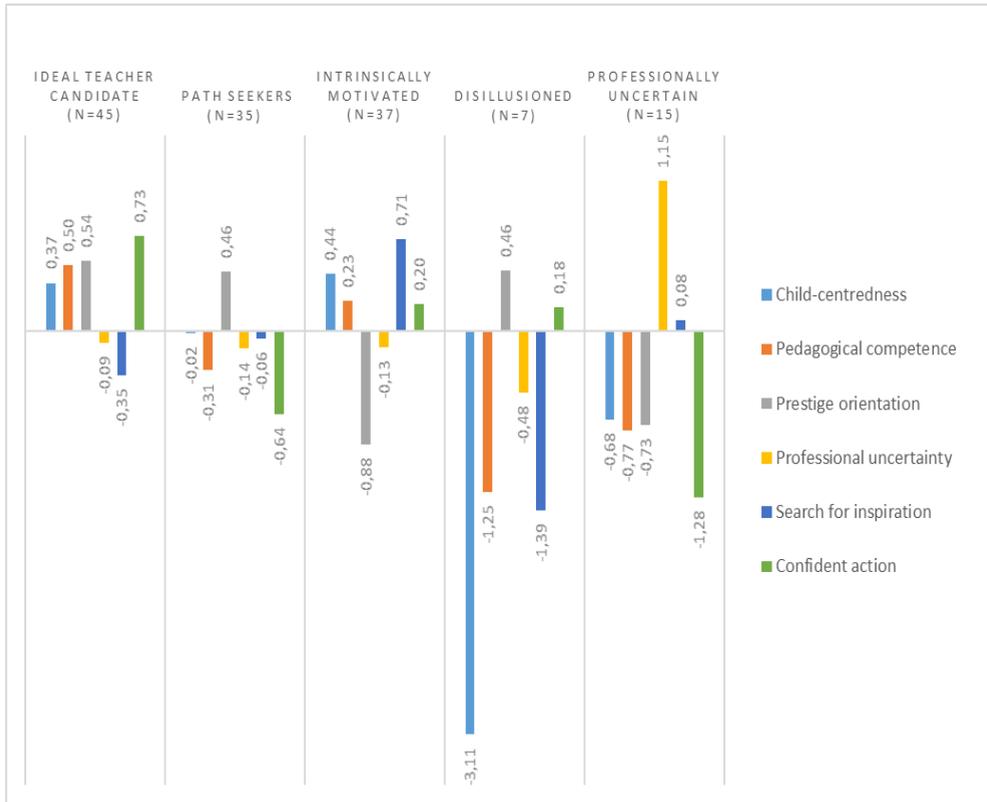
The identification of student profiles on the basis of the career profile factors was carried out through hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward’s method.<sup>16</sup> As a result of the procedure, five clusters emerged, with each student assigned to exactly one cluster. The largest cluster included 45 students, while the smallest contained 7 students. It is important to highlight that during the analyses aimed at determining the number of clusters—while gradually reducing the number of clusters—this small cluster consistently remained distinct from the others. This indicates

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<sup>16</sup> Agárdi, Anita. “Klasszikus Klaszterező Algoritmusok Módosítása Körút Alapon.” *Multidiszciplináris Tudományok*, vol. 11, no. 4, 2021, pp. 81–86, <https://doi.org/10.35925/j.multi.2021.4.9>. Accessed 14 Sept. 2025.

that its specific pattern is sufficiently pronounced and stable to retain its characteristics even through successive mergers. The names of the student profiles and clusters were developed by considering the characteristics most strongly associated with the factors that define each group. The deviations of student types along the career profile factors are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**



**Characteristics of career clusters. N=139**  
**Source: EZETAK Database (2023)**

The five student types, based on career profile factors, are characterized by the following attributes.

The group of 45 students labeled as *ideal teacher candidates* is primarily characterized by statements related to confident performance (6th career profile factor) and prestige orientation/professional advancement (3rd career profile factor). They display ambition, strong motivation, and a pronounced need for professional fulfillment, and they are goal-oriented. Their conception of the teaching career is shaped by the aspiration to achieve across the professional spectrum. Based on their self-image, they are likely to possess personality traits that enable them to successfully manage pedagogical situations (2nd career profile factor). Their attitudes toward students and their drive to make an impact (1st career profile factor) also exceeded the average in a positive direction. We consider them “ideal” because, on the basis of the items defining our career profile factors, these students are the most likely to realize their professional conceptions as teachers and to keep pace with the diverse and expanding functions of the teaching role.

The *path seekers* cluster (35 students) is characterized by a seemingly contradictory trait. Their defining feature is the importance attributed to prestige orientation and professional advancement (3rd career profile factor); however, they identified less strongly with the items related to confident performance. The first statement of this factor was connected to choral work, while the second presupposed self-confidence and assurance emphasizing the ability to succeed regardless of school type. Latently, this may reflect a more objective self-image and a realistic self-perception. At the same time, the items belonging to prestige orientation highlighted goal-directedness and concentration on the profession. Their motivation is presumably derived from external sources. Members of the *path seekers* cluster deviated little from the mean values; slight negative differences were observed in the factor of creative, child-centeredness (1), while slightly higher scores appeared in the variable group of search for inspiration (5). Professionally, they do not consider themselves uncertain, yet they do not identify as confident either. In essence, their career-related self-conception is more nuanced and less conspicuous, without marked or sharply defined characteristics. The balance of their personal convictions is not yet visible, which justifies the designation of this group as *path seekers*.

The *intrinsically motivated* cluster (37 students) is primarily characterized by a stronger presence of items related to the search for inspiration and to child-centeredness with creative energy. They possess a pronounced creative and generative inclination; beyond musical education, they are motivated by the teaching vocation itself and display openness toward other fields as well. They also identified more strongly with the items of pedagogical aptitude, though to a lesser degree than the *ideal teacher candidates*. In our view, their motivation

is primarily linked to teaching activities: they are individuals who take an active part in school life, and the quality of their future work is not dependent on external validation. They are not driven by more conspicuous forms of professional recognition, nor are they motivated by items highlighting professional advancement or explicitly profession-centered aspirations.

The profile of the fourth cluster is highly distinctive, as this small group (7 students) consistently remained separate throughout the cluster-merging process. Their negative deviations from the factor means are equally telling. Even prior to examining the interrelations, our impression is that at the time of the survey, they were characterized by a sense of disillusionment and apathy. They identified the least with the statements of the first factor (creative, generative child-centeredness) and the fifth variable group (search for inspiration). The negative deviation in relation to the first factor was particularly marked<sup>17</sup>, almost amounting to a rejection of the content elements of this dimension. Pedagogically, they do not consider themselves competent; however, in terms of professional knowledge, their self-image does not differ significantly from the average.<sup>18</sup> Surprisingly, this cluster displays the least doubt regarding their subject-specific and professional knowledge, exhibiting outstanding professional self-confidence. Their scores for confident performance (6th career profile factor) slightly exceeded the average, while they considered the items related to professional advancement and prestige orientation to be the most applicable to themselves. This is of particular interest, as other factors outlining the pathway necessary for professional advancement showed low levels of self-identification within the factor structure. In our view, this is a less motivated group.

The fifth cluster, the community of *professionally uncertain* students, consists of 15 university students. Their most dominant feature is their uncertainty, with the pronounced negative pole represented by the weakness of their confident performance. Among all student groups, they deviate the most from the average in these two factors. They seek inspiration only to a minimal extent, likely as a consequence of their professional insecurity. They tend to be withdrawn and are less capable of representing themselves within a community. They possess fewer of the attitudes associated with pedagogical aptitude, and they identified less strongly with the statements related to this dimension.

From the traits of the five student types, we highlight certain motifs that appear particularly noteworthy to us; however, our conclusions cannot be regarded as universally valid due to the diversity within the membership of the clusters:

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<sup>17</sup> deviation from the mean: -3,11

<sup>18</sup> deviation from the mean: -0,48

- The factors of confident performance and prestige orientation/professional advancement were more characteristic of the *ideal teacher candidates* than of the average.
- The attitudes of creative, generative child-centeredness and search for inspiration were most strongly embraced by the *intrinsically motivated* students.
- Doubts regarding professional and subject-specific knowledge were most characteristic of the *professionally uncertain* students.<sup>19</sup> An interesting aspect is that, in this regard, the *disillusioned* students proved to be the most confident<sup>20</sup>, while the *path seekers*<sup>21</sup> and the *intrinsically motivated* students moved around the average level<sup>22</sup>, followed by the *ideal teacher candidates*<sup>23</sup>.
- The *disillusioned* students and the *professionally uncertain* students are similar in that they deviate from the average in a negative direction in four of the six career profile dimensions. From this perspective, the indicators belonging to the *seekers* are closer to the average, although they identified primarily with the content of the prestige orientation variable group.
- When examining career conceptions and self-images, the motivations and commitments of the *ideal teacher candidates* and the *intrinsically motivated* students suggest a greater likelihood of spending a longer period in the teaching profession. It is encouraging that, in our study, these two profiles comprised a higher number of students.

## Discussion and conclusion

Our research, drawing on the career conceptions and attitudes of students enrolled in music teacher education, established a typology of teacher candidates currently in training. The study revealed that distinctly separate student profiles can be identified among teacher candidates. The five clusters, emerging along the six career profile factors, clearly demonstrate that students in music teacher education do not form a homogeneous group but differ in their motivational bases, self-conceptions, and potential for professional socialization. According to our findings, the *ideal teacher candidates* and the *intrinsically motivated* students exhibit the strongest commitment and professional

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<sup>19</sup> deviation from the mean: 1,15

<sup>20</sup> deviation from the mean: -0,48

<sup>21</sup> deviation from the mean: -0,14

<sup>22</sup> deviation from the mean: -0,13

<sup>23</sup> deviation from the mean: -0,09

potential for long-term persistence in the teaching profession, whereas the profiles of the *path seekers*, the *professionally uncertain*, and the *disillusioned* reflect more unstable relationships with the vocation and highlight the difficulties of professional socialization.

Our study supports the necessity of more differentiated and personalized developmental directions in teacher education, particularly for those student groups characterized by professional uncertainty or disillusionment. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that the higher proportion of types displaying positive attitudes offers favorable prospects for long-term commitment to the profession and the development of professional identity. The practical implications of the typology extend beyond the mere description of student attitudes: they may contribute to the development of targeted mentoring, support, and career guidance strategies within teacher education institutions, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of music teacher education and strengthening the social recognition of the teaching vocation in music.

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## MODERN VOCAL TECHNIQUES AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING VOCAL AND VOCAL ENSEMBLE SKILLS OF ART EDUCATION STUDENTS

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OLHA PROTSYSHYNA<sup>4</sup>, YEVHENIIA PROVOROVA<sup>5</sup>

**SUMMARY.** The study's relevance lies in the growing need to adapt the educational process in the field of vocal art to the challenges of the contemporary music scene, where vocalists' non-standard vocal techniques and methods in the performance process are becoming increasingly popular. The study aimed to investigate the influence of modern vocal techniques on the development of vocal and vocal ensemble skills of art education students, to determine their effectiveness in the educational process and to consider implementation methods in educational practice.

**Methods:** The study included expert evaluation, a comparative method for evaluating traditional and modern techniques, and an empirical basis: a questionnaire survey of students of music educational institutions. **Results:** The results of the study have shown that modern vocal techniques such as belting, twang, vocal fry, subtone, creaky voice, whistle register, ingressive phonation, multiphonics, sprechgesang, vocal distortion and yodelling contribute to expanding the performer's range, enhancing timbral expressiveness, and

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developing dynamic control. In addition, their use in a vocal ensemble helps to improve the balance of voices, form a harmonious sound and develop intonation coherence. The use of digital technologies in the learning process allows for an objective analysis of vocal parameters and increases the effectiveness of the training process. **Conclusions:** Modern vocal techniques are powerful tools for improving the vocal training of students in art education institutions. Their implementation in the educational process contributes to improving performance skills, expanding the expressive capabilities of the voice, and optimising ensemble sound. **Scientific novelty of the study:** The study's scientific novelty lies in its comprehensive analysis of the impact of modern vocal techniques - belting, twang, vocal fry, subtone, creaky voice, whistle register, ingressive phonation, multiphonics, sprechgesang, vocal distortion, and yodelling - on the formation of professional skills of students of art education institutions. **Prospects for future research:** Further research could aim to develop specialised methodological guidelines for teachers, adapt modern vocal techniques for different age groups, and analyse the effectiveness of digital tools in vocal teaching.

**Keywords:** pop vocals, vocal techniques, ensemble, ensemble performance, vocal pedagogy, vocal education.

## Introduction

Modern vocal techniques significantly impact the development of students' vocal and vocal ensemble skills. They have become an essential tool for improving the technical and artistic aspects of performance in various styles of music. In particular, in the context of pop vocals, the latest techniques contribute to the development of unique expressive capabilities of the voice, increase the emotional impact of the performance, and improve the ensemble sound. However, modern vocal techniques are not limited to pop vocals - they are also used in academic singing, where they expand the range, improve sound control and intensify timbre expression.

Vocal and ensemble skills are an essential part of music education. In art education institutions, students acquire individual vocal skills and learn to work in a team and interact with other vocalists and instrumentalists, creating a harmonious sound. Modern vocal techniques can significantly improve the quality of ensemble performance, contributing to better intonation coherence, synchronicity, and dynamic balance in the group.

One of the main reasons modern vocal techniques' popularity is their ability to transform the voice, expanding the range and providing new opportunities for articulation and expression. Techniques such as belting, twang, vocal fry, subtone, creaky voice, whistle register, ingressive phonation,

multiphonics, sprechgesang, vocal distortion and yodelling allow singers to create a variety of effects that significantly enrich the sound palette of a performance. Not only do they help singers reach new heights in vocal expression, but they also help improve vocal technique by developing the ability to use voice power in a controlled manner.

These techniques are also crucial in academic vocal education, especially in training young singers and students who seek to combine traditional vocal methods with innovative ones. Using modern vocal techniques in the educational process allows for greater opportunities for solo and ensemble performances.

The study aimed to investigate the role of modern vocal techniques in the development of vocal and ensemble skills of art education students, as well as to analyze their impact on improving the effectiveness of the educational process in the field of vocal art. Empirical objectives of the study:

1. To analyze the influence of modern vocal techniques (belting, twang, vocal fry, subtone, creaky voice, whistle register, ingressive phonation, multiphonics, sprechgesang, vocal distortion and yodelling) on the technical and artistic components of vocal skills of students of art education institutions.

2. To evaluate the effectiveness of modern vocal techniques in developing vocal and ensemble skills, using the example of students who have ensemble and pop singing classes.

3. To trace changes in vocal expression, dynamics and breath control in students after introducing modern vocal techniques into the educational process.

### Literature review

The effectiveness of the introduction of innovative technologies in the process of vocal training was studied by Wang<sup>6</sup>, who emphasized the importance of understanding the physiological aspects of vocal breathing, in particular the mechanisms of diaphragmatic control and regulation of airflow intensity. The same conclusions were made by Chukwu et al.<sup>7</sup> The authors focused on the effect of diaphragmatic breathing exercises on respiratory

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<sup>6</sup> Wang, Yixuan. "The Effectiveness of Innovative Technologies to Manage Vocal Training: The Knowledge of Breathing Physiology and Conscious Control in Singing." In *Education and Information Technologies*, vol. 29, no. 6, 2024, pp. 7303–7319. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-12108-6>

<sup>7</sup> Chukwu, Sylvester Caesar, Egbumike, Chukwuenyegom Joseph, Ojukwu, Chidiebele P., Uchenwoke, Chigozie, Igwe, Emeka S., Ativie, Nkechi R., ... & Uduonu, Ekezie M. "The Impact of Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercises on Respiratory Functions and Vocal Support in Otherwise Healthy Vocalists." In *Journal of Voice*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2022, pp. 37-44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2022.09.025>.

function and vocal support in vocalists, emphasizing that proper breathing is the basis of vocal art. Wasbotten<sup>8</sup> also highlighted the importance of breathing.

The phenomenon of vocal art in the context of both historical and medical aspects of vocal activity was also studied by Hamdan et al.<sup>9</sup> The central emphasis was on considering vocals not only as an artistic phenomenon, but also as a complex physiological and socio-cultural process closely intertwined with the functioning of the vocal apparatus. Their work by Leongómez et al.<sup>10</sup> also emphasized the interdisciplinarity of vocal art. The authors hypothesized that musicianship is not only a socio-cultural phenomenon but also has a deep biological basis formed in the course of human evolution. Bannan et al.<sup>11</sup> drew the same conclusions, having researched the interdisciplinary origins of human vocal communication. The study emphasized the role of musical rhythm and intonation in building social interactions.

In their work, Pechennik et al.<sup>12</sup> explored the transformation of vocal art in the context of postmodernism as a socio-cultural phenomenon. They claimed that a modern vocalist is no longer limited to academic technique alone - the ability to create emotional resonance, flexibility in multi-genre interaction, and openness to stage experimentation are becoming more critical. Drozhzhina et al.<sup>13</sup> also emphasized the importance of pop vocals for social communication and the development of modern society's cultural processes. The peculiarities of different vocal techniques were studied by Myhovych<sup>14</sup>, who underlined the need for a deeper physiological understanding of the vocal apparatus to safely master complex techniques such as belting,

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<sup>8</sup> Wasbotten, Lachman. *From Classical to Contemporary: The Evolution of Classical Vocal Pedagogy in the Modern Studio*, Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Hamdan, Abdul-Latif, Sataloff, Robert Thayer, & Hawkshaw, Mary J. "Vocal Art." *Civilization Features and Voice Disorders*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022, pp. 181–187. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15750-9\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15750-9_10)

<sup>10</sup> Leongómez, Juan David, Havlíček, Jan, & Roberts, S. Craig. "Musicality in Human Vocal Communication: An Evolutionary Perspective." In *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, vol. 377, no. 1841, 2022, 20200391. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2020.0391>

<sup>11</sup> Bannan, Nicholas, Dunbar, Robin I. M., Harvey, Alan R., & Podlipniak, Piotr S. „Acoustic Processing and the Origin of Human Vocal Communication.” In *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2024, pp. 1006–1039. <http://dx.doi.org/10.70082/esculture.vi.982>

<sup>12</sup> Pechennik, Mayia, Pryadko, Olena, Vozniuk, Oleksandr, Martyniuk, Liubov, Rudenko, Oleksandr, & Havrylenko, Yuliia. "Features of Vocal Art in the Context of Postmodernism as a Factor of Cultural Value." In *Postmodern Openings*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2022, pp. 56-68. <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/13.4/505>

<sup>13</sup> Drozhzhina, Nataliya, Yeroshenko, Olena, Davydov, Serhii, Shchepakin, Vasyl, Breslavets, Halyna, & Osypenko, Viktoriia. "Estrade's Vocal Art in the Context of Integration into the Society of the Future." In *Postmodern Discoveries*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2022, pp. 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/13.4/502>

<sup>14</sup> Myhovych, Mykola. "Modern Vocal Techniques and Methods of Their Study." In *Art and Education*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/55-2-13>

vocal fry, subtone, etc. Similarly, in their study, Paolillo et al.<sup>15</sup> highlighted the phenomenon of vocal fry and its anatomical and physiological aspects.

In their work, İldiz and İslim<sup>16</sup> investigated the use of virtual reality technologies in vocal training. Liu and Zhou<sup>17</sup> studied the effectiveness of applying innovative methods in vocal art to enhance the aesthetic expressiveness of performance. In his study, Shi<sup>18</sup> emphasized the potential of mobile applications and online platforms to transform traditional approaches to vocal teaching, creating conditions for personalized, interactive and flexible learning. Cox<sup>19</sup> conducted a comparative analysis of classical and modern commercial vocal pedagogies. In her work, Stephens<sup>20</sup> concluded that introducing contemporary vocal repertoire is necessary for academic singing pedagogy in the twenty-first century. The author substantiated the need to systematically include contemporary music in vocal training programmes and proved that familiarity with various modern styles stimulates innovative thinking in performers and increases their competitiveness.

An essential source for understanding new trends in vocal education, particularly for educators teaching popular singing, is the article by Hughes,<sup>21</sup> in which he researched contemporary vocal art in popular music, particularly how the perception of artists and listeners affects the performance of vocal works in this genre. Hughes addressed various aspects of vocal skills in popular music genres, focusing on how cultural, social and individual factors determine the style and performance of songs.

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- <sup>15</sup> Paolillo, Nico P., Carrozza, Luca, Osio, Maurizio, Rosa, Elisabetta, & Scalabrin, Matteo. "Inspiratory Vocal Fry: Anatomophysiological Aspects, Application in Speech Therapy, Vocal Pedagogy, and Singing. A Pilot Study." In *Journal of Voice*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2021, pp. 394–399. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2019.10.004>
- <sup>16</sup> Yildiz, Doğanyigit Sati, & İslim, Omer Faruk. "Virtual Reality in Vocal Training: A Case Study from Practice." In *Research Studies in Music Education*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2021, pp. 391–401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2021.1879035>
- <sup>17</sup> Liu, J. & Zhou, M. "The Role of Innovative Approaches in Aesthetic Vocal Performance." In *Música Hodie*, vol. 21, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.5216/mh.v21.69132>
- <sup>18</sup> Shi, Yaoyao. "The Use of Mobile Internet Platforms and Applications in Vocal Training: Synergy of Technological and Pedagogical Solutions." In *Interactive Learning Environments*, vol. 31, no. 6, 2021, pp. 3780–3791. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2021.1943456>
- <sup>19</sup> Cox, Megan Nicole. *A Comparative Study of Classical and Contemporary Commercial Vocal Pedagogies*. Thesis for the Degree of Master of Music in Research and Creative Work. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 2021.
- <sup>20</sup> Stephens, Jacqueline P. *The contemporary classical singer: why new music is necessary in 21st-century vocal pedagogy*: treatise submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree. Texas: The University of Texas, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.26153/tsw/47968>
- <sup>21</sup> Hughes, Diane. "Contemporary Vocal Artistry in Popular Culture Musics: Perceptions, Observations and Lived Experiences." *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century. Landscapes: the Arts, Aesthetics, and Education*, vol. 14, edited by Harrison, S., O'Bryan, J. Springer, Dordrecht, 2014, pp. 287-301. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8851-9\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8851-9_17)

## Methods and materials

### *The research procedure*

The first stage consisted of a preliminary diagnosis of the students' vocal skills using an expert assessment. At this stage, the basic level of mastery of such parameters as dynamic range, timbre expressiveness, breath control and intonation accuracy was determined. The expert committee included three vocal and ensemble teachers who independently assessed the students' performances before and after introducing the techniques. The criteria included: purity of intonation, breath control, articulation, timbre palette, dynamics, emotional expressiveness and ensemble coherence. The evaluation was based on a 10-point scale.

The second stage included the purposeful introduction of modern vocal techniques (belting, twang, vocal fry, subtone, creaky voice, whistle register, ingressive phonation, multiphonics, sprechgesang, vocal distortion and yodelling) into practical pop vocal and ensemble classes. Over 10 weeks, these techniques were systematically introduced into solo work and collective music-making (Table 1).

**Table 1**

<b>Vocal technique</b>	<b>Description of the equipment</b>	<b>Effect on vocal abilities</b>	<b>Application results</b>	<b>Examples of exercises</b>
Belting	The technique of powerful vocalization that utilizes the upper vocal range while maintaining a strong "bridge" to the chest voice	It helps develop a strong voice in the high tessitura of singing	The use of belting improves the energy and intensity of the voice in an ensemble performance	Sustaining long notes within the high range and engaging and releasing the chest voice exercises
Twang	A technique that produces a bright, sharp, but controlled sound, often used in folk singing	Enhances vocal resonance and tone quality, adding brightness and precise articulation	Affects the overall sound and confidence of ensemble singing, especially in rock or folk music	Performing short phrases with clear resonance, articulation exercises, and sound clarity drills
Vocal Fry	The technique involves using a low, raspy sound produced by firm compression of the	It achieves a rich, dramatic sound, especially in the lower vocal	Including vocal fry in the repertoire helps create a specific atmosphere in	Exercises for controlling low-pitched sounds, such as

MODERN VOCAL TECHNIQUES AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING VOCAL AND VOCAL ENSEMBLE SKILLS OF ART EDUCATION STUDENTS

Vocal technique	Description of the equipment	Effect on vocal abilities	Application results	Examples of exercises
	vocal folds	range	music, such as in the pop or rock genres	pronouncing phrases using vocal fry to add dramatic effect
Subtone	A softer, quieter, duller sound often produces a muffled sound	Facilitates the transition between voices by adding contrast to the sound	Suitable for creating soft and gentle moments in music, especially in quiet vocal ensembles	Singing slow songs with soft, muffled notes exercises the ease of transition between voices
Whistle register	The highest register of the human voice is similar to that of a whistle	Expands the upper range, trains muscle control	Adds expressiveness and unique color to solo episodes	Gliding up to the highest notes, impulsive attacks in the whistle
Creaky voice	A special way of phonation with low air pressure, close to vocal fry, but with more precise articulation	It allows you to feel the initial movements of the vocal cords and work on sound density	Improves intonation control and lower register sonority	Slow reading of the text with a 'creak', combined with the usual manner of speech
Ingressive phonation	The type of sound production during inhalation	It develops breath control and allows you to diversify sound effects	It is used for spectacular introductions, especially in theatrical or avant-garde productions	Repetition of vowels during inhalation, exercises on soft inhalation with sound
Multiphonics	Simultaneous performance of several tones, especially typical for experimental vocals	It understands complex harmony and trains the vocal apparatus to produce atypical sounds	It strikes the listener with its unusualness and is used in contemporary works	Creating noise effects focusing on resonances, combining falsetto and laryngeal sounds

<b>Vocal technique</b>	<b>Description of the equipment</b>	<b>Effect on vocal abilities</b>	<b>Application results</b>	<b>Examples of exercises</b>
Sprechgesang	A semi-spoken singing style, between singing and speaking, often in avant-garde and dramatic works	Improves diction, trains the rhythmic sense	It helps to create a dramatic effect and diversify the ensemble's sound	Reading the text to a metronome, combining speech intonation with singing
Vocal distortion	A voice distortion technique is often used in rock and metal vocals	It develops strength, endurance, and vocal drive	It adds emotional intensity and is used in energetic fragments	Growling, fry-distortion, screaming voice inserts with breath control
Yodeling	Switching between chest and falsetto registers with a clear "flip"	Trains register control and coordination	It adds color and an element of surprise to folk and stage works	Exercises on register "flips" and "swings" between chest and head voice

**Modern vocal techniques**  
**Source: developed by the authors**

The third stage consisted of surveying the study participants to identify the subjective performance experience gained and changes in vocal self-perception. It also involved conducting a repeated expert analysis of the students' vocal growth results. The survey included 10 closed questions with suggested answers.

The fourth stage is an expert assessment after an in-depth study of modern techniques.

The fifth stage included a statistical comparison of the indicators before and after introducing the techniques, analysis of the dynamics of changes in vocal technique and ensemble skills, and interpretation of the data in the context of the empirical tasks.

The sixth stage involved organising a series of open concert performances and ensemble shows. During these performances, students applied modern vocal techniques in the context of stage interaction, allowing them to explore performance results in a real concert space. The concerts were held at the Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, Mykola Lysenko Lviv National Music Academy, Drohobych State Pedagogical University of Ivan Franko, and the Rivne State University of Humanities.

## **Methods**

The expert evaluation was used to objectively determine the dynamics of the development of vocal technique and ensemble interaction of students before and after an in-depth course of studying modern vocal techniques. The questionnaire method allowed us to collect subjective data from students about changes in their perception of their vocals, confidence in technique, ability to self-control and expressiveness. Comparative analysis was used to identify changes in vocal training.

## **Sampling**

The study involved 30 second- and fourth-year university students, with an average age of 20, who had previous experience mastering modern vocal techniques and those without such knowledge. This approach made it possible to ensure the results' representativeness and determine the impact of training at different levels. The selection of respondents was based on voluntary participation: all participants were familiar with the purpose, procedure and conditions of the study, gave their informed consent to participate, and had the opportunity to refuse to participate at any stage without any consequences.

The key criteria for inclusion in the sample were basic vocal training (at least 1 year of individual lessons), participation in the educational vocal ensemble process, and no medical contraindications to vocal workload.

The choice of this number of participants was determined by the need to ensure the comparability of the data between the results of the expert evaluation before and after the course of an in-depth study of modern techniques, as well as the feasibility of implementing the research procedure within the educational process. For the study, the participants were selected based on conditional homogeneity in age (19-21 years), voice type, and level of basic vocal skills. This method of selection allowed for the reduction of the influence of extraneous factors and the obtaining of reliable data for analysis.

## **Tools**

Google Forms was used to conduct the survey. Video recordings of classes and rehearsals were used for on-site observation. Microsoft Excel was used to process empirical data, namely the survey results, and to implement a comparative analysis of the expert evaluation results before and after the in-depth study of modern vocal techniques.

## Research results

Upon completion of the experimental implementation of modern vocal techniques in training future performers, a thorough quantitative and qualitative assessment of the changes that have taken place in students' vocal training was carried out. According to the expert evaluation of professional teachers, the average scores on a five-point scale are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

<b>Vocal development parameter</b>	<b>Before the course</b>	<b>After the course</b>	<b>Change (+/-)</b>
Dynamic range	2.9	3.8	+0.9
Timbre expressiveness	2.8	3.9	+1.1
Breath control	3.0	4.0	+1.0
Intonation accuracy	3.1	3.8	+0.7

**Results of the expert evaluation before and  
after an in-depth study of modern vocal techniques**  
*Source: developed by the authors*

The analysis of the expert evaluation of students' vocal skills before and after the in-depth study of modern vocal techniques, presented in Table 2, shows a significant improvement in the key parameters of performance skills. The generalization of the data obtained on a five-point scale allowed us to identify both general trends in the participants' professional growth and the internal dynamics of the development of specific components of vocal technique.

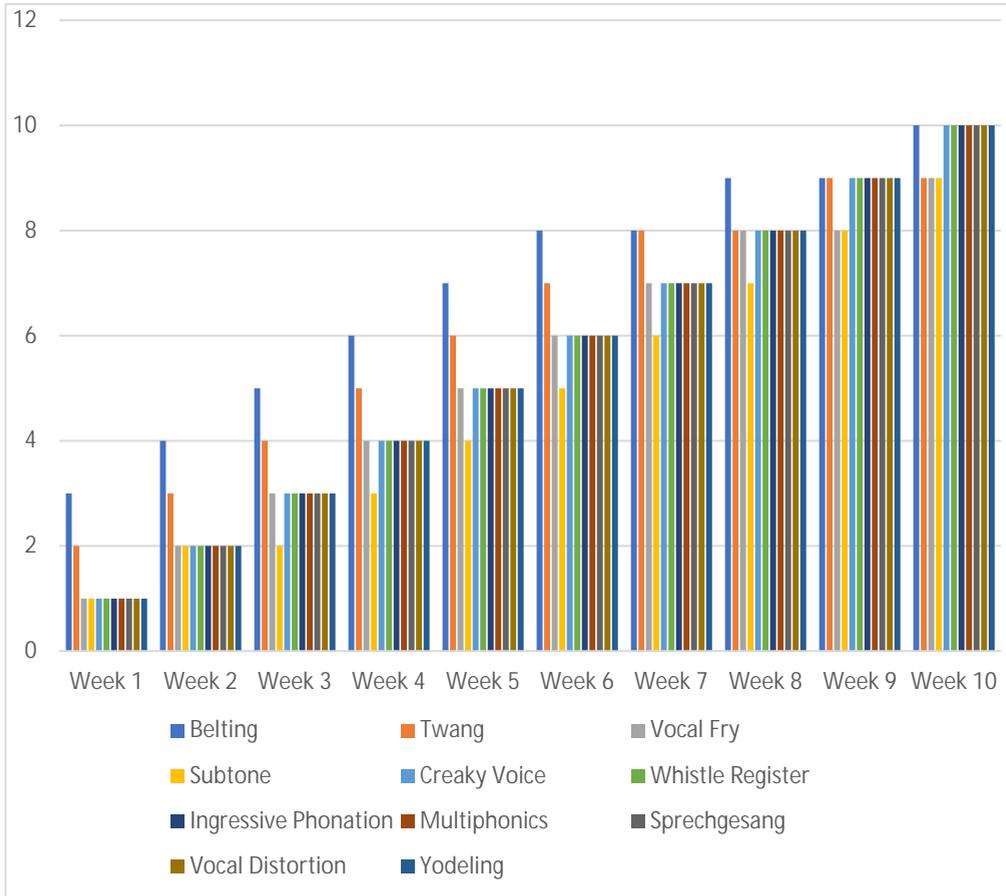
The most significant increase was recorded in the area of timbre expression, with an average score of 2.8 before the course and 3.9 after it was completed. The subsequent highest increase was in breath control, which rose from 3.0 to 4.0, an increase of 1.0 points. The increase in intonation accuracy (from 3.1 to 3.8) is the smallest among all the presented indicators (+0.7 points). Ensemble coherence, which increased from 2.9 to 3.9, also significantly improved (+1.0). Dynamic range increased from 2.9 to 3.8 (0.9 points). As a result of this training, the performers can reproduce a broader range of dynamic levels and use them with greater musical logic and emotional expressiveness.

Figure 3 presents the dynamics of the development of four modern vocal techniques (belting, twang, vocal fry, subtone, creaky voice, whistle register, ingressive phonation, multiphonics, sprechgesang, vocal distortion,

MODERN VOCAL TECHNIQUES AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING VOCAL AND VOCAL ENSEMBLE SKILLS OF ART EDUCATION STUDENTS

yodelling) over 10 weeks of training. All the techniques show a gradual increase in the level of mastery, which confirms the effectiveness of their use in practical pop vocal lessons.

**Figure 3**



**Modern vocal techniques and students' progress in each week of training**  
*Source: developed by the authors*

The analysis showed the most significant progress in the belting technique, where the skill level increased from 3 in the first week to 10 in the last. This technique, which requires the development of voice strength and control, presents the fastest learning pace. At the same time, the twang and subtone techniques gradually develop, reaching level 9 by the end of the study. Vocal fry also shows steady growth, gaining 9 points in week ten. Other

techniques, such as creaky voice, whistle register, ingressive phonation, multiphonics, sprechgesang, vocal distortion and yodelling, also show a gradual increase in difficulty, reaching high scores by week 10, indicating that they require prolonged training to master.

The survey results play a key role in identifying the qualitative changes that have taken place in the learning process. Generalizing the participants' responses made it possible to identify individual peculiarities of learning material and transformation of performance approaches. Thus, the survey results presented in Table 4 represent a multidimensional picture of the educational process's impact on the development of vocal skills.

**Table 4**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answers</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>1. How would you rate your general vocal level before taking the course?</b>	1 (very low)	10%
	2 (low)	5%
	3 (average)	20%
	4 (satisfactory)	35%
	5 (very high)	30%
<b>2. How would you rate your vocal level after completing the course?</b>	1 (very low)	0%
	2 (low)	5%
	3 (average)	10%
	4 (satisfactory)	40%
	5 (very high)	45%
<b>3. Have you experienced any improvement in your breath control while singing?</b>	Yes, it is significant	50%
	Yes, moderately	35%
	Minor	15%
	No, I did not feel any changes	0%
<b>4. How would you rate the changes in your timbre range after completing the course?</b>	Significantly expanded	30%
	Moderately expanded	45%
	No changes	15%
	Decreased	10%
<b>5. Did you find it easier to work in an ensemble after completing the course?</b>	Yes, it is much easier	40%
	Yes, a little easier	45%
	I did not feel any changes	15%

MODERN VOCAL TECHNIQUES AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING VOCAL AND VOCAL ENSEMBLE SKILLS OF ART EDUCATION STUDENTS

Question	Answers	Percentage (%)
	It has become more complicated	0%
<b>6. How much do you think your intonation accuracy has improved?</b>	Significantly improved	35%
	Moderately improved	45%
	No changes	20%
	Deteriorated	0%
<b>7. Did your perception of your vocal abilities change after taking the course?</b>	Yes, towards a significant expansion	25%
	Yes, towards a moderate expansion	50%
	No, it hasn't changed	20%
	Changed negatively	5%
<b>8. Do you feel an emotional and psychological increase in confidence in your voice?</b>	Yes, I feel much more confident	30%
	Yes, somewhat more confidently	50%
	No changes	20%
	I feel less confident	0%
<b>9. How effective were the modern vocal techniques used during the course for you?</b>	Very effective	50%
	Moderately effective	35%
	Weakly effective	10%
	They were not effective	5%
<b>10. Is it appropriate to continue with the methods proposed during the course?</b>	Yes, definitely	55%
	Perhaps to some extent	35%
	Not sure	10%
	No, I do not consider it appropriate	0%
	They were not effective	5%

**Results of the student survey**  
*Source: developed by the authors*

Analyzing the survey results among the study participants on the impact of an in-depth study of modern vocal techniques allowed us to trace changes in vocal self-perception and the effect of the methods used during the study. First, attention should be paid to the changes in the self-perception of the study participants' vocal abilities, which were assessed using closed

questions. The questions about the overall vocal level before and after the course (questions 1 and 2) show a positive change among the respondents. Before the course, most participants rated their vocal level as average or above average, with 35% of participants choosing a score of 4 (average) and 30% indicating that their level was very high. After the course, however, 45% of the participants stated that their vocal level had improved significantly (score 5), and 40% chose a score of 4, indicating a significant increase in vocal ability. This result confirms the effectiveness of the course, the methods used, and the considerable role of training in strengthening vocal techniques.

Regarding the question about breath control (question 3), half of the participants reported that they felt a significant improvement in their breath control while singing. 35% reported a moderate improvement, while 15% reported a slight change. This result indicates that breath control is one of the main techniques in vocal performance, and most participants experienced a significant improvement in this aspect.

The question about the timbre range (question 4) shows various results: 30% of the participants reported that their timbre range had expanded significantly, another 45% reported a moderate expansion, and 15% did not notice any changes. The difference in results may indicate individual differences in perception and ability to develop specific vocal characteristics, but the overall result is positive.

Regarding the ease of working in an ensemble (question 5), 85% of the participants indicated that it became easier for them, with 40% saying it was much easier and 45% saying it was a little easier. The result suggests that participants improved their technical abilities after the course and became more coherent in group performances. Only 15% of the participants felt there were no changes in their ensemble work, indicating a positive effect of the course.

Intonation accuracy, an essential aspect of vocal technique, improved for most participants (question 6). 35% of participants reported a significant improvement, another 45% reported a moderate improvement, and only 20% felt no change. These answers confirm that modern vocal techniques have significantly improved the participants' ability to produce accurate intonation.

The question about changes in perceptions of their vocal abilities (question 7) also showed positive results. 25% of the participants reported that their perception of their abilities had changed significantly, and 50% shifted toward a moderate expansion. Only 20% felt no change in this aspect, which indicates a considerable positive impact of the course on the participants' self-perception.

Regarding emotional and psychological growth and confidence in their voice (question 8), 30% of participants felt much more confident after the course, and 50% felt somewhat more confident. Only 20% felt no change in confidence, confirming the positive impact on the participants' emotional state. This result indicates that mastering modern vocal techniques contributes not only to technical but also to psychological growth.

Regarding the vocal techniques' effectiveness (question 9), 50% of the participants found them very effective, 35% found them moderately compelling, 10% found them slightly effective, and only 5% indicated they were ineffective. This result confirms the high level of acceptance of the techniques among the participants, most of whom found them valuable and practical.

Finally, the question about the feasibility of continuing to study the methods proposed during the course (question 10) received positive responses. 55% of the participants believe they will continue to work with these methods, and 35% think they may do so to some extent. These answers again emphasize the course's high level of appreciation among the participants and their desire to continue working in this area.

During the implementation of the sixth stage of the study (a series of concerts), several significant trends were identified that demonstrated the effectiveness of modern vocal techniques in ensemble singing. The experiment involved students who prepared concert programmes as part of an in-depth study of contemporary vocal methods (Table 5).

**Table 5**

<b>Vocal technique</b>	<b>Expected impact on the performer</b>	<b>Actual results in concert activity</b>
Belting	Enhanced dynamic range, energy, powerful/assertive delivery	Noticeably increased stage expressiveness: listeners remarked on the power of climaxes; performers demonstrated better control over loud phrases
Twang	Bright, sonorous sound; improved resonance balance	The participants could more easily achieve purity of the upper notes; the ensemble began to sound harmoniously, with expressive articulation
Vocal Fry	Deepening the emotional palette, creating a "broken", intimate atmosphere	In a concert context, the technique was used sparingly but appropriately – it evoked a strong emotional response from the audience in solo episodes

<b>Vocal technique</b>	<b>Expected impact on the performer</b>	<b>Actual results in concert activity</b>
Subtone	Softening of timbre, intimacy, and airy phrasing	Providing a warmer, more intimate sound in the ensemble is particularly effective in the introductions and conclusions of pieces.
Creaky Voice	Adding textural depth to the sound is an intriguing effect.	It was used in expressive fragments to add emotional tension, especially in dramatic scenes.
Whistle Register	Melodious high notes; ability to play ultra-high tones	The technique added spectacular moments to solo performances, showcasing the performers' high vocal range
Ingressive Phonation	A unique technique for expression, creating an unusual sound	It was used rarely, but added drama to moments requiring extravagance and a deep emotional response
Multiphonics	Multiple sounds simultaneously; create innovative effects	The technique has found its application in avant-garde performances, impressing listeners with its novelty and experimental performance
Sprechgesang	Concurrence of language and music; creation of unique rhythmic expressiveness	It was used to create a tense atmosphere in productions where conveying the text through music is essential.
Vocal Distortion	Aggressiveness of sound; expressiveness, creating a "rough" sound	From time to time, it was used to add drama to transitional moments, enhancing the emotional tension in songs
Yodeling	Vocal transitions between registers; exceptional voice dynamics	The technique has become an accent in folklore or specific genre performances, adding uniqueness to the performers' sound

**The ratio of expected and achieved effect when using vocal techniques**

*Source: developed by the authors*

One of the most striking trends is a tangible increase in performing freedom. This process manifested itself in the ability of performers to be flexible in their interpretation and to interpret musical material more boldly,

especially in ensemble performances. After purposeful study of techniques such as belting, twang, vocal fry, subtone, creaky voice, whistle register, ingressive phonation, multiphonics, sprechgesang, vocal distortion and yodeling, students began to operate more consciously with the timbre palette, moving from one manner to another within a single piece or phrase without losing ensemble unity.

In particular, the subtone technique allowed expanding the dynamic range of the lower register. Meanwhile, belting and twang, which involve the concentration of sound with a bright timbre color, increased the expressiveness of the upper register. Creaky voice added textural depth and emotional tension. Whistle register expanded the range of high notes, and ingressive phonation provided unusual, expressive effects in specific moments. Sprechgesang improved the rhythmic expressiveness, and vocal distortion enhanced the drama, particularly in transitional moments. Yodelling added unique vocal transitions between registers, accentuating the folklore character of the performance. All these changes were accompanied by increased performance confidence and decreased stage fright, recorded during the concert performances and in the participants' questionnaires.

Another significant achievement was the improvement of the balance between the performer's individuality and the ensemble sound. Modern techniques have enabled each student to show their timbre coloring without disturbing the harmony of the ensemble sound. For example, in vocal ensembles performing modern arrangements of folk songs or pieces with jazz elements, a significant improvement in articulatory coherence between the parts was observed. In practice, the performance acquired greater textural clarity, realization of intonational accuracy and timbre saturation. The timbral palette of the ensembles became richer, and the overall sound more expressive, contrasting, and dynamic, which contributed to the development of "ensemble hearing" - the ability of each member to attune to the collective sound in real time.

Stage interaction between performers has also undergone qualitative changes. Within the concert block of the experiment, an increase in emotional interaction between ensemble members was recorded. Compared to the initial performances, the final concerts were characterized by better eye contact and coordination of tempo changes. In addition, while performing, the participants used body language, gestures, and facial expressions more actively as part of the performance interpretation, which improved the quality of the stage presentation and emphasized the artistic integrity of the performances.

## Discussion

This study found that traditional vocal techniques used in educational institutions often need to be updated or integrated with elements of modern techniques. Similar conclusions were reached by Duan<sup>22</sup> in his study, where he explored the prospects of using virtual and augmented reality in the process of teaching vocals. The same conclusions were made by Breslavets et al.<sup>23</sup> The authors studied the impact of new technologies on the vocal teaching process. Cox<sup>24</sup> studied both traditional and innovative teaching approaches and concluded that modern approaches to commercial singing are more flexible and focused on the individual needs of each student. Suryati<sup>25</sup> also emphasized the importance of using modern vocal techniques.

In her study, Sear<sup>26</sup> proved that traditional academic training often does not cover the specifics of genre stylistics, techniques and vocal strategies necessary for teaching pop and rock vocals. The study used an analysis of curricula, in-depth interviews with teachers, and evaluation of the educational outcomes of courses aimed at pop vocalists. The author has proposed a framework for a potential curriculum that considers both vocal physiological aspects and psychological and pedagogical components. Sear's work is valuable in the context of training pop singers and pop vocal teachers because the study showed that as a result of integrating a course of in-depth studying of modern vocal techniques, students significantly improved the following indicators: dynamic range, timbre expressiveness, breath control, and intonation accuracy.

The study emphasized that modern vocal techniques are relevant and must be actively integrated into the educational process, as traditional performance techniques focus more on academic vocals. The significant difference between scholarly and pop vocals was emphasized in the work of

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<sup>22</sup> Duan, Li. "The Application of Modern Virtual Reality Technology in the Teaching of Vocal Music." In *Curriculum and Teaching Methodology*, vol. 6, no. 19, 2023, pp. 77-81.

<https://doi.org/10.23977/curtm.2023.061912>

<sup>23</sup> Breslavets, Halyna, Shpak, Halyna, Khomenko, Alla, Bakalo, Lydmyla, Osypenko, Viktoriia, & Dziuba, Oleg. "Distance Vocal Training in the Postmodern Period." In *Revista Românească Pentru Educație Multidimensională*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2023, pp. 440-455.

<https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/15.2/743>

<sup>24</sup> Cox, Megan Nicole. *A Comparative Study of Classical and Contemporary Commercial Vocal Pedagogies*. Thesis for the Degree of Master of Music in Research and Creative Work. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Suryati, S. "The Use of Growl Vocal Technique to Enhance Voice Quality in Pop Song Performance." *Jurnal Seni Musik*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2023, pp. 123-135.

<sup>26</sup> Sear, Joanna. "Modern Vocal Pedagogy: Investigating a Potential Curricular Framework for Training Popular Music Singing Teachers." In *Journal of Popular Music Education*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2024, pp. 239-254. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jpme\\_00105\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jpme_00105_1)

Frič and Podzimekova<sup>27</sup>. The authors focused on comparing sound emission between classical and pop singers. They investigated how differences in singing techniques affect the intensity and quality of sound waves generated by the vocal cords of classical and pop singers. Similarly, in their work, Keskinen and Juntunen<sup>28</sup> emphasized that traditional approaches to vocal training do not always meet the needs of pop singers. In his work, Cobb<sup>29</sup> explored how traditional vocal training methods can be adapted to the modern requirements of the stage. However, conventional vocal training methods are not always relevant in contemporary performance. Similarly, Oliveira et al.<sup>30</sup> emphasized the importance of the right approach to vocal training.

The students' survey results showed that the in-depth study of modern vocal techniques significantly influenced the students' professionalism indicators. If we compare this study with works that reveal the pedagogical process in China, in particular, Xia<sup>31</sup> considered the unique features of Chinese vocal art in the context of multiculturalism. Zhang and Hu<sup>32</sup> analyzed the role of the Chinese language in developing popular singing. Hu<sup>33</sup> studied the difference between vocal techniques used in Chinese pop music and traditional music. Li<sup>34</sup> studied the stages of formation of Chinese vocal music over a century. Yin<sup>35</sup> investigated contemporary pop music, considering its socio-cultural

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<sup>27</sup> Frič, Marek, & Podzimekova, Iva. "Comparison of Sound Emission between Classical and Pop Singers." In *Biomedical Signal Processing and Control*, vol. 66, 2021, 102426. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bspc.2021.102426>

<sup>28</sup> Keskinen, Katri A., & Juntunen, Marja-Leena. "Perspectives on Popular Music Voice Teaching: A Systematic Review of Contemporary Literature." In *Journal of Popular Music Education*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2024, pp. 135–155. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jpme\\_00139\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jpme_00139_1)

<sup>29</sup> Cobb, Clarkia. "Vocal Pedagogy with the Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) Singer." In *WWU Graduate School Collection*, 2022, 1101. <https://cedar.www.edu/wwuet/1101>

<sup>30</sup> Oliveira, Priscilla, Ribeiro, Vanessa Veis, Florencio, David Sildes Fidelis F., Palhano, Manoel, Gonsalves, Rayana Rodrigues, & do Nascimento, Maiara Alves. "Vocal Training in Healthy Individuals: A Review of Volume." In *The Journal of Voice*, vol. 38, no. 5, 2024, pp. 11-23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2022.03.004>

<sup>31</sup> Xia, Weitao. "Peculiarities of Singing in Chinese Popular and Traditional Music: Influence of Musical Genres on Vocals." In *Música Hodie*, vol. 22, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.5216/mh.v22.73226>

<sup>32</sup> Zhang, Liu, Hu, Jaong. "Retraction Note: Pop Music Singing in Education with Modern Innovative Technologies: How the Chinese Language Shapes the Creation of Popular Singing." In *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, vol. 54, no. 13, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-025-10130-y>

<sup>33</sup> Hu, M. "Features of Singing in Chinese Pop and Traditional Music: The Influence of the Music Genre on Vocal Music." *Dossier China*, vol. 22, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.5216/mh.v22.73137>

<sup>34</sup> Li, Yanfeng. "The Formation and Future Direction of Chinese Vocal Music in 100 Years of Development History." In *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2024, pp. 1062-1072. <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.1.0076>

<sup>35</sup> Yin, Li. *Knowing Pop Music* (Master's thesis). Berklee College of Music, 2021. <https://remix.berklee.edu/graduate-studies-contemporary-performance/204>

aspects. In contemporary vocal education, these studies confirm the importance of integrating modern vocal techniques, allowing students to gain a broader perspective on vocal art.

### *Limitations*

This study's limitations were the small sample size and individual differences in students' perception and mastery of vocal techniques, which may reduce the standardization of the data obtained.

### *Recommendations*

To ensure greater representativeness of the results, it is recommended that the sample of study participants be expanded by involving more educational institutions and students from different levels of training. In addition, modern vocal techniques should be integrated into the curriculum, which will allow students to acquire comprehensive skills and improve their skills in vocal art and ensemble performance.

### **Conclusions**

The study examined modern vocal techniques to improve vocal and vocal ensemble skills of art education students. The results showed that integrating modern vocal techniques into the educational process significantly enhances students' vocal and performance skills. After implementing an in-depth analysis of contemporary vocal techniques, the study confirmed a significant improvement in students' vocal skills. According to the results of the expert evaluation, the main parameters of performance skills, in particular, timbre expressiveness, breath control and dynamic range, were improved. The most significant improvement in students' vocal skills was observed in timbre expression, an essential aspect of individualizing a performance style. Changes in intonation accuracy and ensemble coherence also confirm the positive impact of the in-depth study of modern techniques on the development of vocal and ensemble interaction skills.

The survey results among the participants showed that most students felt a significant improvement in breath control and timbre range, which are essential components of vocal skills. 50% of respondents said they had experienced a significant improvement in breathing, and 45% in the timbre range. In addition, most participants noted an increase in confidence in their vocal abilities, confirming the emotional and psychological growth that contributed to the overall voice development. This indicates the effectiveness of modern vocal techniques in shaping students' professional skills.

The study proved that the introduction of modern vocal techniques into the educational process positively impacts the development of vocal skills, increases the level of vocal self-perception, strengthens the technical aspects of performance and promotes the professional growth of future performers.

The study's scientific novelty lies in its focus on the specific use of modern vocal techniques in the context of vocal education for students of art education, which allows us to expand our understanding of their role in the development of musicians.

The study's practical value lies in the fact that the results obtained allow for the improvement of curricula, in particular in the context of the use of modern vocal techniques, which contributes to the development of pop music.

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## INDIVIDUAL TRAJECTORY OF FORMING A PIANIST'S PERFORMANCE STYLE IN THE CONTEXT OF PERSONALISED LEARNING IN A HIGHER ARTS INSTITUTION

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**SUMMARY.** This study aims to reveal the individual trajectory of their performance style formation. It is viewed as a progressive strategy with unique content that provides a flexible approach to each student. The research methods chosen included analysis, comparison, synthesis, and observation. Based on these, the author developed a methodology for training pianists. It is based on creating a series of psychological, social, and material-technical conditions. The results demonstrate a deeper aesthetic understanding of world piano culture and an openness to various learning models. The results are also characterised by a respect for each student's philosophical worldview and cultural identity, along with an enhanced acquisition of theoretical knowledge. It was found that effective implementation mechanisms include a varied repertoire, adapted to the student's artistic interests, and the monitoring

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of performance gestures. The prospects for research lie in highlighting new components for improving a unique learning system, the foundation of which is the individual trajectory of pianists' development of their performing style.

**Keywords:** learning environment; ethnic identification; interpreter's psychophysiology; software; creative thinking.

## 1. Introduction

One of the most pressing problems in modern music education is the search for and crystallisation of a unique, proprietary teaching methodology. This serves as the foundation for creating conditions that foster the development of a pianist's performance style along an individual trajectory. This issue was addressed by Ma.<sup>6</sup> The scholar concluded that the most effective way for students to achieve mastery is for teachers to develop universal proprietary teaching methodologies. These methodologies facilitate the profound assimilation of performance practice aspects such as a rich repertoire, musicality of interpretation, and the flexible use of sound contrasts.

Special attention is given to the vivid display of different voice lines in polyphonic works, as well as a creative attitude toward rehearsal and stage work, with compositions by various authors.<sup>7</sup> No less significant is the challenge of developing an effective system of music education that utilises digital technologies. Wang addresses this issue.<sup>8</sup> The expert emphasises that online performance art courses are gradually gaining popularity in society. Their successful implementation requires the availability of digital musical instruments and increased accessibility for both teachers and students.

The issue of developing students' creative thinking also remains unresolved. This fact is explicitly noted by Wan, who highlights the significance of advanced technologies in university music curricula. This, in turn, directly opens up opportunities for students' creative development.<sup>9</sup> Another problem relates directly to the formation of mechanisms for effective interaction between students and artificial intelligence (AI) resources as they master musical

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<sup>6</sup> Ma, RunTao. "Teaching Methods of Piano Playing: Concept of Universalism and Author's Philosophy." In *European Journal of Education*, 60(3), 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12881>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Wang, Yuezhi. "Creative Digital Tools for Teaching Piano." In *Revista Música Hodie*, 22, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.5216/mh.v22.70961>

<sup>9</sup> Wan, Weijia. (2023). The importance of developing creative thinking in the preparation of music education professionals in universities. In *Interactive Learning Environments*, 32(7), 2023, pp. 3686-3696. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2023.2188400>

disciplines. Modern students are interested in an advanced AI-powered learning system (like ChatGPT), which uses a series of question-and-answer algorithms and modernised technologies to stimulate academic and creative development.<sup>10</sup>

On a broader scale, music pedagogy faces the challenge of implementing interactive teaching methods based on electronic resources and identifying the tools necessary for their successful implementation. One solution is the development of an interactive online music education course that stimulates students' creative approach to acquiring the essential knowledge and skills.<sup>11</sup> Also of particular significance is the challenge of cultivating analytical thinking in future instrumental performers, particularly pianists. A group of specialists addressed this, emphasising the importance of highlighting key aspects of analytical thinking by studying the interpretations of musical works.<sup>12</sup>

This not only develops skills in the artistic perception of music but also fosters an understanding of the significance of a work's key components. These include the means of articulation and phrasing, dramaturgy through the sequence of climaxes, the handling of dynamics, the expressiveness of registers, and the context in which the composition was crystallised.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, a significant challenge in the 21st century is the quest for a universal creative identity. Komenda and other contemporary scholars have focused on finding a solution to this.<sup>14</sup> In their opinion, the specific and characteristic features of this phenomenon are an expanded range of professional interests, personal motivation, and a particular typology of musicians. Depending on their field of activity, these individuals can be master performers, creators, pedagogues, or public figures<sup>15</sup>.

The *novelty of the study* lies in considering the individual trajectory of a pianist's performing style as a complex integral system within contemporary

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<sup>10</sup> Wang, Xia. "Integration of AI GPTs in Music Education and their Impact on Students' Perception and Creativity." In *Education and Information Technologies*, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-025-13531-7>

<sup>11</sup> Wen, Mo. "Interactive Online Classes in Music Education: The Impact of Online Technologies on the Level of Creative Thinking of Students." In *Current Psychology*, 43(15), 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05411-5>

<sup>12</sup> Vereshchahina-Biliavska, Olena, Mozgalova, Nataliia, Burska, Olena, Hrinchenko, Tetiana, Novosadov, Yaroslav. "Formation of Analytical Thinking through the Analysis of Interpretations of Musical Works in the Process of Training a Specialist Musician." In *Yegah Müzikoloji Dergisi*, 8(1), 2025, pp. 812-862 <https://doi.org/10.51576/ymd.1628706>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Komenda, Olha, Kysliak, Bohdan, Marach, Oleksandr, Moskvych, Olha, Rehulich, Iryna. (2024). "The Structural and Activity Method of Studying the Universal Creative Personality (on the example of musical culture)." In *Convergences - Journal of Research and Arts Education*, 17(33), 2024, pp. 201-212. <https://doi.org/10.53681/c1514225187514391s.33.240>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

music education. It has several key components that are deeply interconnected. Additionally, the role and significance of independent creative thinking as a component of individual learning strategies are thoroughly explored. By supporting its development and opportunities for multifaceted realisation, students become unique performers, combining the skills of an interpreter with an original, unique worldview. Thus, the research hypothesis involves determining the effectiveness, modernity, and universality of the individual trajectory in the formation of pianists' performing style as a complex, multifaceted, and, at the same time, holistic system.

*The study aims to* examine the developmental trajectory of a pianist's performance style. This trajectory is viewed as a progressive strategy with unique content and a flexible approach to each student.

The task setting includes solving the following *problems*:

- identify the key components of an individualised piano teaching strategy and analyse their content and functions;
- highlight the positive impact of each component of an individual learning strategy on skill development;
- reveal the interconnection between the components of an individual learning strategy and analyse their interaction as a single large-scale system with prospects for application in modern music education.

## 2. Literature Review

The problem of finding an individual approach to forming a pianist's performance style in the context of personalised learning at a higher arts institution is being actively raised and researched by contemporary scholars. For instance, the promising nature of software resources that motivate creativity not only in composers but also in instrumentalists is highlighted. This is made possible by the capabilities of the Expressive Music Variational Autoencoder (XMVAE) model, which is based on a variational autoencoder designed to capture the spectrum of expressive nuances inherent in music. By using a model like this, performers gain a broader range of artistic insights, which boosts their productivity when working on repertoire.<sup>16</sup> The objective evaluation of their interpretations plays an equally significant role in the training of professional pianists.

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<sup>16</sup> Luo, Jing, Yang, Xinyu, Wei, Jie. "Exploring Classical Piano Performance Generation with Expressive Music Variational AutoEncoder". In *Sound*, 2025.  
<https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2507.01582>

Currently, this can already be provided by engineering technologies. Using these resources, a thorough analysis of piano performances is conducted. This is accomplished through network flow optimisation methods, which can analyse audio signals and solve problems of various scales.<sup>17</sup> In the online environment, which is widely used in higher education institutions, gamified digital tools such as Nearpod, Genially, Educaplay, Breakout, and Quizizz are becoming increasingly important. They motivate students to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge through several key characteristics: efficiency, interactivity in the learning experience, real-time feedback, and the dynamics of mastering a musical discipline.

All this ensures positive results in the implementation of the didactic line in the field of professional training.<sup>18</sup> Mobile applications also play an essential role in this regard. They contribute to the autonomy and personalisation of teaching university curricula, which significantly improves the quality of student learning. Additionally, this enhances the effectiveness of the music education system, enabling it to improve the experience of future professionals.<sup>19</sup> The traditional method of mastering the basics of piano performance will take on new meaning thanks to the possibilities of virtual reality. They create a platform for interaction between students and other musicians, as well as the audience, which makes the perception of the different stages of learning a unique and creative process.<sup>20</sup>

A range of AI technologies helps to individualise the trajectory of pianists' performance style development. Among them, ChatGPT-4 is of particular importance. Its use in an educational environment helps to tailor music discipline materials to several specific university programme objectives and students' musical and aesthetic preferences. It also creates an atmosphere of calm, which has a positive impact on the ability to concentrate at the right

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<sup>17</sup> Wang, Huang. "Research on Piano Curriculum Education and Its Performance Ecosystem Based on Network Flow Optimization." In *Applied Mathematics and Nonlinear Sciences*, 9(1), 2024, pp. 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.2478/amns-2024-0830>

<sup>18</sup> Candel, Elena, De-la-peña, Cristina, Chaves-yuste, Beatriz. "A Gamified Digital Framework in Higher Education: Impact on Learning and Motivation." In *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 26(3), 2025, pp. 60-84 <https://doi.org/10.17718/tojde.1556533>

<sup>19</sup> Osuna, Julio, León-Garrido, Antonio, Llorente-Cejudo, Carmen, Ruiz-Palmero, Julio. "The Impact of Mobile Apps and Workload on University Music Education: An Experimental Study." In *Revista de Educación a Distancia (RED)*, 24(80), 2024, pp. 30-2024. <https://doi.org/10.6018/red.602301>

<sup>20</sup> Xu, Leiming. "Construction of an Interactive Platform for Piano Teaching in Virtual Reality Environment." In *Applied Mathematics and Nonlinear Sciences*, 9(1), 2024. <https://doi.org/10.2478/amns-2024-3113>

moments.<sup>21</sup> In the context of the materials mentioned above, the fact that scientists have revealed the effectiveness of various software models is of considerable value.

This opens up a wide range of resources for music education, including the material and technical base of teaching and its functions in improving the conditions for students to master educational programmes and optimising the academic environment in general. These conclusions align with the authors' study findings on the productivity of using computer technologies in the training of professional pianists. With the resources of modern engineering technologies, Internet platforms provide students with the opportunity to imagine themselves in various contexts, both real and virtual. This greatly enriches the palette of their impressions and emotional perception of their activities, which can increase their scale and content in general.

The successful formation of individual learning trajectories during the 20th and 21st centuries was facilitated by the attention that representatives of higher music education paid to the sources of folk art. Thanks to the study of the most valuable examples of folklore, its unique intonational and rhythmic foundations, the laws of form-building, and the projection of performance principles from ethnic instruments onto the piano, a new artistic foundation was formed. Consequently, a vast panorama of pianistic styles and structures characteristic of concert works emerged. All this, in turn, has renewed and enriched the content of the music education system, paving the way for the crystallisation of its personification.<sup>22</sup>

Turning to the primary sources of the ethnic culture of different peoples in the context of globalisation opens up ways to renew and greatly enrich piano literature and modern academic schools of pianism. This also applies to teaching methods designed to uncover and develop the unique abilities of a future performer. This aligns with the view of the authors of this study. In their opinion, when modern pianists incorporate music that reflects the most vivid ethnic elements into their repertoire, it broadens the scope of their general culture and professional worldview, shaping the qualities of a world-class, universal performer.

The foundation for the deep and multifaceted implementation of individual learning strategies for performers is the support of students' creative thinking. It reflects the readiness of future professional pianists to solve various,

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<sup>21</sup> Zhou, Wang, Kim, YeaJin. "Innovative Music Education: An Empirical Assessment of ChatGPT-4's Impact on Student Learning Experiences." In *Education and Information Technologies*, 29(16), 2024, pp. 20855-20881. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12705-z>

<sup>22</sup> Bai, Zuolian, Wu, Chao. "Analysis of the Style and Characteristics of Chinese Piano Performance in the 20th Century from the Perspective of Ethnicity." In *Herança*, 8(1), 2024, pp. 190-205. <https://doi.org/10.52152/heranca.v8i1.840>

sometimes unexpected creative tasks, demonstrating flexibility, attention to project details, speed of information processing, and appropriate decision-making.<sup>23</sup> The importance of the phenomena of “creativity” and “artistic creativity” is also emphasised in the context of individual learning trajectories. Indeed, “artistic creativity” represents a unique environment where students have the opportunity for self-expression. The drive to fully realise this is the expression of “creativity”.<sup>24</sup> Its manifestation is interpretive autonomy, which gives students a sense of competence, independence, and the value of their aesthetic perception of musical works. This fosters learning because it is based on supporting their needs.<sup>25</sup>

As a continuation and expansion of this concept, the idea of a deep and multifaceted study of the aspects of human musical thinking emerged. It encompasses both objective circumstances of personality formation (social environment, historical period, and cultural values) and subjective characteristics (psycho-physiology, spectrum of interests, and the direction of creative realisation). Its foundation consists of emotional and logical components, whose code is musical intonation - a carrier of unique information.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the issues of implementing software resources and developing creative, aesthetic, and artistic thinking are becoming increasingly relevant and are being gradually researched by contemporary scholars. However, several problems still exist that are directly related to the development of a strategy for individual piano training. This paper is dedicated to their research.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Research procedure

The research is based on four stages (Figure 1). In the first stage, the quality of students' and pupils' performances of various pieces was monitored. In the second stage, their repertoire content and the stylistic directions most familiar to each were determined. The spectrum of their emotional reactions

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<sup>23</sup> Islam, Hana, Budiyo, Budiyo, Siswanto. “Creative Thinking Skills from the Best of Self-Efficacy.” In *AIP Conference Proceedings*, 2566(1), 2022, article number 020008. <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0120228>

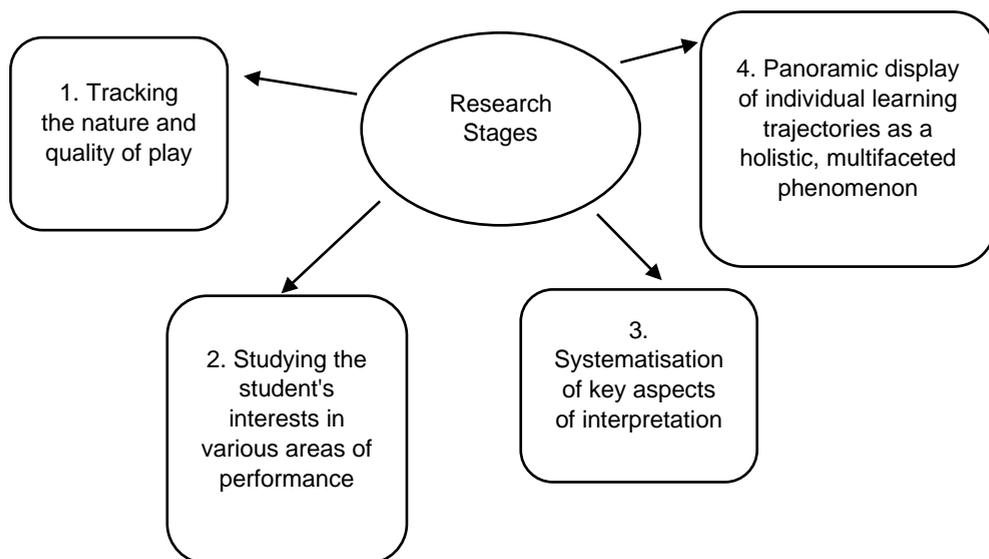
<sup>24</sup> Tetelea, Margarita. “Training of Artistic Skills of the Music Teacher.” In *Review of Artistic Education*, 20(1), 2020, pp. 304-308. <https://doi.org/10.2478/rae-2020-0035>

<sup>25</sup> Fujimoto, Marie, Uesaka, Yuri. “Interpretive Autonomy at the Heart of Classical Musicians' Learning and Well-Being: The Role of Professional Education.” In *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 2025, article 1543268 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1543268>

<sup>26</sup> Vereshchahina-Biliavska, Olena, Mazur, Iryna, Burska, Olena, Iskra, Svitlana, Teplova, Olena. “Musical Thinking Problems.” In *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 46(5), 2022, article number 101138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2022.101138>

to a musical composition was also identified, both during its study and when it was being performed on stage. In the third stage, the researchers compiled the data and conducted a comparative analysis. In the fourth stage, all of this was brought together into a single framework and presented as a holistic, complex system.

**Figure 1**



**The process of researching the individual learning trajectory: main stages**

***Source: created by the authors***

### *3.2. Sampling*

The research materials included, in particular, scholarly papers focused on addressing a wide range of questions related to creating the most optimal conditions for pupils and students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Particular attention was paid to research concerning their interest in the gradual improvement of performance quality and the development of a connection with the audience in various formats, including remote. A no less significant role was played by the fact that the authors of the study had the opportunity to observe specific results from applying their proposed key aspects of individual performer training. This took place in various music education institutions, including schools, colleges, and academies. The study

investigated modern educational issues, including the principles of motivating pupils and students to master repertoire and the factors that stimulate their professional growth.

The interrelationship of these factors, their significance, and their influence on the formation of creative individuality were also analysed. For this purpose, the process of mastering piano pieces by representatives of various age groups was tracked from 2023 to 2025. The sample included 20 senior music school students, 20 fourth-year students from music colleges, and 20 third- and fourth-year students from higher music education institutions. The total sample size was therefore 60 individuals. The ability to monitor the academic performance of representatives from different levels of music education provided the researchers with a clear picture of the implementation of key aspects of individual learning and their effectiveness.

### *3.3. Research methods*

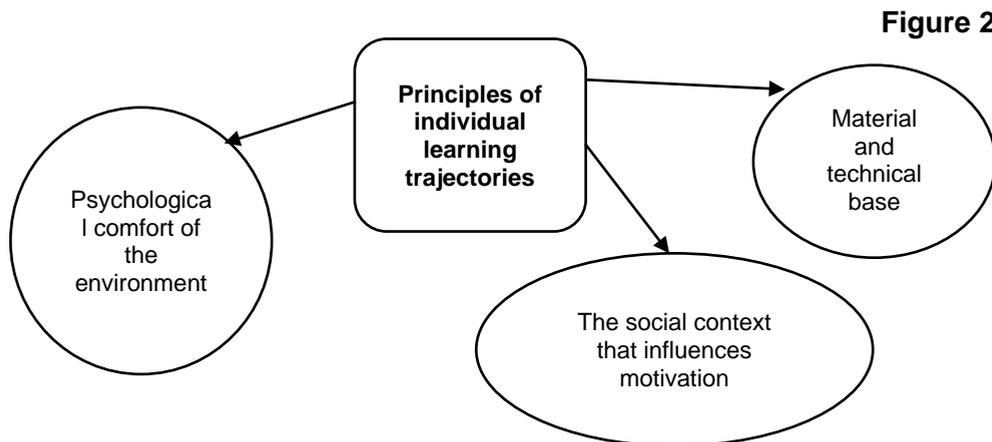
The research methods chosen were analysis, comparison, and synthesis. Through the study, the internal structure of the individual training strategy for performers was revealed. Analysis also helped to uncover the content and functional significance of each of its components. In turn, comparison and synthesis served as the foundation for systematising and compiling the components of the individual approach to training professional pianists into a single, comprehensive phenomenon of pedagogical practice.

The analysis method provided a panoramic view of the key elements of the personal approach to learning. Information about these elements enables the creation of comfortable and attractive educational environments. The comparison method helped to determine both the content and function of these elements, as well as the connection between them. Finally, the synthesis method served as the foundation for the author's methodology in developing performance skills, focusing on the individual development of pupils' and students' unique abilities. Thus, this study implements one of the forms of scientific inquiry – observation – which helped systematise the author's methodology for individual pianist training. It includes:

- understanding the interests of pupils and students;
- paying attention to their psychological and physiological characteristics;
- studying the characteristics of their executive apparatus;
- monitoring the stylistic trends, genres and concepts closest to their creative personalities;
- revealing their individual needs with learning conditions.

#### 4. Results

The creation of psychological, social, and material-technical conditions that foster the realisation of a person's creative potential serves as the foundation for the successful implementation of an individual's trajectory in forming a pianist's performance style (Figure 2).



#### **The foundation of an individual strategy in music education**

**Source: created by the authors**

For the successful development of a future pianist's creative personality, it is crucial to provide students with opportunities to explore their own artistic and aesthetic interests through a diverse repertoire. When the curriculum encompasses works from a diverse range of stylistic directions, genres, scales, and performance styles, conditions naturally arise for the creation of a laboratory for individual performers. A student gradually builds a unique library of compositions that most resonate with their personality. This approach also motivates students to participate in experimental projects, which serve as a platform for them to test their potential in various conditions. This, in turn, helps them choose the area of artistic concepts that most resonates with them.

One component of a personalised approach to training professional pianists is monitoring the *movements* of future specialists during the interpretation process. Recognising their origin and nature helps to select a specific repertoire and directions for enriching the pianists' performing arsenal. Taking into account the psychophysiology of the musician, it becomes possible to create favourable conditions for the disclosure of their unique creative

potential and the formation of performing skills. Valuable information about a student's natural abilities can be gained by monitoring their work with a set of technical and interpretative exercises. Among these exercises are those with which the student is most comfortable. Thus, focusing on the types of exercises that are most appealing to the student can help them gradually build a comprehensive arsenal of skills.

The second, and no less important, component of the individual learning system is to ensure the *holistic and multifaceted development of the performer's emotional-sensory apparatus*. Activating this is fundamental to the successful formation of a unique interpretive style, which will eventually become a reflection of mastery. In this instance, the *repertoire* also plays a role, as it is selected to match the specific nature of the performer's emotional perception of musical works and their ability to convey them to an audience.

The development of engineering technologies in the 21st century has made it possible to introduce another component into music education: *the evaluation of playing quality using software resources*. Electronic instruments, particularly the piano, provide students with a comfortable environment when working on a musical piece, as they strive to find an approach to uncovering and conveying its key idea to an audience. These conditions are related to the ability to coordinate volume levels at different stages of studying a piece and the ease of contact with the keyboard. They also include the ability to record your performances while getting to know the music of a particular composer and preparing it for concert performance. Modern engineering programmes open up a new dimension for students, in which they feel involved in an atmosphere that is closest to the conditions of the stage and performing in front of a large audience. This is achieved through the use of virtual, augmented, and mixed reality resources.

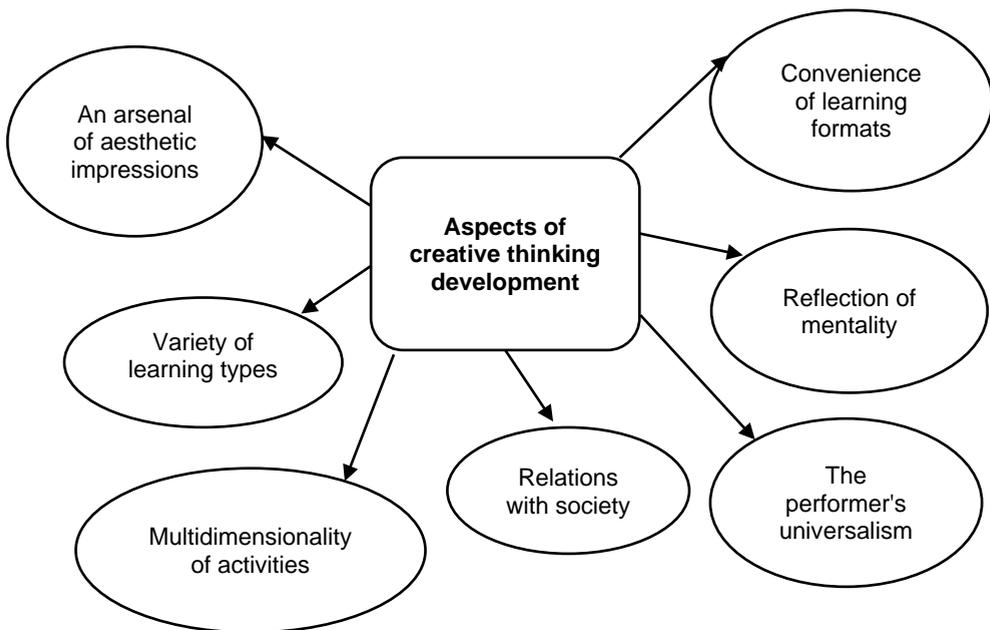
It is essential to emphasise the role of that component in shaping a performer's individuality, which is closely tied to the unique characteristics of their native ethnic culture. This culture formed the environment into which the performer was born and served as the context for their creative development during the initial stages of personality formation. Referring to musical material that embodies the intonational and rhythmic foundation, as well as the compositional structure of the folk oral-professional tradition to which the future professional pianist belongs, is essential. This approach enables the cultivation of a high-level performer capable of conveying to the world the sources of the unique identification code of the art of their homeland.

One of the most critical components of successful training for a modern instrumentalist in an individual format is creating conditions for the development of independent, creative thinking. This is achieved through the acquisition

and gradual enrichment of several aspects that are integral to the training of a professional performer (Figure 3). These include:

- aesthetic experience of perceiving the world's musical culture;
- offering various types of skills and knowledge acquisition, including advanced engineering technologies;
- realising creative potential in various areas of activity;
- setting up professional and social communications;
- attempting to participate in groups and creative associations where different styles of interpretation are practised, which forms a flexible, innovative approach to the environment, surroundings and situation;
- respect for each student's unique philosophical position and worldview;
- Intensification of the process of profound and large-scale assimilation of the theoretical knowledge base related to the art of piano performance.

**Figure 3**



**Basic components of creative potential development**  
*Source: created by the authors*

All of the above-mentioned components of the individual approach to shaping the performing style of future professional pianists are fundamental to the author's teaching methodology in music disciplines. It is based on the direct, balanced, and flexible use of each of them, according to objective conditions: the level of preparedness of students, their psycho-physiology, deep interests, and plans for the future. The practical implementation of all these components of individual training for professional musicians creates, above all, a comfortable environment. It motivates students to improve their performance level, focus on world-class pianistic skills, and develop within themselves the potential to achieve high-quality interpretation.

## 5. Discussion

Modern music education employs various approaches to implementing the principles of individualised learning. Among them, particular attention and support have been given to the phenomenon of performance variability by students in different contexts. This variability becomes a sign of independent thinking, a certain level of mastery, and the revelation of musicians' unique creative potential in general. The principle of gesture mapping supports the documentation of the diversity in interpretive processes. Its mission is to provide knowledge about the interaction between musicians and instruments, and to create a unique design of performance practices that reveal their meaning to a global audience.<sup>27</sup>

Its foundation is such an integral part of musical art as expressive performance. It is a laboratory for pianists, where various unique parameters of interpretation that go beyond the musical notation are reflected: tempo, rhythm, dynamics, intonation, and articulation. As a result, entirely new emotional, affective, and dramatic characteristics of musical works emerge, enabling a truly creative dialogue between performers and the audience. The unlimited range of these expressions is generated by contemporary engineers in the field of digital technologies, whose resources offer unique opportunities for creating popular music.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> West, Travis, Caramiaux, Baptiste, Huot, Stephane, Wanderley, Marcelo. "Making Mappings: Design Criteria for Live Performance." In *Proceedings of the 2021 International Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression (NIME 2021)*, IDMIL, 2021. <https://www.idmil.org/publication/making-mappings-design-criteria-for-live-performance> [data of access July 20, 2025]

<sup>28</sup> Bontempi, Pierluigi, Canazza, Sergio, Carnovalini, Filippo, Rodà, Antonio. "Research in Computational Expressive Music Performance and Popular Music Production: A Potential Field of Application?" In *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction*, 7(2), 2023, 15; <https://doi.org/10.3390/mti7020015>

The panorama of methods for shaping the uniqueness of pianists' playing styles is significantly enriched by the well-established role of relying on folk sources, uncovering the philosophical content of music, its spiritual and semantic dimensions, and ethnic self-identification.<sup>29</sup> The effectiveness of implementing an individualised learning strategy is further enhanced by the active development of performers' polyphonic hearing. The methods employed are based on enriching the educational and concert repertoire with polyphonic works from various eras, schools, and styles, as well as their multifaceted study, which motivates young musicians to master the techniques required for performing such compositions.<sup>30</sup>

The authors of the study fully support the aforementioned system of approaches to the training of professionals in the field of piano performance. According to the methodology proposed in this work, it enables a broad expression of students' original individual perspectives on both the interpretation and performance of musical compositions. Recognising the role and significance of folk tradition, as well as complex polyphonic patterns in the context of repertoire, paves the way for the development of world-class specialists. The principle of mapping is a common way of focusing attention on the specifics of a student's movements during performance. According to the study's authors, this is a key component of a pianist's development trajectory.

The environment for acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge is equally critical to the effectiveness of modern music education. In particular, according to scientists, the well-known and quite popular social network platform WeChat contributes to the active development of students' communicative and cognitive abilities. Its versatility lies in the fact that future professional pianists have access to lecture materials and automated knowledge testing. This allows them to analyse their repertoire, independently acquire the necessary additional information and work in a team with other students.<sup>31</sup> In this context, students are supported by the combinatorial neural network CLSA, which

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<sup>29</sup> Lei, Kun, Luparenko, Svitlana. "Differences in the Piano Performances of Modern Composers of Different Countries: Are the Specifics of Piano Pedagogy Different in Different Countries (For Example, China and Italy)?" In *European Journal of Education*, 59(4), 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12788>

<sup>30</sup> Mozgalova, Nataliia, Novosadova, Anna. "Motivation Bases for the Formation of Students' Polyphonic Hearing in the Process of Piano Training." In *Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences*, 3, 2023, pp. 108-114. <https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2023-3-14>

<sup>31</sup> Chen, Tao. "Classical Music Education in China: The Effectiveness of the WeChat Social Media Platform and its Impact on the Communicative and Cognitive Skills of Music Students." In *Education and Information Technologies*, 29(13), 2024, pp. 17467-17483. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12554-w>

aims to visualise musical sounds, thereby contributing to the clear separation of the vocal part and accompaniment in musical works.<sup>32</sup>

The development of creative thinking, one of the most essential traits of a professional performer, is facilitated by the use of digital audio workstation systems in the music creation process.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the effectiveness of applying advanced computer technologies and software in the field of music education is confirmed, as stated by the authors of the study, for the successful implementation of an individual strategy in shaping a pianist's performance style. Modern scholars view this field quite broadly, focusing on a wide range of aspects, including social and creative communication, a vast informational base, and the modernisation of mechanisms for music creation and performance. This is of great significance to the authors of the study, as their initial focus was primarily on the function of software that assesses the quality of performance.

According to experts, listening to interpretations of works by pianists from different cultures, generations, schools, styles, and practices contributes to the successful formation of a performer's unique personality. This develops students' ability to self-regulate their mastery of the curriculum and concert repertoire.<sup>34</sup> It is directly related to the phenomenon of reflective thinking. If it accompanies individual and group music learning activities, it creates a foundation for activating cognitive, behavioural, affective, and motivational efforts. These efforts aim to regulate the metacognitive aspects of this activity.<sup>35</sup>

Contemporary research findings emphasise the significance of students' aesthetic experiences for the effective implementation of an individualised trajectory in developing a pianist's performance style within the context of personalised learning. It is a platform for accumulating practical skills in perceiving the artistic ideas of composers, related to them through sensory interactions, which activate all the resources of the performer.<sup>36</sup> This idea is

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<sup>32</sup> Zhang, Qingru, Wang, Yan, Du, Yuelin, Li, Wei, Li, Hua. "Reform of Traditional Music Teaching Methods and Cultivation of Students' Musical Creativity on Digital Platforms." In *Applied Mathematics and Nonlinear Sciences*, 10(1), 2025. <https://doi.org/10.2478/amns-2025-0026>

<sup>33</sup> Yanan, Gai. "Use of Digital Audio Workstations in Music Education to Develop Creative Thinking and Increase Self-Efficacy." In *Current Psychology*, 43(29), 2024, pp. 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06093-3>

<sup>34</sup> Volioti, Georgia, Williamon, Aaron. "Nurturing the Musical Imagination: Listening to Recordings for Self-Regulated and Creative Learning." In *Recorded Music in Creative Practices: Mediation, Performance, Education*, Routledge, 2024, pp.157-175. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003190004-13>

<sup>35</sup> Araújo, Rosane, Ferronato, Rafael, Veloso, Flavio. "Metacognition in Musical Practices: Two Studies with Beginner and Expert Brazilian Musicians." In *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1331988>

<sup>36</sup> Martin, Remy, Nielsen, Nanette. "Enacting Musical Aesthetics: The Embodied Experience of Live Music." In *Music & Science*, 7(206), 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20592043231225732>

further developed in the scientific coverage of the content and origin of “musical thinking” as a phenomenon of social reality. It consists of a whole range of components.

Among them, the key roles belong to “musical language” and “musical logic,” which are formed in the context of a specific social, ethnic, and cultural environment. Its conditions have a direct impact on the nature of human thinking as a whole.<sup>37</sup> The development of creative thinking is fostered by a combination of students’ active, hands-on practice and a holistic approach from their instructors in preparing future professionals.<sup>38</sup> These aspects of modern music education add depth and richness to the field of study, organically combining to form the complex system of an individual pianist’s stylistic development. They are of undeniable value to the effectiveness and attractiveness of music pedagogy.

This, in turn, motivates young musicians to explore and internalise the fundamentals of piano artistry deeply. Hence, the context of personalised learning in a higher arts education institution is modernised, becomes more versatile, and ensures the multifaceted development of the unique creative potential of the performing artist’s personality. The concept above is confirmed by the results of this study, which illustrate a comprehensive overview of key aspects for the successful implementation of individualised approaches to training professional personnel in the field of pianism.

### *5.1. Restrictions*

The study is subject to certain restrictions. Firstly, the monitoring of the effectiveness of the individualised learning strategy was conducted over a relatively short time frame (2023-2025). Secondly, the sample size, comprising 60 individuals studying at various levels of music institutions, is limited.

### *5.2. Recommendations*

The authors see great potential in applying the various components of an individualised learning strategy to shape a pianist’s performance style, right from the early stages of their piano education. The capacity to track the

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<sup>37</sup> Xiaobin, Li. “Social Conditions for the Development of Musical Thinking.” In *Scientific Opinion*, 3, 2024, pp. 49-53. [https://doi.org/10.25807/22224378\\_2024\\_3\\_49](https://doi.org/10.25807/22224378_2024_3_49)

<sup>38</sup> Avramkova, Iryna, Kruglova, Marina, Kazakova, Irina, Maksaev, Artur, Grushina, Elizaveta. “Development of Musical Thinking in the Course of Training of Performing Musicians as a Pedagogical Problem.” In *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7(11), 2019, pp. 2449-2453. <https://doi.org/10.13189/UJER.2019.071123>.

development of each student's unique artistic identity throughout their professional training is of considerable value for creating flexible and relevant music education programs that meet modern demands.

## 6. Conclusions

The significance of this research lies in its quest to identify an effective training strategy for future pianists. A key advanced approach is the personalised pathway for the development of each student's unique performance style. This approach is built upon several core components, including the establishment of psychological, social, and material conditions that nurture an individual's creative potential. The practical outcomes of implementing these components include:

- aesthetic experience of perceiving the world's musical culture;
- offering various types of skills and knowledge acquisition, including advanced engineering technologies;
- realisation of creative potential in various areas of activity;
- setting up professional and social communications;
- attempting to participate in groups and creative associations where different styles of interpretation are practised, which forms a flexible, innovative approach to the environment, surroundings and situation;
- respect for each student's unique philosophical position and worldview;
- attention to his ethnic and cultural identity;
- an accelerated and profound mastery of the theoretical foundations of piano artistry.

Among the mechanisms for implementing an individual trajectory for the formation of a pianist's performing style in the context of personalised learning at a higher art institution, the following approaches have proven to be most effective:

- Providing the student with the opportunity to test their own artistic and aesthetic interests across a diverse repertoire; the monitoring of the future specialist's movement patterns during the process of interpretation;
- ensuring a comprehensive and multifaceted disclosure of the performers' sensory and emotional apparatus;
- the assessment of performance quality through both traditional methods and the utilisation of software resources;
- enriching the repertoire with examples of the distinctive ethnic culture to which the pianist belongs;
- creating conditions for the formation of independent creative thinking.

The practical significance of this study hinges on the development of an original methodology for the individual formation of pianists' performance styles. It is based on the identification of key components that facilitate the creation of an optimal environment and comfortable conditions. This, in turn, motivates the mastery of music disciplines and the realisation of the unique creative potential of future professional personnel in the field of piano art. The authors envision the prospects for further research in this field to lie in the elucidation and analysis of new components for the renewal, optimisation, and enhancement of the unique system of student training. The foundation of this system is the individualised trajectory of forming a pianist's performance style.

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## DEVELOPING INSTRUMENTALISTS' INTERPRETIVE FREEDOM THROUGH PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

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**SUMMARY.** The relevance of the study is determined by the need to develop creative thinking and an individual performance style in view of the dynamics of the academic musical space. The aim of the study is to identify effective pedagogical means of developing instrumentalists' interpretive freedom in the course of their professional musical studies. The research employed the methods of a pedagogical experiment, expert evaluation, survey, and comparative analysis. Pedagogical approaches that contribute to the development of interpretive freedom were identified, in particular, performance analysis, improvisational practices, dialogic forms of learning, problem-based creative tasks, master classes, analysis of performance versions, and reflection. The effectiveness of an innovative model of the interpretive freedom development, which systematically takes into account the interaction of technical, pedagogical, and individual factors, was substantiated. The study showed that the initial level of interpretive freedom in the control group (CG) and

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experimental group (EG) was similar. After 12 months of applying pedagogical strategies, the EG increased interpretive freedom by 34%, while the CG showed minor changes. Pedagogical support is a key factor in the development of interpretive freedom, especially in the context of active concert and performance practice, participation in performance competitions, forums, festivals, and interdisciplinary creative platforms.

**Keywords:** musical performance; interpretation of a musical work; performing interpretation; variational potential of a musical work; performing practice; education of a student instrumentalist

## 1. Introduction

The paradigm of art education is increasingly focused on the formation of the performer's creative autonomy, which includes not only technical perfection, but also the ability to independent interpretive thinking. The task of developing instrumentalists' interpretive freedom is becoming particularly relevant in view of rapid transformation of the cultural space and the growing number of new compositional strategies. The performers' interpretive freedom is a key manifestation of their creative individuality, which is realized in the ability to independently artistically comprehend a musical work and its performing interpretation. Such freedom is based on the free and conscious use of performing technique, an analytical approach to musical material, the ability to express the author's idea through the prism of personal vision and emotional experience, as well as the ability to convey it to the listening audience. Pedagogical support is an important factor in this process, which should be based on the principles of interaction, openness to experiment and the development of an individual vision of a musical work.<sup>6</sup>

An important resource for the development of interpretive freedom is the students' participation in modern concert festival projects, performance competitions, and multidisciplinary academic and creative platforms. Several powerful initiatives of this direction stand out among the numerous national and international projects that have defined the musical profile of Ukraine over the past ten years in the educational and artistic environment. They include such projects as Modern Music Workshop, Kyiv Flute Days, Dynasty (at the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music), the Educational Laboratory of Performing Arts (at the Faculty of Musical Art and Choreography

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<sup>6</sup> Fujimoto, Marie, Uesaka, Yuri. "Autonomous or Controlled Interpreters? A Model of Werktreue Internalization for Classical Musicians." In *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 2024, article 1401278. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1401278>

of the Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University <sup>7</sup>. Each of these projects represents an original multi-genre panorama of events that are crucial in the preparation of young instrumentalists and are an effective mechanism for acquiring concert practice, experience, and knowledge.

The complex of activities within the scope of these bright creative projects, which are unique in genre, provides live contact with contemporary composers' work, stimulates reflection on performance strategies and contributes to the integration of young musicians into the professional environment. Participation in such projects opens up new opportunities for the development of interpretative flexibility and critical thinking about one's own performance position.<sup>8</sup>

Theoretical understanding of the concept of interpretive freedom requires an interdisciplinary approach that combines musicological, psychological, pedagogical and cultural approaches. Interpretive freedom is not arbitrariness or

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<sup>7</sup> The concert academic and creative project Modern Music Workshop was created in 2012 as an artistic platform for professional communication and performing practice of young musicians in learning the composer's achievements of modern art. In addition to concert events and master classes, the performing creative component of the project includes a competition, a research-to-practice conference, author's lectures and workshops. The main thematic areas of the project's work include anniversary and memorable musical dates of the year, concert performances and premiere demonstrations of works of the musical avant-garde, understanding of musical culture in modern performing discourse. The International Flute Music Festival — Kyiv Flute Days — founded in 2021 is another influential and recognized platform for the realization of creative ideas of young musicians and experienced professionals — performers, teachers, researchers, composers, musicologists from Ukraine and other countries. In addition to the performance component (concerts, competition of young performers), the festival is necessarily complemented by academic events (conferences, academic round tables). Every year, the festival programmes were enriched by premiere performances of new works by Ukrainian composers. The International Festival — Dynasty — was founded in 2012. Its main goal is to preserve the traditions of inheritance in musical education and piano performance. The main idea of the festival is to involve the widest range of participants (schoolchildren, students, their teachers, and experienced professionals) in co-creation. The second task of the festival is to popularize and promote the studies of Ukrainian composers. An important segment of the festival is the performance competition Uke-Piano, which was integrated in 2021. In 2025, the competition gathered more than 150 participants in 10 nominations. The project The Art of Playing with an Orchestra, starting in 2025, also became part of Uke-Piano. The activities of the Educational Laboratory of Performing Arts are aimed at training highly professional specialists who have the skills of concert-performing, organizational, and managerial activities in the field of musical and performing arts. The laboratory is a base for concert performing practice and is characterized by holding concert events with the students' participation, in particular weekly Musical Interludes, which have a diverse thematic colour and creative collaboration with other types of art (vocal, choreographic, acting), creative projects in museums, libraries, and concert locations of the city.

<sup>8</sup> Johansson, Mats. "Improvisation in Traditional Music: Teaching Practices and Principles." In *Music Education Research*, 24(1), 2021, pp. 41–69.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2021.2007229>

a departure from the author's will. On the contrary, it is based on a deep understanding of the text, style, context and allows the performer to embody his or her own artistic concept in a responsible musical dialogue. Therefore, pedagogical support should provide not only knowledge and skills, but also conditions for the development of interpretive independence - through dialogue, analysis, and joint discussion. In their study, Besada et al. concluded that musical creativity is not only the result of momentary inspiration, but also a complex process that requires purposeful management of time and attention.<sup>9</sup> The article emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach that combines musicology, the psychology of creativity, and cognitive science for a deeper understanding of the creative process.

The problem of developing instrumentalists' interpretive freedom in professional training is complex. It can be solved only with thorough pedagogical support, which takes into account not only students' technical and intellectual development, but also their personal, emotional, and creative potential. The relevance of the conducted research is considered in this context, which is aimed at identifying effective pedagogical means of developing interpretive freedom of young performers in the modern artistic space. The aim of the research was to find effective methods of pedagogical influence that ensure the development of creative interpretive freedom in future instrumentalists during their professional training. Research objectives:

1. Determine the initial level of interpretive freedom of student instrumentalists by conducting initial listening and surveying in order to identify the features of their interpretive thinking and emotional expressiveness.
2. Create and implement a pedagogical support system focused on the development of interpretive freedom, which includes the stages of repertoire selection and performance analysis; improvisational practices, dialogic forms of learning, problem-based creative tasks, master classes, and performances in various concert and competition events, analysis of performance versions, reflection in the educational process of the EG.
3. Assess changes in the level of interpretive freedom in the CG and EG after the application of the experimental methods by expert listening to performances and analysing self-assessment questionnaires.
4. Compare the results of the CG and EG to identify the effectiveness of pedagogical support as a means of forming interpretive freedom.

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<sup>9</sup> Besada, Jose L., Barthel-Calvet, Anne-Sylvie, Pagán Cánovas, Cristobal. "Time Allocation to Musical Creativity: A Conceptual Integration and Material Grounding in Lannis Xenakis' Psappha." In *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 2021, Article 611316.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.611316>

## 2. Literature Review

Expressive performance is not an exclusively intuitive or innate process but can be purposefully shaped through pedagogical methods that take into account conscious reflection, motivational factors, and contextual understanding of a musical work. Prokopchuk reached similar conclusions in his study.<sup>10</sup> The author pointed out the importance of integrating interdisciplinary approaches and developing students' creative competencies in the field of music and noted that modern challenges place new demands on the format of learning, in particular the need to adapt educational programmes to international standards and technological changes. Zhen and Leung, emphasized the need to update pedagogical approaches.<sup>11</sup> Bonastre and Timmers also focused on the influence of educational and cultural context on music pedagogy and the need to adapt teaching methods to a specific environment.<sup>12</sup> The authors found that, for example, British students tend to be more constructivist in their approach, while Spanish students rely more on teacher's directive instructions.

Antonini Philippe et al. studied the phenomenon of "flow" in the context of musical performance, comparing the experiences of professional musicians and students.<sup>13</sup> The results showed that the state of flow is associated with deep concentration, a sense of control, loss of self-consciousness, and a sense of enjoyment of the process. Similarly, Loepthien and Leipold, showed that the experience of flow positively correlates with subjective well-being, emphasizing the importance of this psychological state for the musicians' emotional health.<sup>14</sup> The latest technologies in the field of musical performance open up new opportunities for expanding the creative potential of musicians, in particular through the use of virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI),

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<sup>10</sup> Prokopchuk, Victoria I. "Musical and Pedagogical Education in the Context of Globalization and Civilizational Changes." In *Collection of Scientific Papers ΛΟΓΟΣ*, 2020, pp. 107-109. <https://doi.org/10.36074/13.03.2020.v2.37>

<sup>11</sup> Zhen, Yuan, Leung, Bo-Wah. "Cultivating Creative Abilities of Student Musicians in Piano Performance: A Multiple-Case Study in China." In *Research Studies in Music Education*, 23(5), 2021, pp. 594-608. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2021.1977787>

<sup>12</sup> Bonastre, Carolina, Timmers, Renee. "Comparison of Beliefs about Teaching and Learning of Emotional Expression in Music Performance between Spanish and English HE Students of Music." In *Psychology of Music*, 49(1), 2021, pp. 108-123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735619842366>

<sup>13</sup> Antonini Philippe, Roberta, Kosirnik, Celine, Ortuño, Esther, Biasutti, Michele. "Flow and Music Performance: Professional Musicians and Music Students' Views." In *Psychology of Music*, 50(4), 2021, pp. 1023-1038. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356211030987>

<sup>14</sup> Loepthien, Tim, Leipold, Bernhard. "Flow in Music Performance and Music-Listening: Differences in Intensity, Predictors, and the Relationship between Flow and Subjective Well-Being." In *Psychology of Music*, 50(1), 2021, pp. 111-126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735620982056>

and digital tools for analysing and improving performance skills. Bylica and Bauman also considered the challenges faced by music education in crisis situations, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>15</sup> The authors described various innovative strategies and methods that help to maintain student motivation and ensure the quality of music education in a distance format.

Ppali et al. studied the potential of VR to support creative musical practice.<sup>16</sup> The results showed that VR technologies can expand the capabilities of musicians, stimulate creativity, and help in the development of new musical ideas, creating an innovative environment for experiments. Bontempi et al. and Wei et al. reached similar conclusions.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Lerch et al. emphasized that an integrated approach allows for more accurate modelling, evaluation and reproduction of performance, which contributes to the development of both theoretical and practical aspects of music pedagogy and technology.<sup>18</sup> Travasso came to a similar conclusion about the performer's transformation from a traditional interpreter to a co-creator who actively uses digital technologies and interactive media to expand the possibilities of musical expression.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Kachur et al. emphasized that digital platforms and the latest technologies in the field of musical performance open up new opportunities for the development of creative, pedagogical and methodological

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<sup>15</sup> Bylica, Kelly, Bauman, Betty. "Pedagogical Activity in Crisis Conditions: Pedagogical Creativity in Music Education." In *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 231, 2022, pp. 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.5406/21627223.231.01>

<sup>16</sup> Ppali, Sophia, Lalioti, Vali, Branch, Boyd, Ang, Chee S., Thomas, Andrew J., Wohl, Bea S., & Covaci, Alexandra. "Keep the VRhythm Going: A Musician-Centred Study Investigating How Virtual Reality Can Support Creative Musical Practice." In: *Proceedings of the 2022 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '22)*, Association for Computing Machinery, article 220, 2022, pp. 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3491102.3501922>

<sup>17</sup> Bontempi, Pierluigi, Canazza, Sergio, Carnovalini, Filippo, Rodà, Antonio "Research in Computational Expressive Music Performance and Popular Music Production: A Potential Application Area?" In *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction*, 7(2), 2023, 15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/mti7020015>; Wei, Jing, Karuppiyah, Marimuthu, Pratik, A. "Music Education and Teaching in College Based on Artificial Intelligence Methods." In *Computers and Electrical Engineering*, 100, 2022, article 107851. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compeleceng.2022.107851>

<sup>18</sup> Lerch, Alexander, Arthur, Claire, Pati, Ashis, Gururani, Siddharth. "An Interdisciplinary Review of Music Performance Analysis." In *Transactions of the International Society for Music Information Retrieval*, 3(1), 2020, pp. 221–245. <https://doi.org/10.5334/tismir.53>

<sup>19</sup> Travasso, Rui. "Is the New Media Art Capable to Shape the Instrumentalist's Role? – From Interpreter to (Co)Creator." In *Rotura – Revista De Comunicação, Cultura E Artes*, 5(1), 2025, pp. 153-159. <https://doi.org/10.34623/6nk2-1v87>

competencies of future music teachers, and also contribute to the development of independence and creativity in teaching.<sup>20</sup>

In his study, Sternberg, concluded that musical intelligence is a key factor in the formation of musicians and should be more widely recognized in the psychology of music.<sup>21</sup> Navarro and Chacón-López reached similar conclusions in their study.<sup>22</sup> The authors found that improvisation stimulates various aspects of creativity, including the ability to think original, flexibility in approaches to solving problems, and the speed of generating new ideas. Meisner et al. reached similar conclusions.<sup>23</sup> The authors found that young musicians often have difficulty balancing between sheet music accuracy and personal musical expression.

Research into motivation and practice in teaching musical performance is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of modern music pedagogy. Oliveira et al. emphasized that student motivation is not simply a homogeneous phenomenon, but consists of various internal and external factors, which interact and influence the effectiveness of learning.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, How et al. emphasized the diversity of approaches and research methods, as well as the need for a deeper understanding of the processes of self-learning and motivation of musicians.<sup>25</sup>

Recent studies confirm that expressiveness in musical performance is formed not only intuitively, but also under the influence of purposeful pedagogical strategies that take into account cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors. The development of performer's reflection, motivation, autonomy, as well as consideration of the cultural environment and the influence of psychological state are important.

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<sup>20</sup> Kachur, Myroslava M., Dykun, Iryna A., Zhishkovych, Myroslava A., Stepanova, Liudmyla P., Synevych, Inna S. "Digital Educational Space in the Professional Training of Music Teachers." In *Revista de la Universidad del Zulia*, 12(Extra 35), 2021, pp. 160–180. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46925/rlduz.35.10>

<sup>21</sup> Sternberg, Ribert J. "Toward a Theory of Musical Intelligence." In *Psychology of Music*, 49(6), 2020, pp. 1775–1785. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305734120963765>

<sup>22</sup> Navarro Ramón, Laura, Chacón-López, Helena. "The Impact of Musical Improvisation on Children's Creative Thinking." In *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 40, 2021, 100839. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2021.100839>

<sup>23</sup> Meisner, Henrique, Timmers, Renee, Pitts, Stephanie E. "Just Notes': Young Musicians' Perspectives on Learning Expressive Performance." In *Research Studies in Music Education*, 43(3), 2020, pp. 451–464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X19899171>

<sup>24</sup> Oliveira, Antonio, Ribeiro, Fabiana S., Ribeiro, Luisa M., McPherson, Gary, Oliveira-Silva, Patricia. "Disentangling Motivation in Instrumental Music Learning: A Systematic Review." In *Research Studies in Music Education*, 23(1), 2021, pp. 105–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2020.1866517>

<sup>25</sup> How, Ee Ran, Tan, Leonard, Miksza, Peter. "A PRISMA Review of Research on Music Practice." In *Musicae Scientiae*, 26(3), 2021, pp. 675–697. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10298649211005531>

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Research design*

The effectiveness of pedagogical means of developing students' interpretive freedom as a factor of their performing self-realization was tested through an experiment consisting of three stages: summative, formative, and control. At the first – summative - stage, the EG and CG were formed from among junior students of several art higher education institutions (HEIs) majoring in Piano, Bayan/Accordion, and Flute. The initial level of interpretive freedom was determined through an initial listening of works of similar complexity. The assessment was carried out according to the following criteria: intonational thinking, individuality of approach, variability of tempo-rhythmic, dynamic and articulatory decisions, general emotional and artistic impact, performing expressiveness, performing stability, etc.

The second - formative - stage involved the introduction of a specially developed pedagogical support system aimed at the development of interpretative freedom into the educational process of the EG. It included creative and analytical tasks, improvisational practices, dialogic methods, master classes, analysis of performance versions, reflection, and comparison of alternative interpretations. The CG studied using traditional methods without targeted influence.

At the control stage, students performed a programme equivalent to the initial one. Assessment was carried out following a similar procedure. Comparative analysis of the results revealed the dynamics of changes in the level of interpretative freedom and the effectiveness of pedagogical support.

#### *3.2. Methods*

Pedagogical experiment was used as the leading research method to verify the effectiveness of implementing targeted pedagogical support in the professional training of instrumentalists. Comparative analysis of the results gave grounds to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of pedagogical influence and verifying the author's hypothetical model.

Expert assessment was used to identify the level of interpretive freedom in the performance of musical works by participants of both groups after the experimental exposure. A survey was conducted in order to understand the psychological state of students during the learning process. It contained 20 questions (17 closed and 3 open), aimed at identifying the level of interpretive freedom, the degree of fear of mistakes during experimental

performance, as well as the general emotional background while working on a piece of music. The survey covered 82 students of performing specializations, the results were used to identify key psychological barriers in the development of interpretive freedom.

### 3.3. *Sample*

To conduct the study, a sample was formed from the number of students of 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> years of study of several art HEIs majoring in Piano, Bayan/Accordion, Flute. The selection was carried out from a total of about 100 students of the relevant departments. The main criteria for inclusion in the sample were: 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> years of full-time undergraduate studies, obtaining education according to the specialization with the chosen instruments, and at least four public performances during the last academic year.

In order to maintain the veracity and clarity of the experiment, the respondents were divided into CG and EG by major, while maintaining comparability according to the following parameters: major and concert activities. The groups were formed by the method of purposeful selection. Participation in the study was voluntary. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and the anonymity of the results.

### 3.4. *Instruments*

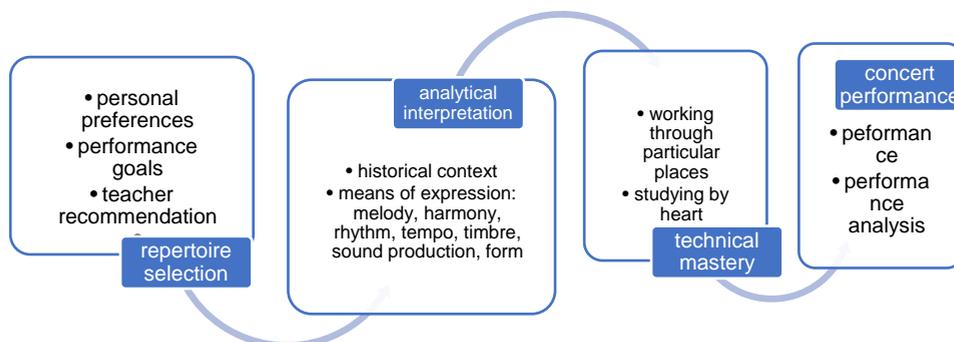
The study used a set of tools that provided both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the experimental results. An analytical interpretative map was developed for expert assessment of the level of interpretative freedom. It contained scales for such parameters as: the level of performing initiative, flexibility of musical thinking, justification of interpretative decisions, ability to creatively transform musical text, emotional expressiveness, and artistic integrity.

## 4. **Results**

### 4.1. *Interpretative freedom of a musician: The specifics of the phenomenon*

The study identified the key components of a musician's interpretive freedom: repertoire choice, analytical interpretation, technical mastery of the musical text, and concert performance (Figure 1).

Figure 1



**Interpretative freedom of a musician at different stages of work  
on a piece of music**

**Source: developed by the author**

Repertoire selection is the first stage at which a musician determines the works to be subject of his or her creative activity. At this stage, the conditions for the realization of interpretive freedom are laid, as different works offer different opportunities for expressing the performer's individuality. The choice of a piece of music is often determined by both personal preferences and performance goals, as well as pedagogical recommendations. An important factor in the development of an instrumentalist's interpretive freedom is the encouragement of independent selection of the performing repertoire.

Such an approach contributes to the formation of a conscious attitude towards musical material, activates analytical thinking, and develops responsibility for artistic decisions. This, in turn, stimulates the manifestation of an individual performing style. The repertoire should include works of different styles, eras and genres, which will contribute to the formation of a worldview and the acquisition of performing experience. It is also important that the selected repertoire includes a range of performing tasks - technical, dramatic, stylistic, which would stimulate the student's professional growth.

Analytical interpretation of a musical work is a stage that involves a deep study of the musical text: its structure, harmony, style, and historical context. Analytical work on the piece of music allows the performer to understand the structure of the work, reveal the logic of its construction, explore stylistic features, genre markers, and semantics of musical language. Understanding intonation relationships, thematic development, vertical and horizontal lines of the musical fabric contribute to an individual approach to studying the work, its creative comprehension. As a result of analytical

interpretation, the students form his or her own interpretative vision, which characterizes his or her performing individuality.

Technical mastery of musical text is a stage that involves mastering the instrument in such a way as to most accurately and expressively embody the idea of interpretation. The work on a musical texture includes detailed work on a sheet music, articulation and dynamic notations, fingering solutions, and phrasing. An important ability is the ability to integrate existing technical skills into the overall artistic concept of the work, because technical freedom is a key factor in interpretative freedom.

Concert performance is the final stage, where interpretative freedom is manifested to the fullest extent, as the interpretation may undergo additional transformations under the influence of a live audience, the performer's emotional state, and other factors.

#### *4.2. Determining the initial level of interpretative freedom*

The summative stage of the study involved a diagnostic of the initial level of interpretive freedom of the experiment participants. The following tools were used for this purpose: expert evaluation of the performance of musical works (with the participation of three teachers of the Department of Special Piano, Folk Instruments, and Wind Instruments), and individual survey of students about their attitude to interpretive freedom (Table 1).

**Table 1**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>	<b>Survey</b>
CG (n=41)	5.8	6.1
EG (n=41)	5.6	6.3

**Level of interpretive freedom before the experiment  
(averaged scores on a 10-point scale)**

*Source: developed by the author*

The average scores in both groups were close. Expert evaluation showed a slightly lower level in the EG (5.6 versus 5.8). The initial situation indicated no statistically significant differences between the groups, which provided the correct conditions for the subsequent formative experiment.

#### *4.3. Instrumental specifics of interpretative freedom: Technological, performance, and pedagogical aspects*

Modern instrumental performance presents a complex relationship between the technical capabilities of the instrument, the musician's performing skills, and pedagogical strategies for developing interpretive freedom.

The piano, as an instrument with a fixed pitch, requires the performer to master the tone, dynamics, articulation, agogics, and pedalling to reproduce a multifaceted texture. Certain limitations on interpretive freedom are associated with the need for a balanced proportion between knowledge of the “laws” and “canons” of stylistically justified intonation and a sense of proportion in creating the personal sound of a musical text. The expansion of the musician’s interpretive potential and freedom in the repertoire of different eras varies within its limits and is stimulated through pedagogical dialogue, which emphasizes the variability of phrasing, timbre palette, etc.

Accordionists have unique performing opportunities to create individual concepts due to the constructive potential of the instruments. At the same time, academic performance on these instruments’ dates back to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which may raise questions about performance traditions. At the same time, the following facts can be counterarguments to this thesis - the rapid improvement of instrument design, the academic performance schools, and a wide repertoire palette - from translations of classical works to original compositions.

The flute, like other wind instruments, has a significant resource of expressive possibilities, which to a significant, sometimes decisive extent depends on the performer’s physiology. While playing, the instrument is under the direct influence of the performer’s breathing, which interacts with the mobility of the labial muscle complex (embossure). It is the specific performing breathing that provides the ability to reproduce the timbre and dynamic palette, the variability of phrasing, and has an impact on the formation of articulation and pitch intonation. However, physiological limitations (for example, the amount of respiratory reserve, the condition of the embouchure) can narrow the interpretative space.

Pedagogical support in this case should be aimed at developing technical flexibility, analysing alternative editions of works (Table 2).

**Table 2**

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Key parameters of interpretive freedom</b>	<b>Typical limitations in performance</b>	<b>Optimal pedagogical approaches</b>
Piano	Variability of pedalling, convex agogics, technical timbre expressiveness	Strong canonical traditions; expectations of the “correct” sound; limitations in performance means of expression	Analytical work with interpretations of musicians from different performing schools; Achieving performing freedom through stage practice;

DEVELOPING INSTRUMENTALISTS' INTERPRETIVE FREEDOM THROUGH PEDAGOGICAL  
SUPPORT IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Instrument	Key parameters of interpretive freedom	Typical limitations in performance	Optimal pedagogical approaches
			Development of individual performing manner through repertoire selection
Flute	Timbre and dynamic palette, variability of phrasing, articulatory flexibility, microtimbre effects (flagellation, whistle tones, noise effects)	Breathing limit; dependence on physiological state; stability of intonation patterns	Use of modern techniques (multiphonics, microchromatics); endurance training
Bayan / accordion	Wide technical possibilities in the context of various textures; articulatory, timbral, dynamic palette; flexibility of sound intonation.	Difficulty in implementing textural solutions, acquiring skills in high-quality technique of mezzo-soprano, patterned approach to stylistic expression.	Problem-based creative assignments for solving textural and stylistic tasks, improving the mezzo-soprano technique; performing analysis of interpretive versions of works; dialogic forms in the search for interpretive solutions; improvisational practices.

**Comparative analysis of the interpretive capabilities of the instruments**

*Source: developed by the author*

The issue of the degree of interpretative freedom of different instrumentalists requires consideration of technological, historical, and cultural factors. For example, pianists do indeed face more rigid academic frameworks, especially in the interpretation of classical works, where the cult of “authenticity” traditionally prevails. However, these very limitations can become a catalyst for creativity: modern performers are increasingly experimenting with pedalling, tempos, or even creating instrumental transcriptions, rethinking canonical texts.

Flutists, on the contrary, deal with physiological limitations (breathing, embouchure position), but their interpretative freedom is often greater due to the absence of a rigid attachment to the tempered scale. This allows performers of contemporary works and interpreters of music created in experimental compositional techniques, among other things, to explore microchromatic and microtimbre effects close to electroacoustics.

Effective pedagogical support in the professional musical training should be focused on creating conditions that contribute to the development of technical independence, the development of artistic thinking, and the formation of an individual performing style. In this regard, the stimulation of the student's creativity is of particular importance, as well as the development of his or her reflective attitude to his or her own performing activity, which is the key to a conscious interpretation of a musical work.

The table below summarizes the main methods and their effectiveness in the context of the development of interpretative freedom (Table 3).

**Table 3**

<b>Pedagogical approach</b>	<b>Frequency of use</b>	<b>Main characteristics of influence</b>	<b>Effectiveness rate</b>
Performance Analysis	Every lesson (from 7 minutes)	Develops awareness of the structural elements of the work, promotes reasoned artistic choices	High (78-85%)
Improvisational Practices	Several times a month (from 30 minutes per class)	Forms flexibility of thinking, spontaneity in artistic decisions	Very high (87-93%)
Dialogic forms of learning	Every lesson (from 5 minutes)	Develops critical thinking through discussion of interpretative options	Moderately high (65-72%)
Problem-based creative tasks	Almost every class (10 minutes or more)	Stimulates non-standard approaches to the interpretation of musical material	High (75-82%)
Master classes	Once a month (1 academic hour)	Provides professional feedback and broadens the interpretive horizons	Moderate (58-67%)
Analysis of the performance versions	Several times a month (10 minutes or more per class)	Forms a comparative approach to interpretation, develops auditory culture	High (80-86%)

Pedagogical approach	Frequency of use	Main characteristics of influence	Effectiveness rate
Reflection	Every class (5 minutes or more)	Promotes awareness of one's own performance decisions and their artistic value	Moderately high (68-74%)

**The effectiveness of pedagogical approaches in the development of interpretative freedom**

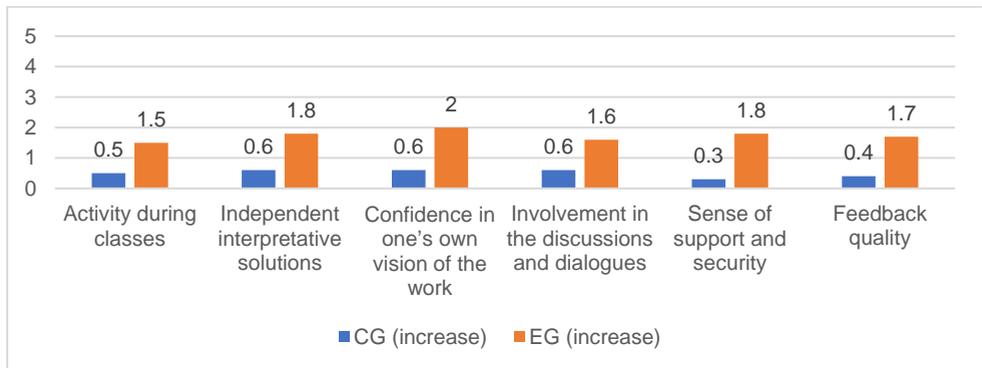
*Source: developed by the author*

The most effective pedagogical strategies in developing interpretive freedom were improvisational practices (87–93%) and analysis of performance versions (80–86%), which ensure the development of flexible thinking, spontaneity, and auditory reflection. Performance analysis (78–85%) and problem-solving tasks (75–82%) also present high efficiency, as they form a structural understanding of the work and stimulate non-standard approaches to interpretation.

*4.4. Comparative analysis of the results of the CG and EG.*

The results were visualized in a chart of the growth of indicators for the EG and CG, presenting a significantly higher level of improvement in the EG. The charts illustrate the dynamics of changes in key components of interpretive freedom, in particular in independent decision-making, active participation in discussions, and a sense of support (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**



**Increase (in points) in the CG and EG**

*Source: developed by the author*

The results indicate a significant improvement in the main components of interpretive freedom in the EG, in particular: increased activity in classes, more frequent adoption of independent interpretive decisions, increased confidence in one's own vision of the work, as well as increased involvement in discussions and dialogical forms of learning. The increase in the sense of support and security is particularly noticeable, which correlates with pedagogical support aimed at the development of creativity. Analysis of Figure 5 emphasizes the importance of pedagogical support in the professional training of instrumentalists, as it is aimed at creating such conditions that ensure not only the development of technical independence, but also the formation of deep artistic thinking necessary for the conscious interpretation of a musical work.

#### *4.5. A conceptual model of interpretive freedom in professional music education*

The author's hypothetical model defines interpretive freedom as a dynamic function that integrates three key variables: instrumental factors, pedagogical approach, and performance experience. This dependence can be expressed by the formula:

**IF = f(I, P, E), where IF - level of interpretative freedom,  
I - technological and technical parameters of the instrument, P - teacher  
support style, E - individual performance experience.**

The instrumental factor determines the objective limits of interpretative freedom through technical parameters and physiological adaptation. Technical parameters include timbre capabilities and dynamic range, while physiological adaptation includes the instrument's ergonomics and the performer's endurance.

The pedagogical factor influences the disclosure of the potential of interpretive freedom through methodological strategies and forms of interaction. The most effective means of developing the instrumentalists' interpretive freedom were pedagogical strategies that promote the development of creative thinking and auditory sensitivity. Performance analysis and problem-based creative tasks that deepen the structural understanding of a musical work and encourage a non-standard approach to interpretation also showed high efficiency.

Performance experience influences the subjective realization of interpretive freedom through learning curves and professional socialization. Participation in professional projects such as Modern Music Workshop, Kyiv Flute Days, and Dynasty festivals, as well as projects of the Educational

Laboratory of Performing Arts, contributes to an additional increase in interpretive freedom by familiarizing with the interpretive principles of historically informed performance, deepening ideas about the possibilities of expressive means in works written in the latest compositional techniques, ensemble music making, expanding concert and stage practice, etc. (Table 4).

**Table 4**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Expert evaluation</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Total increase</b>
CG (n=41)	6.1 (+0.3)	6.4 (+0.3)	+5%
EG (n=41)	7.8 (+2.2)	8.2 (+1.9)	+34%

**Level of interpretive freedom after the experiment  
(averaged scores on a 10-point scale)**

***Source: developed by the author***

Practical testing of the author's model within the scope of an experiment among instrumentalists revealed a significant increase in interpretive freedom by 34% within 12 months of one year of training, which confirms its effectiveness as a tool for predicting and managing interpretive freedom.

## 5. Discussion

The results of the study emphasized the key role of interpretation skills in the development of creative musical subjectivity of musicians, which is confirmed by the study of Oleksiuk, who considered instrumental performance not only as a technical process, but also as a means of developing the spiritual potential of students of art educational institutions.<sup>26</sup> We agree with the author that performing activities contribute to the formation of a holistic personality, activate internal resources, and stimulate self-development through deep emotional and intellectual immersion in the work. At the same time, our study complements this idea, showing the significance of pedagogical support in the context of the development of interpretative freedom. Similar conclusions were drawn by Gaunt et al., who emphasized the importance of forming socially responsible and creatively active personalities in professional music education.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Oleksiuk, Olha. "Instrumental Performance as a Means of Developing Students' Spiritual Potential." In *Visnyk of Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts. Series: Art Studies*, 51(51), 2024, pp. 27–33. <https://doi.org/10.31866/2410-1176.51.2024.318348>

<sup>27</sup> Gaunt, Helena, Duffy, Celia, Coric, Ana, González Delgado, Isabel R., Messas, Linda, Pryimenko, Oleksandr, Sveidahl, Henrik. "Musicians as "Creators of Society": A Conceptual Foundation for Contemporary Professional Higher Music Education." In *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713648>

We support their emphasis on integrating sociocultural aspects, but our study further emphasizes the role of individualizing pedagogical approaches to unlocking the unique creative potential of each student.

The study by Bylica and Bauman on pedagogical flexibility in times of crisis confirms the need for innovative and adaptive teaching methods. We agree with their opinion on the importance of teacher creativity.<sup>28</sup> The analysis of signature pedagogy by Creech et al. has something in common with our approach, emphasizing the importance of active student participation in the learning process for the development of creative and reflective skills.<sup>29</sup> However, our study extends this concept by focusing on pedagogical support methods that purposefully stimulate interpretive freedom. The competency-based approach proposed by Moyanov is reflected in our results, especially in the context of the development of key creative competencies.<sup>30</sup>

Creative pedagogy described by Schiavio et al. during the pandemic illustrates the importance of innovative technologies for maintaining students' creative activity.<sup>31</sup> We share this approach and add that such pedagogical support should be continuous and personalized in order to reveal the individual characteristics of each musician to the maximum possible extent. Similar trends in personalization and adaptability of the educational process are noted by Okhmanyuk et al., Casas-Mas and Lopez-Iñiguez, and Smith.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Bylica, Kelly, Bauman, Betty. "Pedagogical Activity in Crisis Conditions: Pedagogical Creativity in Music Education." In *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 231, 2022, pp. 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.5406/21627223.231.01>

<sup>29</sup> Creech, Andrea, Zhukov, Katie, Barrett, Margaret S. "Participatory Pedagogy in Collaborative Creative Learning in Advanced Music Education, Training, and Professional Development: A Meta-Synthesis." In *Frontiers in Education*, 7, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.929421>

<sup>30</sup> Moyanov, Iqasbay D. "Competency-Based Approach in Higher Music Professional Education." In *ACADEMIA: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 12(4), 2022, pp. 42–47. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7137.2022.00235.X>

<sup>31</sup> Schiavio, Andrea, Biasutti, Michele, Antonini Philippe, Roberta. "Creative Pedagogy in Pandemic Times: A Case Study with Conservatory Students." In *Research Studies in Music Education*, 23(2), 2021, pp. 167–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2021.1881054>

<sup>32</sup> Okhmanyuk, Vitalii, Kosynets, Ivan, Chernetska, Nataliia, Hontar, Oleg, & Tseyko, Nataliya. "Musical Art and Music Pedagogy in Higher Arts Education: Instrumental and Vocal Directions." In *Cadernos de educação Tecnologia e Sociedade*, 18(se1), 2025, pp. 282–290. <https://doi.org/10.14571/brajets.v18.nse1.282-290>; Casas-Mas, Amalia, Lopez-Iñiguez, Guadalupe. "Teacher Preparation for Instrumentalists: Promoting the Transition to Student-Centered Practices in the 21st Century." In: Pozo, H.I., Perez Echeverria, M.P., Lopez-Iñiguez, G., Torrado, H.A. (eds.), *Teaching and Learning in the Music Studio. Landscapes: Art, Aesthetics and Education*, Springer, 2022, vol. 31, pp. 247–265. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-0634-3\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-0634-3_17); Smith, Tawnya D. "Music Education for Survival and Flourishing: Cultivating Childhood Wonder, Sensibilities, Emotional Well-Being, and Wildness as a Means of Discovering and Fulfilling One's Life Purpose." In *Frontiers in Education*, 6, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2021.648799>

Our results coincide with their findings but emphasize the practical implementation of these principles through pedagogical approaches that develop interpretive freedom. The study of Cantarelli Vita and Campbell on world music pedagogy is common with our idea of the development of global musical thinking as a component of the creative personality.<sup>33</sup> In turn, the conclusions of Han and Abdrahim on the strategic importance of teachers' creativity coincide with our position on the need for teachers' professional development to support students' interpretive freedom.<sup>34</sup>

### 5.1. Limitations

The limitations of the study included a small sample size, which may have influenced the overall results. Besides, the study focused on only three performance majors, which limits the applicability of the findings to other musical contexts.

### 5.2. Recommendations

Recommendations for further research include expanding the sample by age and performing skill level. It is also appropriate to study the impact of pedagogical support and innovative teaching methods on the development of musicians' creative subjectivity.

## 6. Conclusions

The results of the study emphasized the multidimensionality and dynamic nature of a musician's interpretative freedom, which manifests itself at different stages of working with a musical work. The study showed that it is the phased process - from repertoire selection to concert performance - that creates the conditions for the realization of the performer's individual creativity, taking into account his technical capabilities, analytical training, and emotional state.

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<sup>33</sup> Cantarelli Vita, Juliana, Campbell, Patricia S. "World Music Pedagogy: Gateway to Global Citizenship and Children's Creative Impulses." In *Malaysian Journal of Music*, 10(1), 2021, pp. 45–53. <https://doi.org/10.37134/mjm.vol10.2.4.2021>

<sup>34</sup> Han, Weijing, Abdrahim, Nur A. "The Role of Teacher Creativity in Higher Education: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Directions." In *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 48, 2023, 101302. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101302>

The conducted experimental study confirmed the effectiveness of the proposed model  $IF = f(I, P, E)$  and the developed methodology for the development of interpretive freedom in students of a music educational institution. The results of the study showed that the implementation of the experimental methodology, which was based on the active students' involvement in performance analysis, creative experimentation and teacher support, contributed to a significant increase in the level of interpretive freedom. In particular, a significant improvement was observed for all parameters (activity in classes, independence of interpretive decisions, confidence in one's own vision, involvement in discussions, a sense of support and quality of feedback), which is confirmed by both students' subjective assessments and objective expert analysis.

The average expert assessment score in the EG significantly increased from 5.6 to 7.8 points, which indicates the development of performance courage, creativity and the ability to meaningfully interpret musical works. The changes in indicators were minimal in the CG, which studied according to the traditional curriculum without additional pedagogical interventions. This indicates the stability of the traditional educational process, but also reveals the limited potential for the development of interpretive freedom without specialized support.

A comparative analysis of the results of the CG and EG confirmed the significant effectiveness of the proposed methodology aimed at developing interpretative freedom. The study emphasized the key teacher's role as a mentor in this process, as he or she stimulates creative search and supports students' reflective attitude to their own performance practice. In turn, this contributes to sustainable professional development and the formation of a creative personality.

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## INTEGRATING MUSIC ITEMS IN GIFTED SCREENING TEST: VALIDATION STRATEGIES IN MALAYSIA

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**SUMMARY.** This study investigates the integration of music-related components into a gifted screening test to enhance the identification of artistic and music giftedness. Focusing on Malaysia's educational context, the research develops and evaluates music items embedded in a standardized test, targeting students' cognitive and creative abilities. A mixed-method design was employed, incorporating quantitative data from 414 students and qualitative insights from expert interviews and observations. Rasch model analysis revealed that the music items, particularly melody awareness and music interval recognition, effectively differentiated students based on ability. The study concludes that integrating music into gifted screening tests provides a more inclusive approach, recognizing diverse talents, and supporting a holistic evaluation of giftedness beyond conventional academic metrics.

**Keywords:** music education; music assessment; gifted and talented; gifted test; music item

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## Introduction

Gifted children refer to those who demonstrate exceptional abilities or potential in one or more domains, such as intellectual, creative, academic, or artistic fields, which necessitate specialized educational support to foster their development.<sup>6 7</sup> Giftedness should not be narrowly defined by high IQ alone but rather recognized as a dynamic construct that encompasses creativity, task commitment, and domain-specific talents. Lasekan et al. (2025) state that giftedness should be regarded as a developmental process, in which inherent potential during childhood evolves into achievement in adulthood through the provision of appropriate chances and support.<sup>8</sup> Since the inception of structured programs in 2009, gifted education in Malaysia has advanced considerably. These programs were created to provide gifted children with accelerated instruction and personalised training according to their unique learning requirements. These programs have established an environment conducive to the flourishing of gifted children, with their career trajectories closely monitored to ensure optimal development. Nevertheless, significant gaps remain in the process of identifying gifted children. Most of the current screening methods predominantly assess STEM-related abilities, hence may excluding students proficient in creative arts such as music, fine arts, and literary arts. This narrow focus on specific domains complicates the identification of giftedness and may marginalise youngsters with diverse talents, particularly in the creative arts.

Standardised assessments may not adequately reflect the strengths of all children, particularly those excelling in creative disciplines such as music, visual arts, and literature.<sup>9 10</sup> Consequently, achieving high scores on these assessments does not necessarily indicate proficiency in other critical domains. This shows the necessity for a more comprehensive and receptive

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<sup>6</sup> Coleman, L. J., and Cross, T. L. *Being Gifted in School: An Introduction to Development, Guidance, and Teaching*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003233213>

<sup>7</sup> Worrell, F. C., Subotnik, R. F., Olszewski-Kubilius, P., and Dixon, D. D. "Gifted Students." *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 70, 2019. Pp, 551–576. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010418-102846>

<sup>8</sup> Lasekan, O. A., Godoy Pena, M. T., and Méndez Alarcón, C. M. "Sustainable and Inclusive Model for Gifted Education." *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Scope*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2025, pp. 1046-1064. <https://doi.org/10.47857/irjms.2025.v06i01.01930>

<sup>9</sup> Okyere, A. A., Adom, D., Kquofi, S., Sampene, A. A. B., and Buami, E. K. "Integration of Universal Design for Learning in Creative Arts Education: Perspectives from Basic Schools in Suame Municipality, Ashanti Region, Ghana." *Studies in Learning and Teaching*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2024, pp. 665-687. <https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v5i3.530>

<sup>10</sup> Bareiß, L., Platz, F., and Wirzberger, M. "Implicit Assumptions of (Prospective) Music School Teachers about Musically Gifted Students." *Social Psychology of Education*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2024, pp. 1009-1041. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-023-09833-8>

approach to identifying exceptional individuals, one that encompasses innovation and talent across several domains. This study seeks to address this deficiency by integrating music-related components into a gifted screening test and evaluating their effectiveness in recognising creative and artistic giftedness. The objectives of this study are to (1) develop and include music-related items into the gifted screening test and (2) evaluate their suitability as components of a comprehensive system for identifying gifted individuals.

## Literature Review

Recent developments in incorporating music-based evaluations into gifted screening examinations aim to improve the precision and inclusivity of identifying gifted children. Previous research found the importance of musical intelligence in giftedness assessments, with a study in Bosnia and Herzegovina revealing a strong correlation among teacher, peer, and self-evaluations of musical intelligence, thus validating its role as an indicator of giftedness.<sup>11</sup>

A study investigating bilateral giftedness in music indicates that music-based assessments can stimulate both musical-mathematical and musical-linguistic capabilities, forecasting the emergence of talents and behaviours in gifted children.<sup>12</sup> A 54-item screening instrument was created in Brazil to identify musical aptitude, with initial findings indicating consistent scores across assessments, hence affirming its efficacy in detecting musically gifted individuals.<sup>13</sup> The incorporation of many informants (teachers, classmates, and parents) in conjunction with self-assessments improves the reliability and validity of the identification process, mitigating biases and enhancing accuracy.<sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> Mandelman et al. (2013) and Siu (2010) employed psychometric instruments, specifically the Aurora Battery and the Gifted Rating Scales-Preschool/Kindergarten Form (GRS-P), which exhibit robust psychometric

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<sup>11</sup> Milic, S., and Simeunovic, V. "Concordance between Giftedness Assessments by Teachers, Parents, Peers and the Self-Assessment Using Multiple Intelligences." *High Ability Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13598139.2020.1832445>

<sup>12</sup> Kalinina, L. Y. "Music in Pedagogical Diagnostics for Bilateral Giftedness of Preschoolers". *Musical Art and Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2024, pp. 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.31862/2309-1428-2024-12-3-17-34>

<sup>13</sup> Koga, Fabiana Oliveira, Rosemeire de Araújo Rangni, and Rafael Pereira. "Musical Aptitude Screening: A Brazilian Experience under Construction." *Engineering Proceedings* 39.1 2023, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3390/engproc2023039007>

<sup>14</sup> Milic, S., and Simeunovic, V. "Concordance between Giftedness Assessments by Teachers, Parents, Peers and the Self-Assessment Using Multiple Intelligences". *High Ability Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13598139.2020.1832445>

<sup>15</sup> Almeida, L. S., Araújo, A. M., Sainz-Gómez, M., and Prieto, M. D. "Challenges in the Identification of Giftedness: Issues Related to Psychological Assessment." *Anales de Psicología*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2016, pp. 621-627. <https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.32.3.259311>

features, hence facilitating a more thorough and precise identification of gifted children.<sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup> Integrating musical intelligence into various frameworks improves how giftedness is identified by recognizing abilities beyond traditional cognitive tests. Recent advances in software development, supported by research on musical intelligence, aim to make this identification process more efficient and accessible.<sup>18</sup>

The convergence of music and giftedness has been examined, with an increasing array of data indicating that musical talents reflect greater cognitive capabilities. Ma et al. (2025) and Liu (2024) highlighted that regular musical training correlates with structural alterations in the brain, especially in regions governing fine motor skills and auditory-motor integration, thereby supporting the notion that musical proficiency fosters enduring cognitive and neurological development.<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup>

These findings corroborate the hypothesis that music represents a distinct domain where both inherent aptitude and acquired skills merge to augment various cognitive capacities. Research indicates that creativity, a facet of giftedness, is linked to musical involvement. Han et al. (2022) emphasised the significance of music emotion recognition (MER), a subdiscipline of music cognition that integrates cognitive psychology and natural language processing.<sup>21</sup> The research emphasised the interconnection between musical and linguistic abilities, reinforcing the need for incorporating music into gifted identification frameworks. Yokochi and Okada (2020) discovered that musical activities foster creative and divergent thinking skills, essential for giftedness, hence associating music with cognitive potential.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Mandelman, S. D., Barbot, B., Tan, M., and Grigorenko, E. L. "Addressing the 'Quiet Crisis': Gifted Identification with Aurora." *Educational & Child Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2013.30.2.101>

<sup>17</sup> Siu, A. F. "The Reliability and Validity of a Chinese-Translated Version of the Gifted Rating Scale-Preschool/Kindergarten Form." *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2010, pp. 249-258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282909345832>

<sup>18</sup> Milic, S., and Simeunovic, V. "Concordance between Giftedness Assessments by Teachers, Parents, Peers and the Self-Assessment Using Multiple Intelligences". *High Ability Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13598139.2020.1832445>

<sup>19</sup> Ma, T., Sanchis, I. C., Santana, G. R., and Jiang, Y. "Neuroplasticity Mechanisms in Early Childhood Piano Education: A Literature Review from the Perspective of Educational Neuroscience." *Journal of Sociology and Education*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2025, pp. 167-175.

<sup>20</sup> Liu, A. *Neurons Behind Notes: An Interdisciplinary Exploration Bridging Psychology and Neuroscientific Insights for Music Learning, Performance, and Pedagogy*. University of Washington, 2024

<sup>21</sup> Han, D., Kong, Y., Han, J., and Wang, G. "A Survey of Music Emotion Recognition." *Frontiers of Computer Science*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2022, pp. 165–191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11704-021-0569-4>

<sup>22</sup> Yokochi, S., and Okada, T. "The Process of Art-Making and Creative Expertise: An Analysis of Artists' Process Modification." *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2020, pp. 532–545. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.472>

Despite the promising relationship between music and cognitive development, existing gifted identification systems often fail to recognize musical talent effectively. Current identification models heavily rely on standardized tests, which often prioritize STEM skills while overlooking creative domains such as music, visual arts, and language arts. This narrow focus results in the underrepresentation of students with exceptional abilities in the arts. As Akdemir et al. (2025) pointed out, standardized assessments do not adequately capture the talents of students excelling in creative fields, leading to a skewed identification process that fails to acknowledge the full spectrum of giftedness.<sup>23</sup> The lack of a comprehensive, inclusive identification model is a critical issue, especially for twice-exceptional gifted children with learning disabilities. These students, who may struggle with traditional assessments, are often overlooked due to their atypical performance patterns. Incorporating music into gifted identification could offer a more inclusive and equitable approach, addressing the diverse cognitive profiles of gifted students.<sup>24</sup> Integrating music-based tasks into identification tools could ensure that a broader range of cognitive and creative abilities is recognized, providing a more holistic view of giftedness.

Theories of giftedness that emphasize the diverse nature of talent offer strong support for incorporating music into gifted identification. Renzulli's Three-Ring Model conceptualizes giftedness as the interaction of above-average ability, creativity, and task commitment (Renzulli, 2021), aligns well with the role of music in fostering creativity and task commitment.<sup>25</sup>

Some music tasks such as improvisation and composition require both technical skills and emotional engagement, making them an ideal medium for assessing creative and cognitive potential. In addition, Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) supports the view that music can contribute to both the natural development of giftedness and the systematic development of talent. It shows the importance of environmental and personal factors in nurturing talent, suggesting that music, with its dual emphasis on innate ability and learned skill, provides a robust platform for talent development across diverse domains. The growing body of research on the cognitive benefits of music and its connection to giftedness emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and comprehensive gifted identification process.

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<sup>23</sup> Akdemir-Beveridge, Z. G., Zaghi, A., and Syharat, C. "Understanding and Evaluating Engineering Creativity: Development and Validation of the Engineering Creativity Assessment Tool (ECAT)." arXiv preprint arXiv:2504.12481, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2504.12481>.

<sup>24</sup> Ismail, M. J., Anuar, A. F., and Loo, F. C. "From Physical to Virtual: A New Learning Norm in Music Education for Gifted Students." *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2022, pp. 44–60. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v23i2.5615>

<sup>25</sup> Renzulli, J. S. "The Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness: A Developmental Model for Promoting Creative Productivity." *Reflections on Gifted Education*, pp. 55-90, Routledge, 2021.

It is beneficial incorporating music into gifted screening tools enabling educators to capture a wider range of talents, particularly those in creative domains. This approach not only aligns with existing theories of giftedness but also ensures that diverse cognitive and creative abilities are recognized and nurtured. As the landscape of gifted education continues to evolve, integrating music-based assessments will likely prove critical in identifying and fostering the development of gifted students across multiple domains, including the arts.

### **Methodology**

The study employed a mixed-method design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component involved administering a gifted test embedded with music-related items to assess participants' cognitive and creative abilities. The sample consisted of 414 participants, including 183 males and 233 females, selected from 38 schools across 13 states in urban and rural areas of Malaysia. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents from primary schools who scored between 85 to 100 marks (excellent) in the universal screening test with a focus on students who also demonstrate talents in arts and music. The qualitative component involved non-participant observation and in-depth interviews with 10 participants, including representatives from the Psychology and Counselling Division, schools, and gifted institutions. The combination of structured testing, observational data, and expert insights are intended to allow exploration of how music-based assessments contribute to identifying gifted students within the Malaysian education system.

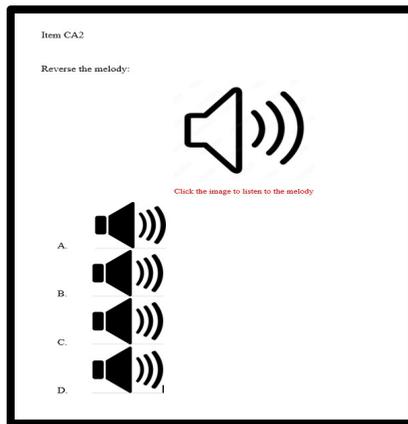
### **Data Collection Gifted Test**

A gifted test was administered over Malaysia (13 states) involving 414 children aged 11 years old. It took two months to finish the test in which we visited 38 schools all over Malaysia to find the eligible respondents to take the test. The data collection process involved administering a gifted test comprising two separate booklets: Booklet 1 and Booklet 2. The total test contained 100 questions, which are distributed across six domains which are intellectual (science and mathematics), creative, social studies, computational thinking, emotional quotient (EQ) and leadership. Two musical items were integrated in each booklet in which the questions were in aural forms. Respondents were asked to identify correct melody by listening to the main melody and at the second part of question respondents needed to listen to music interval and choose the best answers of reverse interval. Total music

INTEGRATING MUSIC ITEMS IN GIFTED SCREENING TEST:  
VALIDATION STRATEGIES IN MALAYSIA

items were 4 coded as CA4, CI3, CI4, and CA2. It means CA4 and CI4 tested the melody awareness while CI3 and CA2 tested the music interval. The test is administered using a computer-based approach in which students need to wear earphones or headphones to listen to the audio. Microsoft Excel is utilized as a platform for data entry and organization. Each respondent is provided with a digital version of Booklet 1 and Booklet 2, and they input their answers directly into the pre-designed Excel sheet as shown in Figure 1.

**Fig 1**



**A Sample of Music Item in Gifted Test**

Questions are primarily in multiple-choice format. Each respondent is provided with instructions on how to complete the test via Excel and submit their responses. They were provided with earphones and headphones to answer the music test. The data collection process including respondent completes both Booklet 1 and Booklet 2, inputting their answers into the Excel file. Researchers approached respondents who facing technological issues in listening to the audio files or if there were format conflicting. After completion, the Excel files were returned to the researchers. Finally, the researchers ensure that the data collection process was consistent across all respondents to minimize variability due to the mode of administration. Upon receiving the Excel files from respondents, the data was verified to ensure that all required fields were completed, and no errors occurred during the data entry process. Any discrepancies were followed up with the respective respondents for clarification or correction. Once the data is collected and verified, they were prepared for analysis using the Rasch model, a psychometric model that allows for scaling responses across the different domains. The data from the Excel sheets was imported into statistical software for performing Rasch analysis across the six domains.

## In-Depth Interview

The interview was conducted with 10 participants who had more than 10 years' experience as teachers, counsellors and officers in the ministry of education involved in gifted education. The interviews were designed as written responses, allowing participants time to reflect and articulate their views in depth. According to Powney and Watts (2018), interviewing is more than a technique in which it is a structured, conversational encounter that requires thoughtful planning, contextual sensitivity, and openness to the perspectives of others.<sup>26</sup> Participants were given time to get ready for responses, fostering a space for consideration and preparation for the interview. The interview questions explored the suitability of music as creative components infused in the gifted test, the importance of integrating music items in the test, and how the integration of musical questions could support a more holistic evaluation of students' potential. Participants were encouraged to respond freely and reflectively, ensuring a diverse range of insights on the value of creativity in gifted education and assessment. The demographic details of participants are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Participant	Gender	Teaching Experience	Position
P1	Male	26-30 years	Academic teacher with gifted teaching experience
P2	Female	16-20 years	Academic teacher with gifted teaching experience
P3	Male	16-20 years	Academic teacher with gifted teaching experience
P4	Male	11-15 years	Counselor
P5	Male	16-20 years	Academic Teacher without gifted teaching experience
P6	Female	11-15 years	Counselor
P7	Female	26-30 years	Ministry of Education Officer
P8	Female	26-30 years	Ministry of Education Officer
P9	Female	16-20 years	Counselor
P10	Male	11-15 years	Academic teacher with gifted teaching experience

### Profile of Participants

<sup>26</sup> Powney, J., and Watts, M. *Interviewing in Educational Research*. Routledge Revivals, 2018.

## Observation

The observation aimed to record students' behaviour and engagement during the gifted test, especially the music section. It was conducted in a computer lab over two-hour sessions with four observers who used a non-participant approach to avoid disrupting the test while noting students' reactions, pacing, and interaction with the materials. Papatheodorou and Luff (2011) emphasized ethical awareness, contextual sensitivity, and the use of unobtrusive methods in conducting observation.<sup>27</sup> Observers assisted at the beginning by clarifying instructions, then circulated the room while documenting behaviours such as signs of engagement, confusion, or fatigue, as well as variations in time taken to complete tasks. As O'Leary (2020) suggests, observation is not merely descriptive but interpretive; thus, observers reflected on the observed behaviours in relation to the complexity of the test items and the individual differences in response.<sup>28</sup>

## Results

The suitability of four music items that were infused into the gifted test was analysed using Rasch model analysis. Table 2 shows Rasch model analysis across different ability levels for four music items namely as CA4, CI3, CI4, and CA2.

**Table 2**

Item	Ability Group	Mean Ability	P-SD	S.E. Mean	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	PTMA Corr.
CA4	Lowest	-1.04	0.34	0.24	0.7	0.7	0.06
CA4	Low	-0.83	0.41	0.06	0.9	0.9	-0.08
CA4	Medium	-0.77	0.45	0.05	1	1	-0.05
CA4	High	-0.76	0.49	0.05	1.1	1.1	-0.05
CA4	Highest	-0.62	0.51	0.05	1	1.1	0.15
CI3	Lowest	-0.97	0.48	0.21	0.9	0.8	-0.06
CI3	Low	-0.83	0.49	0.05	1	1	-0.12
CI3	Medium	-0.75	0.48	0.04	1	1	0.04
CI3	High	-0.67	0.43	0.05	1.1	1.1	0.06
CI3	Highest	-0.6	0.57	0.05	1.1	1.1	0.14
CI4	Lowest	-1.24	0.21	0.21	0.6	0.6	-0.06

<sup>27</sup> Papatheodorou, T., and Luff, P. *Child Observation for Learning and Research*. Pearson Education, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> O'Leary, M. *Classroom Observation: A Guide to the Effective Observation of Teaching and Learning*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2020.

Item	Ability Group	Mean Ability	P.SD	S.E. Mean	Infit MNSQ	Outfit MNSQ	PTMA Corr.
CI4	Low	-1.1	0.39	0.08	0.7	0.7	-0.12
CI4	Medium	-0.84	0.45	0.05	0.9	1	0.04
CI4	High	-0.69	0.5	0.04	1.1	1.1	0.04
CI4	Highest	-0.56	0.51	0.04	1	1	0.23
CA2	Lowest	-1.38	0.28	0.14	0.5	0.5	-0.15
CA2	Low	-0.86	0.44	0.05	0.9	0.9	-0.14
CA2	Medium	-0.82	0.45	0.06	1	1	0.08
CA2	High	-0.76	0.44	0.04	1	1	-0.04
CA2	Highest	-0.56	0.55	0.05	1	1	-0.25

### Rasch Analysis Results

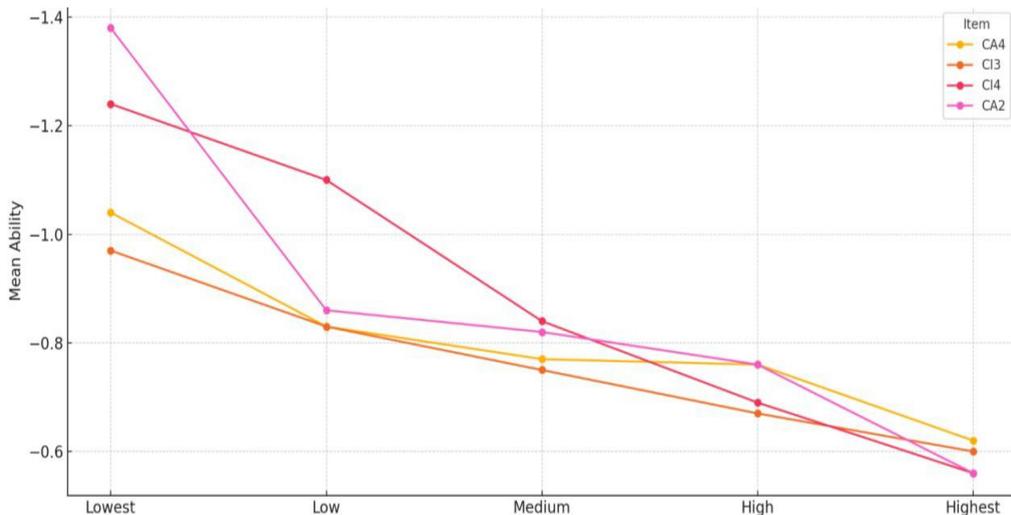
According to Table 2, music item CA2 is the most suitable for a gifted test, while CA4 is the least suitable. CA2 shows the best spread of ability differentiation, and its fit statistics are consistently good, indicating its high quality. The Mean Ability values show how well an item can differentiate between different skill levels. CA2 has the widest range of mean ability values, from -1.38 (Lowest) to -0.56 (Highest). This indicates it effectively measures a broad spectrum of musical aptitude. The significant gap between the Lowest and Highest groups confirms its utility in identifying top-tier talent. CI4 also shows a strong range, from -1.24 to -0.56, making it a good second choice. In contrast, CA4 and CI3 have the narrowest ranges (from -1.04 to -0.62 and -0.97 to -0.60, respectively). This suggests they are less effective at differentiating between test takers, especially those with high ability.

The Infit and Outfit MNSQ values should ideally be close to 1.0, with an acceptable range of 0.5 to 1.5. All four items have excellent fit statistics. Most of their values are very close to 1.0, and none fall outside the acceptable 0.5-1.5 range. This suggests that test-takers' responses were predictable and did not show unusual or random patterns. The lowest values are for CA2 and CI4 in the lowest ability groups (around 0.5-0.6). While still acceptable, this may indicate that for the least skilled test takers, these items were so difficult that their answers were less random than what the model would predict, possibly due to guessing. The PTMA Correlation shows the relationship between a test taker's score on a specific item and their overall ability. A positive value is good. CA4 and CA2 have negative PTMA correlations for low-ability groups, which is a concern. For example, CA2's PTMA for the "Lowest" group is -0.15. This suggests that for this specific group, the item is not functioning as intended. The PTMA values for all items generally become positive for medium to highest ability groups, showing that the items become more effective at differentiating at higher skill levels. CA2 is the "Goldilocks"

INTEGRATING MUSIC ITEMS IN GIFTED SCREENING TEST:  
VALIDATION STRATEGIES IN MALAYSIA

Item: It's difficult enough to challenge the most gifted test takers, but not so hard as to be random for the lowest ability groups. Its ability to differentiate across the full spectrum of talent makes it the most valuable item for a gifted test. CI4 is a great compliment. Given its strong differentiation and fit, CI4 would be an excellent item to pair with CA2. The combination of these two items would provide a robust measure of giftedness. The "Lowest" ability group is an outlier. The data shows a notable disconnect in the "Lowest" ability group for all items, as evidenced by the high standard error, lower fit statistics, and negative correlations. This could be due to a smaller sample size, random guessing, or a fundamental lack of skill in this group, making the item's performance less stable. Because they do not effectively distinguish between different ability levels, CA4 (testing melody awareness) and CI3 (testing music interval) are less efficient for a test specifically designed to identify gifted individuals. However, it doesn't test melody awareness and music interval are improper for this test as the other items showed a potential of testing these skills. The Rasch analysis results is shown in Figure 2.

**Fig. 2**



**Rasch Analysis of Mean Ability by Ability Group**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data from the interview and observation data collection. Interview data was transcript and coded into themes as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

Participant	Verbatim	Coding	Theme
P1	<p>“Music can form students who are more skilled, innovative, creative, and dynamic.”</p> <p>“Creativity items can measure the ability of students’ intelligence to be more holistic and dynamic. They become underachievers if potentials are not uncovered.”</p>	<p>Skill formation, innovation, creativity, dynamic growth</p> <p>Measuring holistic intelligence</p>	<p>Holistic Assessment of Giftedness</p>
P2	<p>“Music element suitable in gifted test as it measures intelligence holistically, beyond STEM.”</p>	<p>Broadening intelligence measurement</p>	
P2	<p>“Evaluates creativity side of gifted individuals, including music and visual art.”</p>	<p>Creativity, multi-domain intelligence</p>	<p>Multi-Domain Talent</p>
	<p>“Identifies all traits of a gifted student.”</p>	<p>Comprehensive gifted traits</p>	<p>Holistic Assessment of Giftedness</p>
	<p>“Integrating creativity through music promotes a holistic assessment of intelligence.”</p>	<p>Holistic intelligence</p>	
P3	<p>“Reflects Malaysia’s diverse culture, aligns with multiple intelligences theory.”</p>	<p>Cultural relevance, multiple intelligences</p>	<p>Cultural &amp; Theoretical Relevance</p>
	<p>“Broadens concept of giftedness to include diverse talents.”</p>	<p>Broader concept of giftedness</p>	<p>Giftedness Definition</p>
P4	<p>Creativity elements from music cultural recognize diverse talents, relevance, and engagement.”</p>	<p>Diverse talents, cultural relevance, engagement</p>	<p>Cultural Relevance &amp; Engagement</p>
	<p>“Finds multi-talented gifted students Measures creativity level.”</p>	<p>Multi-talent identification</p>	<p>Skill Development</p>
P5	<p>“Music helps students explore themselves more and become more creative... Needs to be included as an item.”</p>	<p>Self-exploration, creativity</p>	<p>Creative &amp; Artistic</p>

INTEGRATING MUSIC ITEMS IN GIFTED SCREENING TEST:  
VALIDATION STRATEGIES IN MALAYSIA

Participant	Verbatim	Coding	Theme
P6	“A creativity item can gauge a candidate’s interest in arts.”	Interest measurement	
	“Supports individuals with exceptional creative abilities in a more inclusive approach.”	Inclusion, creativity support	Inclusion & Creative Support
P7	“Makes testing experience more engaging and enjoyable.”	Engagement, enjoyment	Engaging
	“Music elements are important to value students.”	Valuing individual abilities	Value Individual Talents
P8	“Reengineer product, easy to evaluate them.”	Assessment design, simplicity	Focused Assessment
	“Music involves skills like singing, playing instruments, supporting mental growth.”	Skill diversity, mental growth	Holistic Skill Development
	“Boosts creativity in gifted students and helps them express ideas.”	Creativity boost, artistic expression	Creative & Artistic
	“Important for cognitive development.”	Cognitive support	Cognitive
P9	“Allows expression of emotions, language, and culture, giving a well-rounded experience.”	Emotional, linguistic, cultural expression	Emotional & Cultural Expression
	“Music is a field that can nurture giftedness and enables a holistic perspective.”	Giftedness nurturing, holistic perspective	Holistic Giftedness Development
	“Music items allow candidates to connect rationale with divergent solutions creatively.”	Rationale, divergent thinking, creativity	Problem-Solving & Divergent Thinking
P10	“Triggers creativity and rationale domains.”	Creativity and rationale	
	“Music items let candidates think creatively, test artistic abilities, and make the test holistic.”	Creative thinking, artistic ability, holistic test	Creative & Artistic

### Interview Results

Table 3 shows that participants agreed on the importance of including music in the Malaysian Gifted Screening test to provide a fuller picture of the student’s competences. Participants stressed that music promotes creativity, self-expression and the development of artistic and cognitive skills which are often overlooked in conventional assessments. They found that music helps to identify talents that go beyond academic achievements, such as emotional sensitivity, cultural awareness and different perspectives. Several respondents also noted that music reflects Malaysia’s cultural diversity and supports a wider interpretation of the concept of intelligence.

**Fig. 3**



**Observation During the Implementation of Gifted Test**

Observation data was collected and coded into themes as shown in Table 4. Observation was conducted.

**Table 4**

Participant	Verbatim	Coding	Theme
P1	“Music can form students who are more skilled, innovative, creative, and dynamic.”	Skill formation, innovation, creativity, dynamic growth	Holistic Assessment of Giftedness
	“Creativity items can measure the ability of students’ intelligence to be more holistic and dynamic. They become underachievers if potential is not uncovered.”	Measuring holistic intelligence	
P2	“Music element suitable in gifted test as it measures intelligence holistically, beyond STEM.”	Broadening intelligence measurement	Holistic Assessment of Giftedness
	“Evaluates creativity side of gifted individuals, including music and visual art.”	Creativity, multi-domain intelligence	Multi-Domain Talent

INTEGRATING MUSIC ITEMS IN GIFTED SCREENING TEST:  
VALIDATION STRATEGIES IN MALAYSIA

Participant	Verbatim	Coding	Theme
P3	“Identifies all traits of a gifted student.”	Comprehensive gifted traits	Holistic Assessment of Giftedness
	“Integrating creativity through music promotes a holistic assessment of intelligence.”	Holistic intelligence	
	“Reflects Malaysia’s diverse culture, aligns with multiple intelligences theory.”	Cultural relevance, multiple intelligences	
P4	“Broadens concept of giftedness to include diverse talents.”	Broader concept of giftedness	Cultural & Theoretical Relevance Giftedness Definition
	Creativity elements from music cultural recognize diverse talents, relevance, and engagement.”	Diverse talents, cultural relevance, engagement	Cultural Relevance & Engagement
	“Finds multi-talented gifted students Measures creativity level.”	Multi-talent identification	Skill Development
P5	“Music helps students explore themselves more and become more creative...Needs to be included as an item.”	Self-exploration, creativity	Creative & Artistic
	“A creativity item can gauge a candidate’s interest in arts.”	Interest measurement	Inclusion & Creative Support Engaging
P6	“Supports individuals with exceptional creative abilities in a more inclusive approach.”	Inclusion, creativity support	
	“Makes testing experience more engaging and enjoyable.”	Engagement, enjoyment	
P7	“Music elements are important to value students.”	Valuing individual abilities	Value Individual Talents Focused Assessment
	“Reengineer product, easy to evaluate them.”	Assessment design, simplicity	Holistic Skill Development
P8	“Music involves skills like singing, playing instruments, supporting mental growth.”	Skill diversity, mental growth	
	“Boosts creativity in gifted students and helps them express ideas.”	Creativity boost, artistic expression	Creative & Artistic
	“Important for cognitive development.”	Cognitive support	Cognitive

Participant	Verbatim	Coding	Theme
P8	“Allows expression of emotions, language, and culture, giving a well-rounded experience.” “Music is a field that can nurture giftedness and enables a holistic perspective.”	Emotional, linguistic, cultural expression Giftedness nurturing, holistic perspective	Emotional & Cultural Expression Holistic Giftedness Development
P9	“Music items allow candidates to connect rationale with divergent solutions creatively.” “Triggers creativity and rationale domains.”	Rationale, divergent, thinking, creativity Creativity and rationale	Problem-Solving & Divergent Thinking Creative & Artistic
P10	“Music items let candidates think creatively, test artistic abilities, and make the test holistic.”	Creative thinking, artistic ability, holistic test	

## Observation Results

Table 4 indicated participants’ insights into students’ experiences during the implementation of the Malaysian Gifted Screening Test. The testing environment was orderly and conducive to concentration, with students generally maintaining focus and discipline. Teachers played an important role in guiding students, though some students required repeated clarification, especially for music-related items. Many students showed interest and engagement during the creative and music sections, although a number experienced difficulty with unfamiliar music concepts and technical aspects of the computer-based format. Challenges such as software issues, navigation errors, and time constraints were observed, leading to frustration for some students. Despite these obstacles, signs of critical thinking and reflective behaviour emerged, particularly during problem-solving tasks. The varied responses suggest that while the music component sparked interest, technical and instructional limitations need to be addressed to ensure a smoother and more equitable testing experience.

## Discussion

The integration of musical components in the gifted screening test provides opportunities for merging musical aptitude with conventional assessments of giftedness. The findings indicated that students encountered challenges in completing the computer-based test due to restricted access

to digital resources and a lack of experience with software interfaces. These problems highlight a more problem of technological disparity, especially in remote or underfunded institutions where kids may possess limited exposure to digital learning environments. Future incarnations of the test could adopt mobile-friendly or web-based formats, enhancing accessibility beyond desktop platforms. Furthermore, integrating fundamental digital training into current disciplines like computer class may better equip students for technology-enhanced evaluations. Integrating musical elements into the gifted screening test creates new avenues for investigating the potential synergy between musical aptitude and conventional indicators of giftedness. This study revealed that certain students encountered difficulties with the computer-based test due to insufficient access to digital tools and unfamiliarity with software interfaces, underscoring a broader issue of technological inequity in rural or under-resourced schools, where numerous students may lack experience in a digital learning environment.

The Rasch analysis revealed that two items, CA4 (assessing melody awareness) and CI3 (evaluating music intervals), exhibited lower efficiency compared to the other test items. These findings suggest that while the concepts of melody awareness and music interval testing are valuable, the specific content used in items CA4 and CI3 may need further revision to enhance their effectiveness. This recommendation is supported by the performance of similar items, CI4 and CA2, which assess the same musical domains of melody awareness and interval recognition. These items demonstrated better efficacy, indicating that the underlying constructs are appropriate for inclusion in the screening test. Therefore, it is plausible that with adjustments to the content of items CA4 and CI3 particularly focusing on the keys associated with melody and intervals, the revised items could show improved potential for accurately assessing the intended musical skills. Such revisions may enhance the overall validity and reliability of the gifted screening test, ensuring it better captures the musical abilities of the participants as recommended by Heil (2024).<sup>29</sup>

Observations indicated that students demonstrated better comfort with items that utilized visual or theoretical elements rather than aural playback. This shows that individuals with minimal training in aural skills perform well in tasks associated with visual or notation-based music. The findings correspond with the Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983), which asserts that individuals have varied cognitive abilities, including musical intelligence, yet may not cultivate all facets of that intelligence

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<sup>29</sup> Heil, S. "Universal Screening for Gifted Education in the Arts." National Association for Gifted Children, 2024. <https://www.nagc.org/news/universal-screening-for-gifted-education-in-the-arts>

uniformly.<sup>30</sup> Students can show an awareness of music in both visual and theoretical aspects; however, they might face challenges in processing aural information without formal training. This highlights the importance of developing music evaluation tools that integrate diverse modalities through which students engage with and respond to musical information. The study suggests converting aural items into written or visual forms, allowing students to imagine the sounds, relate them to their experiences, and select the most appropriate answer based on their reasoning skills. Written items appear to be more practical than aural ones, as they simplify testing procedures, particularly in rural areas where access to audio resources may be limited.

Enhancing music assessment is essential for the precise identification of cognitive abilities and creative traits in gifted students. The existing testing framework, although effective in assessing general musical awareness, may inadequately evaluate students with specific or technical musical skills, including improvisation, harmonic analysis, or rhythmic precision. Research indicates that musical aptitude is evident in melodic identification, harmonic assessment, rhythmic accuracy, and improvisation. Future iterations of the test may integrate sophisticated technical elements, including intricate rhythmic exercises, sight-reading challenges, and improvisational prompts, to differentiate students with authentic musical aptitude from those possessing merely a fundamental grasp of music theory. The integration of musical components in gifted evaluations broadens the criteria for recognising giftedness beyond conventional cognitive measures.

Evaluations focused on music would measure musical intelligence in connection with creativity, problem-solving, and divergent thinking characteristics often overlooked in traditional gifted assessment methods. The integration of music in evaluations illustrates a thorough method for identifying giftedness, affirming the arts and humanities as valid domains of exceptional talent in conjunction with traditional STEM assessments. The findings demonstrate an increasing consensus in gifted education that intellectual ability alone is insufficient for defining giftedness, highlighting the importance of incorporating creative and artistic intelligence.

The preparedness of students and their understanding of music education significantly influenced performance outcomes; numerous students encountered unfamiliar musical terminology and concepts, resulting in an inequitable scenario for those without formal training in notation or rhythm. This concern aligns with the findings of Farias et al. (2023), which advocate for assessment tools that account for cognitive variability and diverse

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<sup>30</sup> Gardner, H. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Basic Books, 1983.

learning experiences.<sup>31</sup> The implementation of pre-assessment sessions is recommended to ensure participants are familiar with fundamental musical concepts prior to the evaluation. Incorporating pre-assessment sessions into the evaluation process is recommended to familiarize participants with essential musical concepts before the actual assessment, thereby improving fairness. The findings demonstrate that some individuals, despite lacking formal music training, displayed an inherent comprehension of musical concepts. This observation is noteworthy, as it implies that cognitive attributes like pattern identification, auditory memory, and inherent musicality may develop autonomously from conventional education, corroborating findings from Cetinkaya (2023) regarding creativity and intelligence in gifted individuals.<sup>32</sup> These findings highlight the necessity of providing ongoing musical training opportunities to children with inherent musical skill, facilitating the cultivation and enhancement of their abilities throughout time.

Traditional assessments frequently overlook critical elements such as cognitive reasoning and analytical skills. In contrast, music-focused evaluation tools can identify attributes like creativity, originality, and curiosity, which are areas where many children excel. Integrating a musical element into assessments of giftedness may enhance the identification of gifted children who have been missed by tests that exclusively measure cognitive or analytical skills. This method aligns with theories of artistic talent that highlight the complex nature of giftedness, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and artistic dimensions. Music is connected to culture, ethnomusicology, and history, fostering a profound comprehension and appreciation of heritage through interdisciplinary investigation. Engagement with diverse musical traditions significantly enhances students' understanding of their cultural heritage and broadens their global perspective.<sup>33</sup> Future iterations of the test may integrate elements of soundscape analysis, ethnomusicology, and historical musicology.

This study also illustrates that music-based assessments can reveal cognitive and creative abilities that conventional academic evaluations may overlook, thus advancing the field. It is found that music-based assessments can uncover creative and cognitive abilities that traditional academic tests

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<sup>31</sup> Farias, E. S., Nakano, T. C., and Wechsler, S. M. "Identification by Teachers of Intellectual Gifted Students: Construction of an Instrument and Evidence of Content Validity." *Ciencias Psicológicas*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2023, e-2581. <https://doi.org/10.22235/cp.v17i1.2581>

<sup>32</sup> Cetinkaya, C. "The Relationship between Intelligence and Creativity within the Threshold Theory among Gifted and Bright Students in Turkey." *SAGE Open*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2023, pp. 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231206612>

<sup>33</sup> Miendlarzewska, E. A., and Trost, W. J. "How Musical Training Affects Cognitive Development: Rhythm, Reward and Other Modulating Variables." *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, vol. 14, 2014, 1037. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2020.01037>

may fail to identify. The results show that music functions as both an academic field and a means of assessing gifted potential, merging cognitive science, the humanities, and talent identification. Gardner (1983) posits that musical intelligence is associated with emotional sensitivity, abstract reasoning, and pattern recognition, suggesting capabilities that extend beyond mere musical performance and encompass a wider range of cognitive functions.<sup>34</sup> The capacity of certain students to identify melodic and rhythmic patterns without formal instruction indicates an inherent cognitive process that supports the organic growth of musical intelligence in specific individuals. This supports the claim that the gifted screening test should continue to explore non-traditional assessment methods, particularly those that challenge traditional notions of intelligence and talent.

The integration of musical components into the assessment broadens the scope of gifted evaluation, allowing for a more thorough identification of exceptional learners. Traditional testing methods often fail to recognise other important types of intelligence, including artistic ability.<sup>34</sup> The integration of music into the assessment model incorporates elements related to musical and creative intelligence, consistent with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence (1983), which recognizes these domains as legitimate facets of human potential, thus adhering to international standards in gifted identification. Addressing challenges associated with technological access and digital literacy may involve schools adopting web-based assessment platforms, improving technology-focused subjects such as computer class by incorporating digital music tools, utilizing visual aids, interactive design, and scaffolding techniques to enhance student engagement, and broadening the curriculum through interdisciplinary approaches that include soundscape studies, ethnomusicology, and music psychology. Incorporating soundscape studies, ethnomusicology, and music psychology enhances the interdisciplinary nature of the content, promoting cognitive and creative engagement in accordance with Beghetto and Kaufman's (2014) framework for fostering creativity in educational settings.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

This study presents a new method for identifying gifted children through the integration of musical items into the gifted screening test. The inclusion of music-oriented questions, extending beyond conventional assessments focused on logical reasoning and academic achievement, facilitated the identification

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<sup>34</sup> Gardner, H. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Basic Books, 1983.

<sup>35</sup> Beghetto, R. A., and Kaufman, J. C. "Classroom Contexts for Creativity." *Educational Psychology Review*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2014, pp. 665-687. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13598139.2014.905247>

of students possessing creative thinking, musical sensitivity, and artistic expression skills might be neglected in traditional evaluations. The findings indicated that musicals could be good items in forming a comprehensive screening test in identifying gifted individuals including those who may not excel in STEM fields. Interviews and observations data validated the suitability of music in broadening the criteria for identifying gifted individuals. On the other hand, challenges including restricted music exposure, technological limitations, and differing levels of digital proficiency highlighted the necessity for improved item design, preparation of procedures, and accessible assessment platforms.

Integrating music into the evaluation process for gifted pupils corresponds with a more comprehensive method of identifying exceptional learners. This is achieved by acknowledging that there exists a spectrum of potential in our students, whereby talent identification tools are essential not just in assessing information acquisition but also in recognizing creative thinking, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness. Music-based assessments can enhance this paradigm by equipping educators to evaluate musical aptitude more precisely and by integrating music into talent-identification strategies, necessitating further research to ascertain how these methods support the long-term development of gifted learners.

### **Acknowledgment**

Authors acknowledge the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) for funding under the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme – Early Career (FRGS-EC) (FRGS-EC/1/2024/SSI07/UITM/02/6) and Universiti Teknologi MARA UiTM (600-RMC/FRGS-EC 5/3 (010/2024)). The authors would like to thank the collaborator, which is *Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia* especially Azizi, Suhaimi, Aisyah, Izzati, and Maheran. The AI particularly ChatGPT and Quillboat were used to proofread and improve the language. There is no conflict of interest as a result of this study.

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INTEGRATING MUSIC ITEMS IN GIFTED SCREENING TEST:  
VALIDATION STRATEGIES IN MALAYSIA

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## BREAKING BARRIERS IN MUSIC: DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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**SUMMARY.** This paper focuses on issues that have to do with the inclusion of students with Special Education Needs (SEN) in higher music education institutions (HMEIs). It addresses an examination of fundamental conceptual delimitations and shares information about the objectives, Work Packages from the *IncluMusic* European Project. In addition, it also presents the experiences, viewpoints and recommendations of three focus group interviews with a selected group of professionals from Cyprus and Romania, who have rich experience in teaching music and other subjects in all levels of education, from primary school to university.

**Keywords:** Inclusion, SEN (special education needs), higher education, support strategies, Design Principles

### Introduction

Everyone agrees that music education should be available for all children, at least in compulsory education. The motto for NafME's Strategic Plan 2022 is "Equity in music education" and one of the core values of ISME is "Formal and informal music education programs should serve the individual needs of all learners, including those with special needs and exceptional competencies."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, when it comes to furthering one's skills and knowledge in higher music education institutions, there is usually a different approach. One of the mainstream beliefs and misconceptions in the area of

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<sup>3</sup> International Society for Music Education. About ISME. <https://www.isme.org/about> (accessed 14.09.2025).



music, at least in such countries like Cyprus, is that only the talented few will be able to be accepted to study music in higher education and have a successful career in the field. This belief is, in one way, justified by the numerous examples of extraordinary composers and performers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Shostakovich, Theodorakis, Enescu, to say a few, who exhibit an abundance of musical talent throughout their lives. Moreover, it is also supported by the numerous examples of young children and youth around the world who can play a musical instrument at an extraordinarily high level from a very young age. There is an abundance of such examples from music competitions and concert series worldwide, as well as through YouTube. Moreover, many of us have experienced such reactions during our teenage years as „you are not talented enough to make it in the music world,” or „practicing only 2-3 hours a day is not enough to be accepted as a music student.” Finally, in case of students with special educational needs (SEN) or any physical disabilities, the prevailing reaction is usually that there is no place for them in higher education in music.

Such a reaction is not only unfair and undemocratic but also unsubstantiated and deceiving. Thankfully, there are various examples of extraordinary musicians with special educational needs (SEN) or any physical disabilities who have had amazing careers in music. One can name individuals such as percussionist Evelyn Glennie, singer/songwriter/pianist Stevie Wonder, violinist Isaac Perlman, as well as drummer Rick Allen, guitarist/songwriter Jose Feliciano, singers Ray Charles and Andrea Bocelli, guitarist Django Reinhardt and saxophonists Neill Duncan, Roland Kirk and David Nabb. Nevertheless, what happens with those aspiring musicians who are not of such high caliber? Should the right to study music in higher education and/or to aspire to be involved with music professionally be reserved only for those few individuals who are extremely talented and who are “guaranteed” to be successful? What happens with those of us who are not such musical geniuses? After all, does somebody who is an “average” student and musician, have the right to study music in higher education? And if (s)he manages to enter in the music program of an “average” university of music academy, does this mean that (s)he will be an “average” musician/music educator/composer/musicologist/conductor in the future? What are, after all, the prerequisites of success for a future career within the various diverse fields of music? And is our goal, as music teachers in higher education, to “safeguard” the music field from those “average,” SEN and/or disabled students who are probably not going to be exceptional performers and winners of national or international music competitions? Or maybe our role as music educators should be to support and encourage each and every one of our students to become the best musicians they can be and meet their needs and expectations at the highest level?

## Conceptual delimitations

Before we engage in an attempt to answer the above questions, we should have a better understanding of the different terms used in our discussion. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, persons with disabilities are defined as „those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.<sup>4</sup> In this definition a clear distinction is made between the term disability and impairment. Having an impairment does not necessarily mean that one is disabled and in a clear disadvantage with others who are not impaired. In an ideal world there should be equal access to opportunities in education, in the arts, in sports, in professional and everyday activities etc. for all, impaired or unimpaired. Unfortunately, this is not the case in many countries, societies and cases and, therefore, impaired people usually have much less opportunities, or have to fight much more than others, in order to be able to study at a university, to perform at a band, to participate in sports, or to find a decent and/or well-paying job. This is not their fault, and it is not due to their impairment. It is because society regards their impairment as a major disadvantage and does not take the extra measures to support them. Thus, their impairment becomes a disability.

According to the European Commission (2013) there is not a shared, agreed-upon definition in European countries as to what we mean with special education needs (SEN).<sup>5</sup> This is partly because of the different educational and cultural context in each country, but also because of the distinction between normative and non-normative difficulties that one experiences. Normative difficulties are obvious and distinct physical and sensory difficulties for which there is an objective agreement about the clear assessment measures that need to be taken. On the other hand, non-normative difficulties are a wide range of difficulties that require professional assessment and for which there is less agreement in regard to diverse measures that need to be taken. Such examples of non-normative difficulties are emotional difficulties, dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and others, which are becoming more and more common to children in many countries.

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<sup>4</sup> European Commission. (2013). Persons with disabilities. [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability/persons-disabilities\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability/persons-disabilities_en) (accessed 15.09.2025).

<sup>5</sup> European Commission. (2013). Support for children with special educational needs (SEN). Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. European Commission. (2013). Support for children with special educational needs (SEN). Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (accessed 14.09.2025).

As defined by the *Dictionary of Pedagogy*, school inclusion is "a set of multidimensional measures and actions carried out in the field of education, with a focus on including all children and young people in the educational system, in line with the goal of school for all and the paradigm of education for all and for each person."<sup>6</sup> These measures aim to enhance the potential of each individual, regardless of their individual particularities, and to ensure equal opportunities and access to quality education.

In regards to inclusion, UNESCO states that in order for an educational system to be inclusive it should identify and remove any barriers regarding curricula to pedagogy and teaching that hinder or exclude people because of their... "gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or social origin, language, religion, nationality, economic condition or ability."<sup>7</sup> As the European Pillar of Social Rights states that „everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labor market."<sup>8</sup> Adapting this statement for music we can, thus, support that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive music education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire musical skills and knowledge that enable them to participate fully in diverse musical contexts and situations and manage successfully transitions in the music market.

### ***IncluMusic* European project**

*IncluMusic - Increasing skills for building more inclusive conservatoires* is a project which expresses ideas for solving problems faced by higher music education, regarding the enrollment of students with special educational needs (SEN). The partners involved in the project are specialists in the field of music and educational sciences, as follows: ANMGD-*Gheorghe Dima* National Academy of Music (coordinator, Cluj-Napoca, Romania), RIAM-Royal Irish Academy of Music (Dublin, Ireland), EUC-European University Cyprus (Nicosia, Cyprus), LUMSA University (Rome, Italy), CONSPA-State Music Conservatory 'Alessandro Scarlatti' (Palermo, Italy), AEC-Association Européenne des Conservatoires (Belgium), and Resolvo (Florence, Italy). The project runs for 3 years (36 months), from November 2022 to October 2025.

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<sup>6</sup> Bocoș, Mușata (coord.). *Dicționar de pedagogie (Dictionary of Pedagogy)*. Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2021, p. 752.

<sup>7</sup> Unesco. (2013). Inclusion in education. <https://www.unesco.org/en/inclusion-education> (accessed 14.09.2025).

<sup>8</sup> European Commission. (2013). Support for children with special educational needs (SEN). Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (accessed 14.09.2025).

The main goal of the project is to help students with special educational needs to adapt better in the university music environment. Depending on the type of need, Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs) should find effective solutions that cover both appropriate learning strategies and the materials and resources needed in the field of music.

The project has a very important motivation, which relates to the lack of support in the practice of inclusive policies for adapting curricula, training teachers, providing specialized support services, and educational assistance for students with SEN in higher music education institutions (HMEIs) in most EU countries.

The objectives of the project, formulated based on some realities identified in the university music system, focus on the following directions:

- Increasing the number of students with sensorial or cognitive disabilities enrolling in HMEIs;
- Reinforcing the competencies of HMEI teachers and HMEI administrative staff in the field of Special Education;
- Creating a new professional role – that of the Academic tutor – aimed at monitoring on social inclusion practices within HMEIs and on the training process of HMEI teachers;
- Preparing the Academic tutor with the role of intermediation between students with disabilities and the Academic staff;
- Reinforcing the skills of Academic staff to help them work for inclusion together with the Academic tutor for Inclusive Music Teaching;
- Defining new approaches for training HMEIs students with SEN;
- Creating a community of HMEIs adopting social inclusion practices.

### **Working packages**

The project was based on five work packages, with one of the partners responsible for each package. The project was based on five work packages, with one of the partners responsible for each package. The first package refers to project management and is led by ANMGD, as coordinator, and ValueDo (initially) / Resolvo, throughout the entire implementation process. ANMGD is responsible for organizing the activities and tasks proposed by the project, while Resolvo is the agency that monitors progress, quality of activities, and project achievements.

Work package no. 2 focused on defining and configuring in detail a set of design principles and a curriculum for the training course for teachers, tutors, and administrative staff at European level, with the aim of building an inclusive higher education system. This design was configured based on an analysis of the state of the arts of inclusion in HMEIs in Europe.

The third stage of the project, work package no. 3, had as its main results the concrete creation of the training course for the three interested groups from institutions, teachers, tutors, and administrative staff, the delivery of course materials (such power point presentation resources, videos, external resources, scientific papers, various exercises), assessment methods in the shape of quizzes for the staff members involved in the training activities, and the internal piloting of the course, provided by each of the partner institutions.

Work package no. 4, external testing and delivery of support tools, provides as outputs the courses for teachers and administrative staff and the training manuals related to the courses, which explain the pedagogical methodology of each session and other useful information about the delivery of the training course.

The last work package refers to the dissemination of project results and the exploitation of all possibilities for maximizing the project's value, such as presenting project ideas at international conferences and other events, on various social media channels, and posting regularly on partners' websites about the stages of the project. The main goal is to create a community of HMEIs adopting social inclusion practices to make them inclusive environments for learning.

The general expected results of the project include two online e-learning courses, handbook/training manual and website. Partners involved in the project will develop two e-learning courses (one for HMEI teachers and one for administrative staff/tutors), aimed at improving the learner's skills and break down the barriers that limit the access to HMEIs to people with SEN. Training materials will be freely and openly available on an e-learning platform in English and partners' languages. The partners will also create a community of practices around the project topic.

## **Design Principles**

Based on a well-documented analysis of the current situation in Europe regarding the existence of a system that facilitates the integration of students with special needs into music universities, the project team established a set of fundamental principles. The process started from the methodology known as 'From the basket to the pyramid', which allows the transition from the generation of several ideas, placed in an electronic basket, to their classification in a hierarchical pyramid, summarizing the most important ideas, which are presented below (Table 1).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cinque, Maria; Bălan-Budoiu, Oana; Zagrean, Ioana. "IncluMusic - new skills for inclusive higher music education institutions". In *Review of Artistic Education* vol. 27, 2024, pp.105-110, DOI: 10.35218/rae-2024-0012, [https://rae.arts.ro/filecase/filetypes/documents/archive/rae27/rae\\_2024\\_0012.pdf](https://rae.arts.ro/filecase/filetypes/documents/archive/rae27/rae_2024_0012.pdf) (accessed 09.07.2025)

**Table 1**

<b>Fundamentals</b>
- General educational philosophy
<b>General Principles</b>
- Empathy
- Flexibility and creativity
- Inclusion of student voice
<b>Methodological Principles</b>
- Theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and training
- Creative approach
- Customized teaching strategies
- Inclusive evaluation approaches
<b>Specific Principles</b>
- Dedicated staff
- Technology
- Designing appropriate assessment for BES
- Adapting learning and teaching environments

**Hierarchical pyramid of design principles**

### **Research methodology**

The main objective of this descriptive study is to crystallize a set of design principles for developing an effective curriculum for training teachers and administrative staff in HMEIs.

The secondary objective of the research is to create an international academic community in the field of music, which ensures participation in future activities of the IncluMusic project and also for external testing of the training course platform.

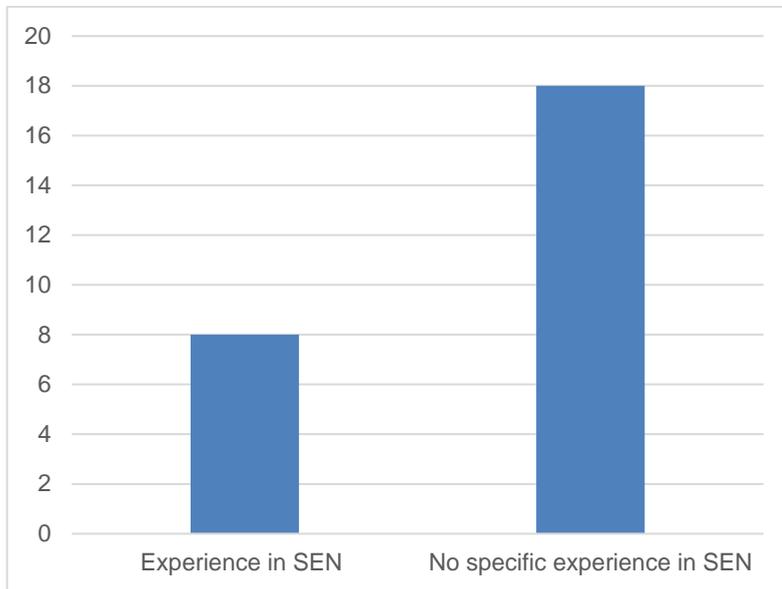
As a research tool, this paper is based on an international focus group with teachers from Cyprus and Romania, involved in educational institutions, from primary school to university.

### **Focus group in Cyprus and Romania**

The people who participated in the focus group in Cyprus and Romania are teachers with experience in general education, but who have encountered inclusive contexts, as well as people who work in schools with

students with different types of special needs (deaf, blind, autism, ADHD) or collaborate with various relevant associations. There were 26 participants in total, including 8 men and 18 women, and in terms of teaching experience in institutions with students with special needs, there are several people who have no training in this area, as can be seen in the figure below (E.g. 1). The aim of the IncluMusic project is precisely this: to familiarize teachers with specific learning situations in the field of music and to create a guide for music universities, that will enable those involved in education, including students, teachers, and administrative staff, to receive and give superior training.

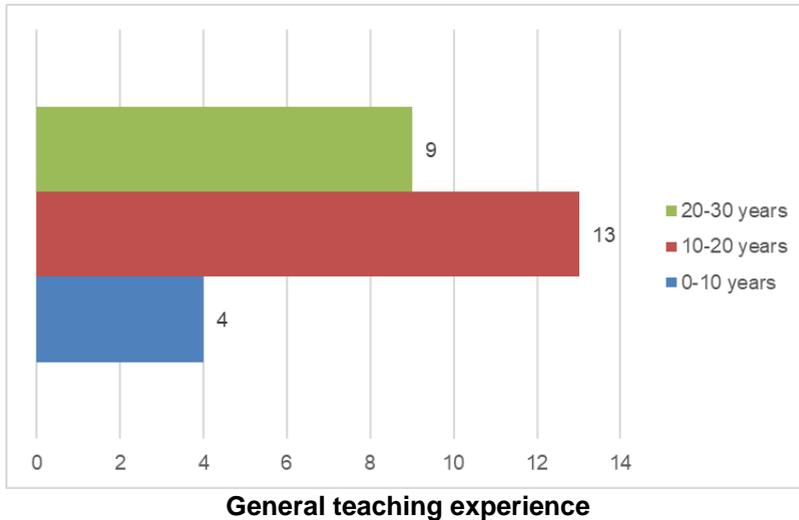
**E.g. 1**



**Teacher's experience in SEN**

Most of the participants have extensive experience in teaching, with a small proportion having been teachers for less than 10 years. The detailed situation regarding general teaching experience in the field of music can be seen in the following image (E.g. 2).

E.g. 2



The Focus Group is organized into three parts, as follows:

1. *Introductory phase*: project presentation and collection of participants' socio-demographic information, teaching experience in SEN.
2. *Core phase*: work on Design Principles (DP= through specific questions, the votes assigned by each participant before the focus group and through the three metaphors (mirror, microscope and binocular) to be presented during the focus group.
3. *Closing phase*: thanking the participants and proposing future collaboration in IncluMusic project.

The most important part of the focus group meeting was the second one, in which participants analyzed the design principles proposed by IncluMusic and then added ideas or suggestions for completing and improving them.

### **Metaphors as a guide in analyzing design principles**

The facilitator explains to the participants that they will be guided in the group reflection, in order to validate the list, through three metaphors. Each one offers a progressive perspective for analyzing design principles and ensures consistency in understanding the educational contexts where they will be applied. Below, we present each metaphor in more detail:

- *the mirror metaphor*: the focus is on one's own personal teaching experiences with students with SEN; participants think of an experience related to inclusion in the field of music in higher education (but not

only) in which they participated (directly or indirectly) and which they consider to have worked very well, with the task of noting the fundamental aspects, in terms of design principles, that contributed to the success of that project; then check whether the aspects mentioned are included in the list proposed by the project;

- *the microscope metaphor*: will ask participants to look at things closely, in depth; analyzing each element separately, how could it be improved?
- *the binocular metaphor*: Attention now turns to the future of inclusion and inclusive education in higher music education institutions; participants will analyze which design principles are essential for the effective functioning of education involving students with SEN.

## Results

Overall, participants commented positively on the proposed definition of Design Principles. Specifically, most participants indicated that the definition is comprehensive and encompassing. It was, nevertheless, suggested that additional clear information should also be given on how students with SEN can be invited to work in groups with other students. Another participant highlighted the importance of providing a strong foundation for assisting students with SEN in their future musical involvement and employment. Finally, it was also pointed out that a few students with non-normative difficulties often go undetected during their compulsory years in school or may be unaware of their specific special condition until their early adulthood stage.

Some of the other comments made regarding the Design Principles are that it might be useful to produce two different leaflets, one for academics and educators and another for the general public. The two different versions, it is proposed, can share similar information but will be presented in a different manner and language to be more applicable and useful to the different groups. Both leaflets will address definitions, typologies, different conditions of SEN and the importance of early diagnosis and specialized assistance, to receive the most appropriate support to overcome the educational obstacles that students face.

Regarding the mirror metaphor, participants focused especially on the importance of the experience lived through the body and without necessarily being confined in a school classroom, but, instead, enabling students to connect with their classmates in smaller and more personal group circles and through movement, rhythm, chanting and singing. They also indicated that educators should be aware that each student case is different and requires an individualized and specialized approach from a team of professionals. Most of the participants pointed out that they have not received any relevant training during their studies and, thus, they emphasized the importance of sharing

experiences and successful approaches, pursuing in-service training and encouraging collaboration with specialists.

Regarding the microscope metaphor participants emphasized the need to adapt course curricula, requirements, evaluation and teaching approaches to the individual conditions and needs of our students. Many shared experiences with students with normative difficulties such as deafness and blindness and described how talented these students were, how much they loved music and how they managed to graduate and successfully continued to be involved with music. They also indicated that in their students' educational path the use of appropriate assistive technologies and/or a support worker or scribe was of crucial importance in their success. The need for and diversity of technologies is increasingly highlighted in the context of inclusive education, and studies mention that there is a wide variety of applications and programs used to provide important and valuable resources to people with special educational needs, disabilities, or neurodiversity.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the importance of appropriate legislation and knowledge of one's rights regarding inclusive education is of primary importance.

Finally, in regard to the binocular metaphor participants stated the importance of continuous research and advancement in the area of assistive technologies, while, at the same time, pointing out the importance of human support from classmates and teachers, of empathy, understanding and collaboration with others. It was recommended that some university courses can be redesigned as laboratories in which older and more experienced students assist and guide younger and novice students in the program with their assignments and skill development. This can be part of their overall music practicum/internship, or as preparation for a community outreach project in the schools and the community. It was also suggested that administrators, educators and institutions should showcase and promote more clearly the examples of renowned musicians with SEN such as the ones mentioned in the beginning of this article. Through their life experiences they will serve as role models for future generations of musicians and as exemplary examples of human perseverance and determination.

Overall, participants emphasized the importance of cultivating an inclusive and supportive culture in the institution/organization. They also indicated the need to restructure and modernize the curriculum of the typical bachelor's in music, by including specialized courses that offer the necessary

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<sup>10</sup> Mladin, Paula; Pascu, Cristina; Bailey Fallen, Kim; Harris, Jessica; Lawrence, Andrea. "IncluMusic Course: An E-learning Platform for Building More Inclusive Conservatories". In ICTMF, Vol. XVI, No. 1/2025, pp. 17-32, DOI 10.47809/ICTMF, [https://tic.ediuramediamusica.ro/reviste/2025/1/ICTMF\\_ISSN\\_2067-9408\\_2025\\_vol\\_15\\_issue\\_1\\_pg\\_no\\_017-032%20-%20MLADIN-PASCU-BAULEY-HARRIS.pdf](https://tic.ediuramediamusica.ro/reviste/2025/1/ICTMF_ISSN_2067-9408_2025_vol_15_issue_1_pg_no_017-032%20-%20MLADIN-PASCU-BAULEY-HARRIS.pdf) (accessed 12.09.2025).

training to future music teachers and musicians in order to prepare them to work with people with SEN. Another recommendation is to incorporate opportunities for collaboration between abled and disabled people, as well as between teachers in special education and music students.

## Discussions

The analysis of the results revealed that institutions and professionals in the two countries are taking active measures to support students with normative and non-normative difficulties in entering their respective higher education music institutions and pursuing a career in the music field. As indicated above in the introduction, the music field is widely diverse, and it can accommodate the talents, strengths, and interests of a wide range of students. Pursuing a career in music should not be limited only to the talented few who are extraordinary performers. As Christopher Small stated, "There are many kinds of excellence, and the individual technical dexterity that we prize so much is only one of them."<sup>11</sup>

Our role as music educators should be to support and encourage each of our students to become the best musicians they can be and meet their needs and expectations at the highest level. Within the field of music there is a need for great performers, composers, arrangers, musicologists and ethnomusicologists, songwriters, improvisers, conductors, sound engineers, music administrators, music educators, as well as people in the fields of music medicine and music technology. All these professional and amateur musicians can express themselves through music, leave their imprint and make an impact in the lives of others. Using Small's (2001) position about musical excellence, each of those individuals should strive to achieve the best that they can with what they have at any given point of time. Specifically, he supported that "My own formula for excellence is to do the best you can with what you have. It is by doing the best you can with what you have that you are empowered to explore, affirm and celebrate those relationships you value, and to say, to yourself and to anyone who may be paying attention, *this is who we are.*"<sup>12</sup>

In music, unlike the field of sports, there are no winners or losers. A community music ensemble comprising of amateur musicians can have an equally important (and sometimes even greater) impact in the lives of people than an amazing soloist. There is space for everyone to learn and participate

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<sup>11</sup> Small, Christopher. Acts of musicking. Lecture for Taonga. In Drummond, John & Sell, David (Eds), Taonga of the Asia Pacific Rim - proceedings of the NZSME & ISME conference 2001. NZSME. (2002), p.11.

<sup>12</sup> Idem.

in music making, to become engaged, to be inspired and, hopefully, transform the lives of others through music. Music should not exclude people but unite people of all abilities, races and cultures.

As a conclusion we would like to share the real story of one of our ex-students. As a prospective music student, Vasilis auditioned for the music program at EUC. He was provisionally accepted since he could not read notation for drums, he did not have adequate training as a drummer and his GPA in high school was average. Nevertheless, we could see in his eyes that he had a passion for music and was excited to study at the university. He was informed that we will need to reaudition to enter officially in the program. During his first semester in the program Vasilis worked hard and continued doing so until the end of his studies. He graduated with a high GPA and performed one of the best final student recitals. He was later instrumental in establishing a trio with which he recorded two CDs with their own compositions. Since then, he has been performing extensively as a drummer and percussionist, establishing his own teaching studio and becoming one of the leading players of the hand pan. He is also involved in the reconstruction of the hand pan to allow it to perform melodies based on eastern/non-diatonic modes. Finally, he realized that he has SEN, which justifies the difficulties he faced in reading and writing and why he felt so bored and isolated in compulsory education. Because of his acceptance in the music program at EUC, Vasilis is now a happy professional musician who inspires others to pursue their passion for music. He is a clear example of perseverance and determination to succeed. His career path also illustrates the importance of providing the necessary support and assistance to students with SEN in higher music education.

## **Conclusions**

This study highlights the need to further support the inclusion of people with special educational needs in the higher education music institutions and the importance of ensuring their access to education in all levels and fields of activity, including music.

Their inclusion in higher education music institutions must be based on certain guidelines that facilitate their accommodation in the music education system by adapting teaching, learning, and assessment strategies to the needs of students. These strategies can be based on the design principles developed through the IncluMusic project, which are based on a rigorous analysis of existing special education systems and take into consideration the experiences of teachers in general education.

Data was obtained through two focus groups in Cyprus and Romania, as a result of analyzing musical educational contexts from the perspective of

the three types of metaphors, reinforce the idea of including students with special educational needs in higher music education institutions, but participants also mentioned other important ideas. Among these are the existence of clear specifications regarding possible collaborations between students with SEN and other groups of students, the lack of awareness among students with non-normative difficulties, who are not always aware of their specific condition until early adulthood, which makes it difficult for them to adapt to school requirements, as well as special conditions for admission to universities and additional assistance offered by HMEIs in finding a job after graduation for students with SEN.

In line with the objectives set out in the IncluMusic project, along with the development of a training manual for teachers and administrative staff and an educational platform containing various useful materials, we demonstrate that we care and want to break down barriers in higher music education to find optimal educational solutions for all students.

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## TRANSFERABILITY IN MUSIC EDUCATION: FROM PRACTICE ROUTINES TO PERFORMANCE-BASED LEARNING AND EVALUATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES

ANCA SIMION<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** This article explores the concept of transferability in education with a focus on the practices of music education and their application across broader learning contexts. Drawing on theories of transfer and pedagogical frameworks, it examines how strategies such as disciplined practice routines, real-time feedback, performance-based evaluation, collaborative ensemble learning, and emotional engagement can enrich general educational settings. By analyzing how music-specific methods foster motivation, resilience, and deeper understanding, the article argues for their adaptability to non-music disciplines, enhancing both academic achievement and personal development. The discussion highlights the potential of music education to serve as a model for effective teaching practices that bridge knowledge, creativity, and real-world application. The article explores the social and emotional dimensions of transferability, highlighting how collaborative music-making encourages empathy, communication, and teamwork, which are essential competencies in any learning or professional context. It argues that by intentionally leveraging these experiences, educators can create more holistic learning experiences that connect individual skill development with collective achievement. Ultimately, the article positions music education not merely as a subject-specific endeavor but as a pedagogical paradigm with far-reaching implications for designing interdisciplinary curricula that nurture both cognitive and socio-emotional growth.

**Keywords:** music education, transfer of learning, performance-based learning, pedagogical strategies

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## Introduction: Theoretical foundations and practical implications

Music education offers an engaging framework for investigating the topic of transfer in learning. Students learn a multitude of abilities beyond music itself via activities such as instrumental practice, group cooperation, improvisation, and performance preparation, including discipline, pattern identification, critical listening, and problem-solving. These encounters provide numerous chances to study how information and skills acquired in one domain may be transformed and utilized in other situations, demonstrating the broader educational value of transfer. By studying music education, we may gain a greater understanding of how disciplined practice, reflection, and artistic participation contribute to the development of transferable abilities required for lifetime learning.

The idea of transferability in educational contexts relates to the transfer of unique professional practices from one environment to another<sup>2</sup>.

*Can a fourth-grader utilise their measuring skills to calculate how much wrapping paper is required to cover a present of particular dimensions? Can a second-grader use what they've learned about shapes to recognise and classify distinct geometric figures on the playground? Can a first-grader apply their knowledge of counting and numbers to properly set the table for a family of six, ensuring that everyone gets a plate, fork, and cup?*

How can we answer these questions?

Transfer is the process of adapting one's knowledge and abilities to new environments, which is a key goal of education. Although all learning needs some level of transfer, research shows that applying information efficiently and flexibly is difficult<sup>3</sup>. Students may be able to exhibit knowledge in class and on tests but are unable to use it in other situations where it is appropriate<sup>4</sup>. Transfer is more likely to fail when students have a poor understanding of the content they have learned and are unsure of how, where, and when it is useful. Perkins and Salomon<sup>5</sup>, describe transfer of

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<sup>2</sup> Marleen F. Westerveld et al., 'Implications and Transferability to Other School Contexts', in *Reading Success in the Primary Years*, by Marleen F. Westerveld et al. (Springer Singapore, 2020), [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3492-8\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3492-8_8).

<sup>3</sup> Iring Koch et al., 'Cognitive Structure, Flexibility, and Plasticity in Human Multitasking—An Integrative Review of Dual-Task and Task-Switching Research.', *Psychological Bulletin* 144, no. 6 (2018): 557–83, <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000144>.

<sup>4</sup> Victor Gekara and Darryn Snell, 'Designing and Delivering Skills Transferability and Employment Mobility: The Challenges of a Market-Driven Vocational Education and Training System', *Journal of Vocational Education & Training* 70, no. 1 (2018): 107–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820.2017.1392996>.

<sup>5</sup> Emily Good-Perkins, 'Arab Students' Perceptions of University Music Education in the United Arab Emirates: A Discussion of Music Education and Cultural Relevance', *International Journal of Music Education* 37, no. 4 (2019): 524–35.

learning as the application of knowledge or skills learned in one context to new or related contexts.

This concept lies at the heart of the educational mission, with scholars emphasizing that the entire educational system operates on the premise that earlier learning influences future performance and real-life application<sup>6</sup>. Numerous researchers<sup>7</sup> have highlighted the central role of transfer in promoting autonomous, lifelong learners who can meaningfully apply knowledge across diverse situations.

Despite its recognized importance, the mechanisms of transfer remain complex and not fully understood. Perkins and Salomon argue that transfer is often assumed rather than explicitly taught, underscoring the need for educators to create deliberate learning opportunities that bridge school learning with real-world application. Haskell<sup>8</sup> further critiques traditional instruction for neglecting transfer, emphasizing that "all learning is transfer of learning" and advocating for metaphorical teaching, spiral curricula, and contextual integration to foster meaningful connections.

As Haskell implies metaphors have been shown to enhance the vividness of learning, spiral curricula have been demonstrated to facilitate the retention of knowledge, and contextual integration has been evidenced to render learning relevant. All three of these factors have been shown to facilitate the establishment of meaningful and lasting connections between students and the subject matter, with the result that such connections are not merely beneficial for academic assessments but for life in general.

*Metaphorical Teaching* - in the context of education, metaphorical teaching can be defined as the process of elucidating complex or abstract concepts through the utilisation of relatable images, narratives, or analogies. To illustrate this point, the concept of electricity can be elucidated by the metaphor of "water flowing through pipes," a notion that assists students in conceptualizing and comprehending an invisible phenomenon. It is recommended that teachers employ the use of metaphors in a deliberate manner with a view to enhancing the memorability and accessibility of their lessons, a practice that is especially pertinent for those teaching younger learners.

*Spiral Curricula* - are a pedagogical approach that entails the systematic structuring of learning material so that students revisit fundamental concepts at progressively more sophisticated levels of complexity over an extended

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<sup>6</sup> Neil C. M. Brown, 'The Meaning of Transfer in the Practices of Arts Education', *Studies in Art Education* 43, no. 1 (2001): 83, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1320994>.

<sup>7</sup> John Dunlosky et al., 'Improving Students' Learning with Effective Learning Techniques: Promising Directions from Cognitive and Educational Psychology', *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 14, no. 1 (2013): 4–58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612453266>.

<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Haskell, 'Transfer of Learning', in *Transfer of Learning* (Elsevier, 2001), <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012330595-4/50003-2>.

period. For instance, students initially acquire fundamental multiplication skills, subsequently revisiting the topic in the context of fractions and algebraic expressions. It is recommended that curricula are structured in such a manner that core concepts are reintroduced and expanded on at regular intervals. This approach is intended to facilitate students in deepening their understanding, as opposed to merely memorising facts on a single occasion.

The concept of *contextual integration* in education can be defined as the process of teaching content by establishing connections with real-world examples, students' experiences, or other subjects. To illustrate this point, in the context of science education, students could be encouraged to compose poems about nature in language arts or calculate plant growth rates in maths. The objective is to design experiential learning opportunities that facilitate the establishment of connections between subjects, thereby ensuring that the educational content is firmly rooted in real-life scenarios. This approach is intended to engender a sense of significance and practical relevance in the learning process.

The challenges in promoting transfer have also been attributed to the lack of clear definitions and measurable dimensions of transfer<sup>9</sup>. In order to address this issue, Barnett and Ceci proposed a taxonomy for the evaluation of transfer based on content and context. The purpose of this taxonomy is to clarify the circumstances under which transfer occurs in educational settings.

### *A Taxonomy for the Evaluation of Transfer Based on Content and Context*<sup>10</sup>

**1. Content Dimension** - this dimension is concerned with the evaluation of the knowledge, skills, strategies, or attitudes that are being transferred.

- *Near content transfer* - the transferred knowledge exhibits a high degree of similarity to the original learning situation.
  - For instance: The application of the same mathematical formula to two problems of a similar nature is demonstrated here.
- *Far content transfer* - the transfer of knowledge is characterised by its abstract nature, generalisability, and applicability across different domains.
  - For instance: The utilisation of problem-solving skills acquired in the field of mathematics is employed in the organisation of a group project.

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<sup>9</sup> Susan M. Barnett and Stephen J. Ceci, 'When and Where Do We Apply What We Learn?: A Taxonomy for Far Transfer.', *Psychological Bulletin* 128, no. 4 (2002): 612–37, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.4.612>.

<sup>10</sup> Idem 2002.

**2. Context Dimension** - the purpose of this dimension is to evaluate the circumstances of the transfer, including the situation, environment, or setting.

- *Near context transfer* - the new task is situated in a context that bears a strong resemblance to the original one, exhibiting a high degree of similarity in terms of environment and task conditions. This phenomenon helps an individual to successfully perform a new task within a context that is strikingly similar to the original one.
  - For instance: the implementation of a scientific experiment in a classroom setting follows its prior rehearsal in a laboratory lesson.
- *Far Context Transfer* - refers to the occurrence of a new task in a markedly divergent context, characterised by a shift in environment and altered demands.
  - For instance: the utilisation of scientific thinking in order to address a genuine, real-world problem within the community is of significant importance.

A significant yet frequently disregarded notion in education is the premise that the knowledge and skills acquired by children in the classroom are applicable to real-world situations and challenges. A significant proportion of investment in education is directed towards equipping students with the skills necessary for ongoing learning, thereby facilitating their transition into becoming contributing members of a society characterised by a perpetual flux in employment needs and demands. There is a substantial body of evidence that lends support to the notion that education holds great importance in a modern, service-oriented society. It is evident that educational institutions effectively impart fundamental competencies such as reading, writing and critical thinking. This phenomenon is exemplified by the recurrent inclusion of educational attainment as a pivotal element in job descriptions by businesses. Notwithstanding this fact, a considerable number of students continue to fall short of these objectives, thereby restricting their possibilities for professional progression.

### ***Building Bridges Between Knowledge and Practice***

Cognitive research has consistently shown that information transfer is more effective when individuals learn in a way that encourages a deep, abstract grasp of key concepts in a subject<sup>11</sup>, rather than by rote application of rules based on superficial similarities across issues<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond et al., 'Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development', *Applied Developmental Science* 24, no. 2 (2020): 97–140, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>.

<sup>12</sup> Gabrielle A. Strouse et al., 'The Role of Book Features in Young Children's Transfer of Information from Picture Books to Real-World Contexts', *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (February 2018): 50, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00050>.

*The application of knowledge in different situations is indicative of its versatility, which is defined by its ability to be retrieved from the original learning context and utilised in a variety of settings*<sup>13</sup>. In order to ascertain fundamental commonalities and contrasts, it is essential that students and teachers explore beyond the superficial parallels or differences between two circumstances. To illustrate this point, consider the following example. In the field of science, children are often able to recognise the similarities between a roller coaster and a train on a track. However, students may encounter difficulties in understanding a concept when it is applied in contexts that differ from the initial example. For instance, a principle demonstrated with a roller coaster may be harder to grasp when observed in a ball rolling down a slope or water flowing in a stream. While direct instruction is effective in introducing such inaugural examples, research shows that it can sometimes produce inflexible knowledge. To enhance understanding and promote transfer, teachers can provide multiple examples that share an underlying structure, emphasizing the core commonalities while varying surface details. Interestingly, only two or three carefully chosen instances are often sufficient to cultivate flexible comprehension, especially when instruction is gradually scaffolded - from explanation to guided practice, and ultimately to autonomous application - while continuously monitoring understanding and offering support where needed.

This approach is directly applicable to music education, where students encounter concepts like rhythm, melody, and harmony in diverse musical contexts. Exposing students to multiple instances of a concept - different rhythms, pieces, or tonal patterns - helps them recognize underlying musical structures. For example, a rhythmic pattern learned on a drum may later appear in piano exercises or ensemble performances. By varying surface features while maintaining core principles, teachers encourage flexible understanding, enabling students to transfer skills across instruments, styles, and even into non-musical domains such as mathematics or language<sup>14,15</sup>.

Scaffolding in music education<sup>16</sup> - moving from demonstration to guided practice and eventually independent performance - supports the internalization of abstract concepts. Integrating reflective practice and

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<sup>13</sup> Dunlosky et al., 'Improving Students' Learning With Effective Learning Techniques'.

<sup>14</sup> E. Glenn Schellenberg and Ellen Winner, 'Music Training and Nonmusical Abilities: Introduction', *Music Perception* 29, no. 2 (2011): 129–32, <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2011.29.2.129>.

<sup>15</sup> E. Glenn Schellenberg, 'Music and Nonmusical Abilities', in *The Child as Musician*, ed. Gary E. McPherson (Oxford University Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198744443.003.0008>.

<sup>16</sup> Joel Krueger, 'Music as Affective Scaffolding', in *Music and Consciousness* 2, 1st edn, ed. Ruth Herbert et al. (Oxford University Press Oxford, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198804352.003.0004>.

metacognition, such as asking students to explain why a chord progression works or how a melody interacts with rhythm, further strengthens comprehension and adaptive transfer<sup>17</sup>. Emotional engagement, inherent to music-making, also enhances memory<sup>18</sup>, motivation<sup>19</sup>, and understanding, establishing deeper and more lasting learning connections. By combining diverse examples, scaffolded practice, and reflective exploration, music education not only develops musical proficiency, but also cultivates transferable cognitive<sup>20</sup> and social-emotional skills<sup>21</sup> that enrich broader learning experiences. This assertion underscores the necessity for a more comprehensive learning approach<sup>22</sup>. Learning for understanding may align more closely with the implicit or explicit educational goals of certain learner communities than with others<sup>23</sup>. In order to ascertain whether there exists a discrepancy between the perceived needs of some learners for material that is of immediate practical relevance and the material in question, further research is required<sup>24</sup>. In the event of such barriers being present, it may be necessary to place greater emphasis on the exploration of effective engagement and collaborative working<sup>25</sup> with learners who hold these assumptions.

In the process of transferring techniques from schools specialising in music to those not specialising in music, it is imperative to thoroughly examine the distinctive characteristics of music education, whilst also considering universally applicable pedagogical concepts.

Pedagogical concepts that are universally applicable refer to teaching principles and strategies that are effective across different subjects and learning environments, and which are not limited to any single discipline such as music. These concepts are centred on the optimal methods for student

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<sup>17</sup> Theodore P. Zanto et al., 'Digital Rhythm Training Improves Reading Fluency in Children', *Developmental Science* 27, no. 3 (2024): e13473, <https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13473>.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher N. Wahlheim and Jeffrey M. Zacks, 'Memory Updating and the Structure of Event Representations', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 29, no. 4 (2025): 380–92, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2024.11.008>.

<sup>19</sup> Diego Aguirre et al., 'Influence of Songs in Primary School Students' Motivation for Learning English in Lima, Peru', *English Language Teaching* 9, no. 2 (2016): 178–91.

<sup>20</sup> Westerveld et al., 'Implications and Transferability to Other School Contexts'.

<sup>21</sup> Scott N. Edgar, 'Introducing Social Emotional Learning to Music Education Professional Development', *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 31, no. 2 (2013): 28–36, <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123313480508>.

<sup>22</sup> Darling-Hammond et al., 'Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development'. (2020): 97-140, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>

<sup>23</sup> Lizzi O. Milligan et al., 'Understanding the Role of Learning and Teaching Support Materials in Enabling Learning for All', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 16 March 2018, 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2018.1431107>.

<sup>24</sup> Afzal Sayed Munna and Md Abul Kalam, 'Teaching and Learning Process to Enhance Teaching Effectiveness: Literature Review', *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)* 4, no. 1 (2021): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.33750/ijhi.v4i1.102>.

<sup>25</sup> Collaboration allows students to see alternative perspectives, compare approaches, and co-construct understanding, which can help dismantle rigid preconceptions.

learning, irrespective of the specific content being taught. The following examples are illustrative of this phenomenon:

*Active Learning* - it is important to encourage students to engage actively with the material through discussions, problem-solving, and hands-on activities, rather than passively receiving information.

*Scaffolding* - the provision of temporary support structures is conducive to the mastery of new skills or concepts by students. These structures are then gradually removed as students gain independence.

*Formative assessment* - the utilisation of continuous feedback, quizzes and informal checks for understanding serves to guide instruction and facilitate students' sustained improvement.

*Metacognitive strategies* - the process of education should include the cultivation of reflective practices among students, with a focus on their learning processes, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating strategies to enhance outcomes.

*Collaborative learning* - the promotion of learning is achieved through the utilisation of group work, peer-to-peer interaction, and cooperative tasks that facilitate the development of social and cognitive skills.

*Motivation and engagement techniques* - the implementation of strategies that facilitate intrinsic motivation in students is recommended, including the establishment of meaningful goals, the provision of autonomy to students, and the alignment of learning with their interests.

*Differentiated instruction* - it is the responsibility of educators to adapt teaching methods and materials to meet the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of all learners in the classroom.

Transferability is defined as the application of effective approaches and procedures from one domain to another, with the objective of enhancing learning outcomes. It is evident that disciplined practice routines, performance-based examinations, and collaborative learning through group participation are all important components of music schools. In order to transfer these techniques to non-music institutions in an effective manner, it is first necessary to undertake a comprehensive examination of the underlying ideas that make these practices effective. To illustrate this point, one may consider the way disciplined practice routines in music education, which emphasise regular, concentrated practice sessions, can be modified for the purpose of fostering consistent study habits in other areas. Performance-based evaluations, in which students demonstrate their knowledge through presentations or projects, have the potential to be employed in a variety of topics with the aim of fostering greater comprehension and engagement.

Transferring professional practices from music-specific institutions to non-music schools may require the following steps:

- the identification of the most efficacious music education approaches,
- the acquisition of knowledge regarding the fundamental ideas that underpin the effectiveness of certain techniques, such as discipline, frequent feedback, and collaborative learning,
- the modification of procedures to meet the demands and limits of non-music subjects. For instance, in the context of literature or history classrooms, performance assessments have the potential to be transformed into project presentations.

A multitude of techniques employed within the domain of music education, including mastery through repetition, real-time feedback, emotional connection to content, and performance-based learning, exhibit a high degree of congruence with these universal concepts. By identifying and adapting these elements with care, educators in non-music schools can enhance their practices and more effectively support students' motivation, engagement, and skill development.

Music education is distinguished by its unique integration of emotional expression, creativity, and disciplined practice. Music education frequently necessitates the immediate *application of learning* (through playing or singing), *real-time feedback* (from teachers or peers), and *continuous repetition and refinement of skills*. *Intrinsic motivation* is also fostered, as students often feel a personal and emotional connection to the music they perform or create. The field of music education places significant emphasis on performance-based learning, wherein the demonstration of progress through recitals, concerts, or small group performances constitutes a pivotal component of the educational process. The amalgamation of these characteristics fosters an educational milieu that is simultaneously meticulously structured and profoundly personalised, seamlessly integrating the cultivation of technical competencies with the cultivation of emotional engagement.

### ***Strategies for Enhancing Transfer in Learning Environments***

A range of approaches in music education have been demonstrated to be particularly effective in enhancing student engagement, skill development, and overall learning<sup>26</sup>. One such approach is *disciplined practice routines*, which emphasise frequent, concentrated practice sessions that are customised to the demands of each individual learner<sup>27</sup>. This strategy helps students learn their instruments, also instils discipline and time management skills that

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<sup>26</sup> Evan Feldman et al., *Instrumental Music Education: Teaching with the Musical and Practical in Harmony*, 3rd edn (Routledge, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429028700>.

<sup>27</sup> Kristine A. Camacho and Michael P. Krezmien, 'A Statewide Analysis of School Discipline Policies and Suspension Practices', *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth* 64, no. 1 (2020): 55–66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2019.1678010>.

can be applied to a variety of courses<sup>28</sup>. Applying the notion of disciplined practice routines to non-music disciplines through regular, concentrated study sessions. In mathematics, for example, students might be encouraged to practise problem solving for a specified amount of time each day, somehow it is like musicians practising their instruments<sup>29,30</sup>. This pattern may be designed to gradually address more complicated problems, replicating the incremental learning process in music. Teachers may assist this by providing organised practice materials and clear goals for each session, allowing students to establish a solid foundation of skills and knowledge gradually. The use of technology, such as educational applications that offer immediate feedback and measure progress, may make this activity more interesting and participatory. By encouraging a disciplined approach to learning, students learn to manage their time effectively, stay organized, and develop resilience and perseverance, which are essential skills for academic success across all subjects<sup>31,32</sup>.

It is important to acknowledge the distinctive benefits that music education can offer. Educators can find inspiration in the methods employed in music education to enhance learning across all subjects. By adapting key techniques, such as real-time feedback, performance-based tasks, and fostering emotional connections to content, teachers can create more engaging and effective learning environments. The following section presents several examples of strategies employed within the domain of music education that have been successfully transferred to general classroom settings.

In the domain of music, students meticulously **prepare for performances**, thereby providing a tangible demonstration of their learning. In the field of literature, students could present dramatic readings, host book talks, or stage short scenes based on the literary works they have read. The process of preparing for a "performance" has been shown to engender heightened motivation, personal investment, and a more profound comprehension of the subject matter.

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<sup>28</sup> Gary E. McPherson et al., 'Feedback in Music Performance Teaching', *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (June 2022): 891025, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.891025>.

<sup>29</sup> Henrique Meissner et al., "'Just Notes': Young Musicians' Perspectives on Learning Expressive Performance", *Research Studies in Music Education* 43, no. 3 (2021): 451–64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X19899171>.

<sup>30</sup> Heiner Gembris et al., 'High-Performing Young Musicians' Playing-Related Pain. Results of a Large-Scale Study', *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (December 2020): 564736, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.564736>.

<sup>31</sup> Fatma Sadik, 'Children and Discipline: Investigating Secondary School Students' Perception of Discipline through Metaphors', *European Journal of Educational Research* volume–7–2018, nos volume7-issue1.html (2017): 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.7.1.31>.

<sup>32</sup> Kent McIntosh et al., 'Using Discipline Data to Enhance Equity in School Discipline', *Intervention in School and Clinic* 53, no. 3 (2018): 146–52, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451217702130>.

Another important approach is **performance-based evaluation**, in which students show their knowledge through recitals, concerts, and other public performances. This technique not only evaluates their technical capabilities, but it also boosts their confidence and public speaking ability. To effectively change music education methods for non-music disciplines, each practice must be tailored to the unique requirements and limits of the new setting while maintaining its primary advantages. For example, converting performance-based exams into project presentations in disciplines such as physics or history may be quite beneficial. In music, performance evaluations not only examine technical proficiency but also foster confidence and public speaking skills. In a science lesson, this might be students presenting their experiments, research findings, or scientific models to the class. Similarly, in history, students might offer their analyses of historical events or primary source interpretations. These presentations help students to connect deeply with the content, organise their ideas logically, and communicate effectively. Furthermore, this approach creates a sense of ownership over their learning and provides opportunities for peer learning and feedback, which are vital for a well-rounded educational experience.

**Collaborative learning** through ensemble involvement is another important aspect of music education, enabling students to collaborate, listen to one another, and develop a feeling of collaboration and responsibility. This cooperation teaches students how to balance individual contributions with collective goals, which is useful in any academic or professional situation. Improvisation and creativity activities in music lessons foster creative thinking and problem-solving abilities, which are transferable to various fields of study and life. Ensemble participation teaches students the value of working together to achieve a shared objective, which includes attentive listening, communication, and mutual support. This collaborative setting encourages students to value varied viewpoints and to align their efforts with those of their classmates, fostering a feeling of community and shared responsibility. When applied to non-music classrooms, collaborative learning may be achieved through group projects, peer evaluations, and cooperative problem-solving exercises. The collaborative learning environment created by ensemble participation may be used to encourage cooperation and collaboration in other topics. In literary classrooms, students might collaborate to analyse texts and develop group presentations or projects, fostering active conversation and varied perspectives. In computer science, collaborative coding projects may teach students how to work together to solve complicated issues, exchange information, and produce software. These collaborative initiatives not only improve comprehension of the subject matter, but also help to develop important interpersonal skills like communication, negotiation, and leadership.

Another underlying premise is the significance of **regular feedback**. In music education, students receive ongoing feedback from teachers throughout classes and rehearsals, which is critical for their progress. This instant and continuous feedback enables students to make modifications in real time, resulting in faster development and a deeper grasp of the content. This idea may be effectively applied to non-music educational contexts by adding regular formative evaluations and feedback sessions, which ensure that students are always aware of their progress and opportunities for growth. This feedback loop promotes a growth attitude, encouraging students to see setbacks as chances for development rather than impediments. This idea not only improves learning results, but it also helps pupils develop resilience and adaptive skills.

Students who receive regular performance feedback in the classroom are better able to identify their strengths and areas for improvement<sup>33</sup>. Effective feedback does more than just point out errors; it also provides helpful advice and tactics to assist students improve their academic performance and learning<sup>34</sup>. Over time, a deeper and more trustworthy relationship is developed between educators and students when they communicate openly and consistently. A poor relationship between a student and their teacher is one of the main causes of disengagement from school<sup>35</sup>. An environment that is more encouraging for learning is created when feedback is given both to students and to teachers. In addition to assisting teachers in better guiding pupils, this gives children greater confidence to voice concerns, share ideas, and ask questions. Uncertainty is decreased by feedback. Uncertainty among students about expectations or results frequently indicates a communication breakdown. Decreased motivation, poorer performance, or assignment confusion may arise from this. Frequent feedback helps students understand how to better accomplish learning objectives and makes expectations clear<sup>36</sup>. Additionally, feedback-giving and -receiving enhances communication abilities. It helps children learn how to have productive conversations with peers and teachers, which improves cooperation and teamwork in the

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<sup>33</sup> Benedikt Wisniewski and Klaus Zierer, 'Functions and Success Conditions of Student Feedback in the Development of Teaching and Teachers', in *Student Feedback on Teaching in Schools*, ed. Wolfram Rollett et al. (Springer International Publishing, 2021), [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75150-0\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75150-0_8).

<sup>34</sup> Alice Clack and Eleanor J. Dommett, 'Student Learning Approaches: Beyond Assessment Type to Feedback and Student Choice', *Education Sciences* 11, no. 9 (2021): 468, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11090468>.

<sup>35</sup> Jennifer A. Fredricks et al., 'Profiles of School Disengagement', in *Handbook of Student Engagement Interventions* (Elsevier, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-813413-9.00003-6>.

<sup>36</sup> Islahul Mauliya et al., 'Lack of Motivation Factors Creating Poor Academic Performance in the Context of Graduate English Department Students', *Linguistics: Journal Of Linguistics and Language Teaching* 6, no. 2 (2020): 73, <https://doi.org/10.29300/ling.v6i2.3604>.

classroom.

Throughout the learning process, the provision of feedback is of key importance in guiding students' academic and personal development. The functions of various forms of feedback in enhancing classroom communication and student learning are subject to variation. The following is a non-exhaustive list of some of the most popular types which have been modified for use in the educational environment:

*Formal feedback* - This is typically organised and scheduled at regular intervals, such as at the conclusion of academic terms, during parent-teacher conferences, or in the context of report card assessments. Formal feedback is employed by educators to discuss their students' learning habits, academic progress, and areas for development. For instance, an instructor might undertake a formal evaluation of a student's arithmetic performance over the course of the semester. This evaluation would encompass both the student's strengths and weaknesses in this domain.

*Feedback for evaluation* - the evaluation of a student's performance or conduct through the utilisation of grades, scores, or concise remarks such as "good job" or "needs improvement" is designated as evaluative feedback. The utilisation of overuse or unfavourable evaluations may be interpreted as being excessively critical or impersonal, even in circumstances where positive comments can serve a motivational function. The provision of feedback to a pupil that their presentation was not of a high standard, for instance, has the potential to engender a state of demotivation unless it is followed by the provision of additional criticism that is deemed to be helpful.

*Prescriptive feedback* - Feedback of this nature offers unambiguous guidance on how to improve one's performance. This pedagogical technique has been found to be especially beneficial in the context of introducing new material to students, as well as in the initial stages of their learning journey. For instance, a teacher might advise a student to "outline your ideas before writing your essay the next time to improve clarity." However, when employed in excess, it has the potential to curtail student autonomy and supplant more meticulous and contemplative remarks.

*Descriptive feedback* - descriptive feedback is a form of assessment that focuses on the actions of the student and the outcomes of those actions, without passing judgment. The programme has been developed to promote long-term development and to aid pupils in understanding their learning process. For instance: It is evident that the author's response was more persuasive, as it incorporated specific instances from the text to substantiate the claims being made. The utilisation of transitional words is recommended to establish a stronger connection between ideas and thereby reinforce their impact. Descriptive feedback is frequently regarded as the most successful form of feedback in educational settings, since it combines praise and growth

recommendations in a well-rounded and inspiring manner.

The integration of methodologies derived from music education into conventional pedagogical practices underscores the cross-culturally applicable potency of active engagement, constructive feedback, and emotional involvement in the educational process. By adapting these methods in a thoughtful manner, educators can cultivate classrooms that are academically strong, as well as deeply motivating and personally rewarding for students. The transfer of such strategies has the potential to contribute to the development of more resilient, creative, and autonomous learners across all areas of education.

### ***Future directions and challenges***

The objective and future directions are to make advances in the education of teachers on how scientists address conflicting viewpoints on a certain body of information. It is imperative that educators possess the capacity to critically analyze multiple viewpoints within their respective fields<sup>37</sup>. The implementation of these strategies necessitates the provision of structured educational training for educators, encompassing the theoretical underpinnings of cognitive neuroscience<sup>38</sup>. Furthermore, the integration of educators into active research groups is necessary to facilitate the translation of theoretical knowledge into practical applications. The objective of these endeavours is to furnish a robust scientific education that enhances their aptitude to navigate intricate scientific concepts and material expeditiously. Notwithstanding the evaluation's limitations, involvement in research has been shown to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills that are essential for the discernment of authentic scientific material from the plethora of commercial offerings<sup>39</sup>. By fostering a scientific mentality in educators, they may better interact with specialised literature and make informed teaching judgements.

The role of education and neuroscience in shaping the future of learning can be particularly illuminated through the lens of music education. Music learning engages multiple brain systems simultaneously, from auditory processing and motor coordination to emotional and social networks, making

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<sup>37</sup> Kathryn Jane Aston, "Why Is This Hard, to Have Critical Thinking?" Exploring the Factors Affecting Critical Thinking with International Higher Education Students', *Active Learning in Higher Education* 25, no. 3 (2024): 537–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14697874231168341>.

<sup>38</sup> Valerie Gray Hardcastle, 'The Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Cognitive Neuroscience', in *Philosophy of Psychology and Cognitive Science* (Elsevier, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-044451540-7/50027-X>.

<sup>39</sup> Alejandra Carboni et al., 'Teaching the Science in Neuroscience to Protect From Neuromyths: From Courses to Fieldwork', *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 15 (September 2021): 718399, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2021.718399>.

it a rich context for applying neuroscience insights. The crux of this perspective lies in understanding how educational institutions, families, and music instructors interact with children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Neuroscience-informed music programs emphasize nurturing rather than molding, promoting children's autonomy, agency, and intrinsic motivation through creative exploration and collaborative performance, rather than coercion or rigid instruction. Research indicates that pedagogical approaches in music that rely on encouragement, scaffolding, and positive reinforcement can strengthen motivation, self-regulation, and long-term engagement, while coercive methods may diminish these outcomes<sup>40</sup>. This, in turn, may engender negative long-term consequences<sup>41</sup>. Instead, educators and families should focus on creating situations that encourage children's autonomy, agency, and intrinsic drive.

By integrating neuroscience concepts into music education, educators can create learning experiences that foster social-emotional development, attentional control, and cognitive flexibility. Techniques such as scaffolded practice, reflective feedback, improvisation, and ensemble collaboration not only enhance musical skill but also support broader developmental outcomes<sup>42</sup>. Furthermore, collaboration among educators, neuroscientists, policymakers, and families can ensure that music programs are evidence-based, inclusive, and tailored to respect each child's individuality. In this way, music education serves as a model for educational practices that harmonize cognitive growth, emotional well-being, and intrinsic motivation, demonstrating how neuroscience can inform pedagogical strategies that cultivate holistic development.

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<sup>40</sup> Su Wan Gan et al., 'Relations between Parental Autonomy Support and Coercion with Children's Total Difficulties', *Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia* 24, no. 1 (2020): 37, <https://doi.org/10.7454/hubs.asia.1050819>.

<sup>41</sup> John T. Bruer, 'Where Is Educational Neuroscience?', *Educational Neuroscience* 1 (January 2016): 2377616115618036, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2377616115618036>.

<sup>42</sup> Marc Schwartz, 'Mind, Brain and Education: A Decade of Evolution', *Mind, Brain, and Education* 9, no. 2 (2015): 64–71, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12074>.

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## TRAINING FUTURE TEACHERS OF MUSIC AND OF THE INTEGRATED COURSE “ART” TO CREATE ORIGINAL EDUCATIONAL MEDIA PRODUCTS

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**SUMMARY.** The study aimed to identify the impact of the experimental model of training future teachers of music and of the integrated course “Art” on their level of competence in creating educational media products. The study uses a set of theoretical and empirical research methods typical of the education sector. Theoretical: analysis and generalization of theoretical sources and modern international experience in distance learning and digital technologies for its organization, particularly in the field of music and arts education in general, as well as theoretical modelling; empirical: pedagogical observation, questionnaires, comparative analysis of test results before and after the implementation of the experimental model of training future teachers, expert evaluation of the quality of media products created by students, as well as the method of reflective self-analysis. Within the framework of the

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study, an author's model for developing the competence of future teachers of music and of the integrated subject "Art" in creating educational media products was developed and tested. The proposed experimental model for teaching the creation of original didactic media products is a comprehensive pedagogical tool that ensures the systematic formation of professionally essential competencies in future teachers of music and of the integrated course "Art". Interdisciplinarity and a personal and professional focus in teaching. Prospects for further research include refining the criteria for evaluating educational media products, developing a typology of integrated artistic media formats, and examining their impact on student motivation in school courses for musical arts and the integrated course "Art".

**Keywords:** media product; media education; competence; music and pedagogical education; multimedia technologies; reflective approach

## 1. Introduction

The educational space of the 21st century is undergoing rapid transformations caused by the dynamic development of digital technologies, which significantly change both the content of professional training of teaching staff and the very logic of the organization of the educational process.<sup>6</sup> These changes are particularly relevant in the field of school art education, where the combination of traditional art forms with new multimedia tools opens up qualitatively new opportunities for pedagogical activity. At the same time, there is a need to develop in future teachers not only a high level of musical and general artistic competence, but also the ability to conceptually, didactically and technologically comprehend educational content from the perspective of the modern media environment.<sup>7</sup> In this context, special attention should be paid to the problem of developing students' ability to create educational media products that integrate artistic, didactic and communicative functions. It requires not only technical mastery of digital design tools, but also a deep understanding of the specifics of the creative influence of artistic texts in the media format, the ability to purposefully transform complex musical meanings

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<sup>6</sup> Merrick, Bradley, Joseph, Dawn. "ICT and Music Technology during COVID-19: Australian Music Educator Perspectives." In *Research Studies in Music Education*, 45(1), 2022, pp. 189–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X221092927>

<sup>7</sup> Levit, D., Ievtukhova, T. "Training Course "Media Literacy" as a Mean for Developing Media Competence of Prospective Vocalists." In *Innovative Pedagogy*, 2(48), 2022, pp. 138–144. [https://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/id/eprint/41724/1/D\\_Lievit\\_T\\_Ievtuhova\\_INP48T2\\_IM.pdf](https://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/id/eprint/41724/1/D_Lievit_T_Ievtuhova_INP48T2_IM.pdf)

into visual and audio images that are accessible to students, as well as the skills of critical analysis and evaluation of the pedagogical effectiveness of the created product.<sup>8</sup>

The ability to create their own media products for Ukrainian teachers of music and of the integrated course "Art" is critically important, because since the quarantine restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and in the current conditions of martial law, the educational process in both general secondary education institutions and higher pedagogical education institutions is carried out mainly in a mixed format, if not exclusively online, depending on the region.<sup>9</sup>

Against the backdrop of existing research, which mainly focuses on the use of digital resources as an auxiliary tool in teaching art disciplines, the task arises to create a comprehensive methodological model focused on the independent creative activity of students – future teachers.<sup>10</sup> This approach allows for the development of not only digital creativity but also pedagogical thinking based on the interaction of artistic experience and educational reflection. This study aimed to examine the impact of the author's model of professional training for students of art and pedagogy specialties on the development of their competence in creating educational media products. The following tasks were performed in the course of the study:

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<sup>8</sup> Çetin, Ekmel. "Digital Storytelling in Teacher Education and its Effect on the Digital Literacy of Pre-Service Teachers." In *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 39, 2021, 100760. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100760>

<sup>9</sup> Yalovskyi, Pavlo, Lotsman, Ruslana, Yurieva, Kateryna, Parfentieva, Iryna, Sokolova, Alla. "Alternative Ways of Organizing Distance Practical Classes for Future Music Art Teachers." In *Amazonia Investiga*, 12(61), 2023, pp. 276-286. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2023.61.01.28>; Shlenova, Maryna, Konoplenko, Nataliia, Yuryeva, Kateryna, Korneiko, Yuliia, Hlukhovska, Maryna. "Comparative Analysis of the Distance Learning Implementation in Ukrainian System of Higher Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Martial Law." In *Interactive Learning Environments*, 32(9), 2023, pp. 4968–4977. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2023.2207196>; Tkachenko, Maryna, Sokolova, Alla, Yuryeva, Kateryna. "The Muses do not Fall Silent! (Art in times of war)." In *Education, Research, Practice*, 5, 2024, pp. 429–439. <https://doi.org/10.52340/erp.2024.05.45>; Vasilyeva, Oksana. "Qualification Exam in Choir Conducting: Distance Format." In: *Choral Creativity and Education: Understanding Traditions, Mastering Innovations*. Helvetica, 2023, pp. 14–18. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K\\_aKZGzhibIW\\_1ztHFf5eFGned5d-TP8g/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K_aKZGzhibIW_1ztHFf5eFGned5d-TP8g/view)

<sup>10</sup> Bohak, Adam, Tina, Metljak, Mira. "Experiences in Distance Education and Practical Use of ICT during the COVID-19 Epidemic of Slovenian Primary School Music Teachers with Different Professional Experiences." In *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 5(1), 2022, 100246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100246>; Park, Hyejin, Kim, Han S., Park, Han W. "A Scientometric Study of Digital Literacy, ICT Literacy, Information Literacy, and Media Literacy." In *Journal of Data and Information Science*, 6(2), 2021, pp. 116–138. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jdis-2021-0001>

1. The specifics and pedagogical potential of the author's educational media products in the context of teaching music and the integrated course "Art" in general secondary education institutions have been determined.

2. A structural and functional model for developing students' competence in creating original educational media products has been developed.

3. An experimental verification of the effectiveness of the proposed model in the educational process of higher pedagogical education institutions was conducted.

4. Changes in the levels of competence of future teachers of music and of the integrated course "Art" in the creation of original educational media products were analyzed, which manifested themselves in the emergence of a range of knowledge, skills and professionally significant personal qualities in students, which together form the competence under study.

## 2. Literature Review

The integration of media education into the training system for future teachers of arts disciplines is considered in contemporary scientific discourse not only as the development of digital competencies, but also as the formation of the ability to design educational content independently. In particular, a study by Shablîi emphasizes that the effectiveness of video content depends not only on technical quality, but also on pedagogical relevance: when creating educational media products, it is important to consider the learning objectives, the logic of the presentation of the material, the duration and the visual dynamics.<sup>11</sup> In their study, Castillo et al. described the complete cycle of creating educational videos for biology education, from the planning stage to post-production and content distribution.<sup>12</sup>

In turn, Zimmer and Matthews studied the effectiveness of virtual coaching in increasing the digital awareness of educators, which, in the context of arts and teacher education, can serve as a basis for developing one's own multimedia resources.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, Partti et al. emphasize that

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<sup>11</sup> Shablîi, Liubov M. "Creation of Educational Videos and Their Use.: In: *Actual Problems in the Education System: Secondary School – Pre-University Training – Higher Education Institution*. National Aviation University, Kyiv, 2021, pp. 247–249. <https://doi.org/10.18372/2786-5487.1.15879>

<sup>12</sup> Castillo, Stephanie, Calvetti, Karisa, Shoup, Jeffery, Rice, Madison, Labbok, Helen & Oliver, Kendra H. "Production Processes for Creating Educational Videos." In *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 20(2), 2021, Article es7. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.20-06-0120>

<sup>13</sup> Zimmer, Wendi K., Matthews, Sharon D. "A Virtual Coaching Model of Professional Development to Increase Teachers' Digital Learning Competencies." In *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 109, 2022, 103544. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103544>

the development of digital competence involves not only the instrumental mastery of techniques but also critical reflection on their application in the educational process.<sup>14</sup> This reflective approach is key to creating original media products that meet both content and methodological requirements. Almazroa and Alotaibi emphasize the need to move away from traditional training models, which are limited to technical skills, in favor of innovative practices, in particular, the media creativity of teachers.<sup>15</sup> In this context, creating one’s own educational products is seen as a sign of methodological independence for future teachers. Research by Bannerman and O’Leary confirmed that the actual level of students’ readiness for such activities often does not meet the stated expectations, which requires updating the content of professional training with an emphasis on the practical aspects of creating digital educational content.<sup>16</sup>

In their work, Khairunnisa et al. explored how various digital interaction strategies – both inside and outside the classroom – contribute to the development of students’ oral speaking skills, proving that free production of digital content – such as creating videos or blogging – has significant potential for deepening language skills.<sup>17</sup> In turn, Ma et al. proposed a multidimensional approach to the formation of digital competence, which integrates technological, pedagogical, and ethical components.<sup>18</sup> Particular attention is paid to the pedagogical application of digital tools in arts education, which involves critically reflecting on their impact on the learning process.

Multimodal media products not only expand traditional forms of learning but also stimulate students’ creative and critical abilities, promoting

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<sup>14</sup> Partti, Heidi, Weber, Julia, & Rolle, Christian. “To Master a Skill or to Learn? Supporting Music Educators’ Professional Development in Technology Integration.” In *Journal of Music, Technology & Education*, 14(2–3), 2021, pp. 123–139.

[https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte\\_00037\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte_00037_1)

<sup>15</sup> Almazroa, Hiya, Alotaibi, Wadha. “Teaching 21st-Century Skills: Understanding the Depth and Breadth of Challenges for Designing Proactive Teacher Education Programs.” In *Sustainability*, 15(9), 2023, 7365. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15097365>

<sup>16</sup> Bannerman, Julie K., O’Leary, Emmett J. “Digital Natives Unplugged: Challenging Assumptions of Preservice Music Educators’ Technological Skills.” In *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 30(2), 2020, pp. 10–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083720951462> (Original work published 2021)

<sup>17</sup> Khairunnisa, Nor Amalia, Rahman, Muhammad A., Handrianto, Ciptro. “English Digital Literacy Practices Inside and Outside Class to Develop Students’ Speaking Skills.” In *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 10(1), 2023, pp. 13–24.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.32332/joelt.v10i1.3790>

<sup>18</sup> Ma, Na, Lee, Sze S. J., Md Noor, Harrinni, Fu, Jia Q., & Wang, Ying. “A Pre-Service Art Teacher Digital Literacy Framework for Digital Literacy in Pre-Service Art Teacher Education in China.” In *Asian Journal of University Education*, 20(2), 2024, pp. 235–247. <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/111488>

a deeper understanding of the learning material. Olsen came to the same conclusions.<sup>19</sup> The author studied the impact of multimodal cognition and a holistic approach on the transformation of educational practices through media art. In turn, Lähdesmäki, et al. focused on how the integration of different modalities – visual, auditory, textual, and bodily – contributes to the formation of a comprehensive understanding of cultural meanings and students' communication skills.<sup>20</sup> In their study, Raptis et al. investigated multimodal interactions aimed at improving the understanding of artistic contexts using modern methods of artificial intelligence and human-computer interaction.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Bezemchuk, et al. examined the characteristics of engaging music education students in distance learning through online courses.<sup>22</sup> The authors emphasize the importance of using digital tools to support the learning process in distance education, taking into account the specifics of music pedagogy. In their study, Chen and Xiong examined innovative methods for optimizing multimedia visual representations in music pedagogy aimed at improving the effectiveness of the learning process.<sup>23</sup>

Particularly relevant for the training of future teachers of music and of the integrated course “Art” is the emphasis on creating conditions for creativity, critical thinking, and media literacy.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, in their study, Huralna et al. highlighted various technical tools and software products that contribute to improving the quality of the educational process.<sup>25</sup> In their work, Björklund

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<sup>19</sup> Olsen, Dain. *Media Arts Education: Transforming Education through Multimodal Cognition, Holistic Learning, and Techno-Embodiment* (1st ed.). Routledge, New York, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003430834>

<sup>20</sup> Lähdesmäki, Tuuli, Baranova, Jüratë, Ylönen, Susanne C., Koistinen, Aino-Kaiso, Mäkinen, Katja, Juškienė, Vaiva, & Zaleskiene, Irena. (Eds.). *Learning Cultural Literacy through Creative Practices in Schools: Cultural and Multimodal Approaches to Meaning-Making*. Springer Nature, Cham, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89236-4>

<sup>21</sup> Raptis, George E., Kavvetsos, Giannis, Katsini, Christina. “MuMIA: Multimodal Interactions for Better Understanding of Artistic Contexts.” In *Applied Sciences*, 11(6), 2021, 2695. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app11062695>

<sup>22</sup> Bezemchuk, Larysa, Sokolova, Alla, Binitcka, Kateryna. “Engagement of Music Pedagogy Faculty Students in an Online Course.” In *Review of Contemporary Higher Education*, 8, 2023, pp. 91-103. <https://doi.org/10.28925/2617-5266.2023.86>

<sup>23</sup> Chen, Mengmeng, Xiong, Chuixiang. “New Methods for Improving Optimization of Multimedia Visual Representations in Music Pedagogy.” In *Technical Sciences*, 40(5), 2023, pp. 2131–2138. <https://doi.org/10.18280/ts.400530>

<sup>24</sup> Levit, D., Ievtukhova, T. “Training Course “Media Literacy” as a Mean for Developing Media Competence of Prospective Vocalists.” In *Innovative Pedagogy*, 2(48), 2022, pp. 138–144. [https://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/id/eprint/41724/1/D\\_Lievit\\_T\\_levtuhova\\_INP48T2\\_IM.pdf](https://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/id/eprint/41724/1/D_Lievit_T_levtuhova_INP48T2_IM.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Huralna, Svitlana, Demianko, Nataliia, Sulaieva, Nataliia, Irkliienko, Viktoriia, Horokhivska, Tetiana. “Multimedia Technologies for Teaching Musical Art under Present-Day Conditions.” In *International Journal of Computer Science and Network Security*, 24(5), 2024, pp. 165–171. <https://doi.org/10.22937/IJCSNS.2024.24.5.18>

Boistrup and Selander examined contemporary approaches to research design, teaching, and learning that are oriented toward the future of education in the context of rapid social and technological change.<sup>26</sup> The authors proposed a theoretical framework that integrates various educational practices with an emphasis on innovation, adaptability, and interdisciplinarity.

Finally, participants in a study conducted by a team of authors consisting of Yuryeva et al., when discussing the important personal and professional qualities of contemporary teachers of artistic disciplines, emphasized, among other things, flexibility, the ability to effectively apply the latest digital resources in professional activities, and the desire to continuously improve professional skills, including the use of multimedia technologies.<sup>27</sup>

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Research procedure

The research was structured in three consecutive stages, which made it possible to comprehensively ensure and ultimately evaluate the impact of the proposed pedagogical model on the formation of the competence of future teachers of music and of the integrated course "Art" in the creation of original educational media products. The first stage involved preparatory work, which included an analysis of contemporary approaches to the digitalization of education and the formation of an experimental teaching model. The second stage involved directly implementing the developed model in the professional training process, with students from the experimental group and the collection of primary empirical data. In contrast, the third stage involved collecting empirical data after the pedagogical experiment, processing and analyzing it to assess the effectiveness of implementing the experimental training model.

As part of the study, an original experimental model was created that combines traditional approaches to music education with concepts of media education and elements of digital creativity. It is based on the concept of a three-component structure of media creation competence, which covers both knowledge of the theory and history of musical art and the arts in general, performing (instrumental, vocal, conducting) skills, and the digital skills necessary for effective pedagogical media creation, as well as a value-emotional attitude towards one's own professional activity as the basis for professional reflection.

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<sup>26</sup> Björklund Boistrup, Lisa, Selander, Staffan. (Eds.). *Designs for Research, Teaching and Learning: A Framework for Future Education*. Routledge, London, 2021.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003096498>

<sup>27</sup> Yuryeva, Kateryna, Li, Yabin, Wang, Pan. "Personal and Professional Qualities and Skills of Art College Teachers in China: A Phenomenological Analysis." In *Multidisciplinary reviews*, 8(3), 2025, 2025077. <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2025077>

The experimental model developed provides for the parallel implementation of three areas of integrated interdisciplinary content in training: cognitive-analytical, creative-design, and reflective-evaluative. The cognitive-analytical direction involved the integration of modern digital technologies into the process of studying general training disciplines (History and Culture of Ukraine, Philosophy, Fundamentals of Economic Theory, Pedagogy, Psychology, etc.), mastering the theoretical foundations of musical art and the arts in general, and performing arts training to develop analytical skills and understand the specifics of media products. The second, creative-constructive direction involved teaching students practical design of original educational media resources, which included mastering multimedia design techniques, audio and video recording and audio and video editing, as well as the application of created author's media resources in compliance with the pedagogical principles of differentiation and individualization of learning.

The third stage of the study involved the use of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, in particular, student surveys, didactic and content analysis of the media products created, and their expert evaluation, which made it possible to objectively assess the level of development of the relevant components of the competence under study.

One of the components of the developed model is the introduction of a formula for determining the level of development of the studied competence (C), which looks like this:

$$K=f(M,D,R)$$

Where K is the overall level of media creation competence; M is musical and general artistic and pedagogical knowledge and skills; D is digital skills and ability to work with media technologies; R is reflectivity as the ability to evaluate one's own activities and creative process based on emotional and value-based attitudes towards them. It was the formation of the components of the competence under study – M, D, R – that became the criteria for expert assessment.

### *3.2. Methods*

To achieve the goal, a set of interrelated research methods was used. Competence-based and activity-based approaches were taken into account when selecting the methods. The first is based on a three-component structure of competence – knowledge, skills, and attitude – and is aimed at developing the ability to apply relevant knowledge and skills in pedagogical practice and evaluate the results obtained. The second is aimed at involving students in the active creation of educational media content. The analytical method provided an overview of scientific and methodological literature and

contemporary practices in digital and music/arts education. Theoretical modelling ensured the development of an experimental teaching model. Pedagogical observation made it possible to track the dynamics of student engagement in the process of creating media products.

The pedagogical experiment, which included preliminary and final testing, was formative in nature. It allowed us to test the effectiveness of the developed model in real conditions of the professional training of future music teachers and the integrated course "Art". To assess the level of musical and artistic-pedagogical knowledge, performance and digital skills, and reflective abilities, a comprehensive diagnostic test developed by the author was used. The first block included tasks for musical-theoretical and artistic-pedagogical analysis of works, aimed at identifying the depth and scope of musicological knowledge and the ability to perform interpretations. The second block covered questions about the didactic capabilities of digital tools (Canva, PowerPoint, BandLab, Audacity, OBS Studio, etc.) and practical cases of their use in the educational process. The third block involved assessing the level of reflection based on emotional and value-based attitudes towards art in general, musical art, and one's own musical and pedagogical activities.

Participants conducted a self-analysis of their own performance and pedagogical activities, analyzed examples of educational media content, and proposed their own ways to improve it. Testing was conducted twice – at the beginning and end of the experiment – which allowed us to identify positive dynamics for each of the three components of competence (M, D, R). The questionnaire was used to identify students' subjective value-emotional perception of the content of experimental learning, their progress in professional training, and the level of development of media creation competencies. The questionnaire included 18 questions, 12 of which were closed and six were open, allowing participants to provide detailed reflective answers.

Thematic coverage of the questionnaire included the following areas: 1) level of musical, artistic and pedagogical training; 2) digital creativity skills; 3) emotional and value-based reflective attitudes towards the use of digital media products in pedagogical activities; 4) reflective assessment of personal experience working with educational media products. The quality of the educational media products created by students was assessed by external experts – teachers of music teaching methods and the integrated course "Art", methodologists and teachers of general secondary education institutions with experience in the field of digital technology implementation. All experts had relevant professional training and did not participate in the development or implementation of the experimental model, which ensured the independence of the assessment. A comparative analysis of the results of preliminary and final testing made it possible to statistically substantiate the dynamics of changes in the level of students' competence in creating media products.

### 3.3. Sampling

Students majoring in arts and specializing in three higher education institutions, namely H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding (NUS), and Donbass State Pedagogical University, participated in the study. The choice was determined by the focus of these HEIs and their departments on music and art education, media literacy, and digital innovations. The total number of respondents was 138, with 84 students aged 17–20 (average age 18.5 at the beginning of the 2022/2023 academic year) included in the experimental sample, 73% of whom were women.

The following inclusion criteria were taken into account: basic knowledge in the field of music education, a high attendance rate ( $\geq 85\%$ ), and an initial level of digital competence. To avoid distortion of results, students with 6 months of experience in creating educational media products were excluded. The average academic score of participants was 87 (on a 100-point scale). Participation was voluntary, informed, ethical, anonymous, and with the right to refuse. The confidentiality of personal data was guaranteed in accordance with the ethical standards of pedagogical research, and all data were analyzed anonymously.

### 3.4. Tools

The online service Google Forms was used to collect data, which ensured the convenient collection of questionnaire responses and initial statistical processing. The educational experiment was implemented using the MOODLE distance learning platform, Zoom and Google Meet video conferencing services for synchronous interaction between teachers and students, as well as Canva, BandLab, Audacity, OBS Studio, PowerPoint, and WordWall for creating educational media products. Expert sheets with clearly defined criteria (structure, aesthetics, interactivity, compliance with didactic goals) were used to evaluate the created products. All collected data was processed in Google Sheets, which allowed us to build diagrams and conduct a comparative analysis of the results.

## 4. Results

*4.1. Development and justification of an experimental methodology for training music teachers and an integrated “Art” course in a digital environment.*

The preparatory stage of the experiment began in the 2021/2022 academic year, when first-level (bachelor’s) higher education students began their professional training in a mixed, predominantly online format due to

quarantine restrictions. Later, under martial law conditions, teachers sought new approaches and tools to help higher education students acquire sufficient performance skills and undergo pedagogical and methodological training remotely.

During quarantine restrictions, teachers have already gained experience in using distance learning tools, including for art and music disciplines. After Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, when it became clear that online learning in frontline regions would continue for a long time, the problem arose of enriching the toolkit and developing original teaching methods for first level (bachelor's) higher education students.

First of all, there was the problem of conducting semester and final assessments remotely. To conduct the qualifying examination in musical arts and music teaching methodology, teachers chose the format of presenting video recordings of students performing concert programmes on musical instruments, singing, and choral conducting, as well as presenting and defending video recordings of lesson fragments using original media works for students.<sup>28</sup> In order for students to be able to present such video presentations to the certification commission at the final certification stage, teachers had to teach them how to create such media products.

Thus, the implementation of the experimental teaching model developed at the preparatory stage of the study in the 2021/2022 academic year took place over the next three academic years – 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025, and ended in June 2025 with the final certification of bachelor students – a qualification exam in musical arts and methods of teaching musical arts. For the qualification exam, students submitted video recordings of their performances of concert programme pieces on musical instruments, voice performances, virtual versions of choral performances of pieces from choral conducting, as well as video recordings of lessons conducted remotely in general secondary education institutions during teaching practice. Thus, the experiment lasted four academic years, of which the implementation of the experimental author's model of teaching lasted three academic years.

During seminars and practical classes in general education subjects (History and Culture of Ukraine, Philosophy, Pedagogy, Psychology, as well as History of Music, Harmony, etc.), students learned to create multimedia presentations in compliance with all didactic and technical requirements, develop interactive online exercises and quizzes, games, and illustrative and demonstration materials.

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<sup>28</sup> Vasilyeva, O. "Qualification Exam in Choir Conducting: Distance Format." In: *Choral Creativity and Education: Understanding Traditions, Mastering Innovations*. Helvetica, 2023, pp. 14–18. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K\\_aKZGzhlW\\_1ztHFf5eFGned5d-TP8g/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K_aKZGzhlW_1ztHFf5eFGned5d-TP8g/view)

In musical instrument and voice training classes, students learned to make audio and video recordings of their performances and, together with their teacher and other students, analyze these recordings, which helped them to acquire performance skills and develop artistic and pedagogical reflection. In choral conducting and choral class lessons, students mastered MIDI scores, audio and video recordings of singing and conducting. Subsequently, teachers and students mastered the technology of creating virtual choirs. To this end, they also used audio and video recordings, audio and video mastering techniques, as well as methods for creating and implementing a directorial concept for music videos based on choral performances.<sup>29</sup>

Students also used the skills acquired in this way in classes on methods of teaching music and the integrated course “Art”, and later, during teaching practice at school, to develop and conduct music art lessons and the integrated course “Art” in a distance format, to create original educational multimedia products for such lessons: presentations, slideshows, interactive online exercises, games and quizzes recording thematic didactic podcasts, video lessons, etc. (Figure 1).

Thus, the experimental teaching model that was developed and implemented involved students mastering methods for creating:

- multimedia presentations;
- development of interactive online exercises, surveys, games;
- audio recording;
- video recording;
- audio and video mastering;
- basics of multimedia product directing, etc.

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<sup>29</sup> Vasylieva, Oksana, Kalinina, Nataliia, & Malysh, Stella. “Training Future Music Teachers to Create a Video Concept for a Virtual Choir.” In: A. Sokolova (Ed.), *Time of Art Education*. H. S. Skovoroda KhNPU, 2025, pp. 125–129.  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YGvrJrY0yuqvVAzLP5KujLI2ypOa4rZY/view>

Figure 1



**Content components of the model for training future teachers to create original educational media products**  
*Source: developed by the authors*

Let us take a closer look at the stages of ensuring the content component of our experimental model (Table 1). The data in Table 1 show how the complexity of the media products that students learned to create gradually increased from semester to semester. This was achieved thanks to the targeted training in creating such products, integrated into the process of mastering various educational components (academic disciplines, practices, etc.), as envisaged by our experimental model. We analyzed the content of each educational component, including the lists of general and specific competencies to be developed under the programme of each academic discipline, as well as the programme learning outcomes that each discipline and practical training contribute to achieving. The results of the analysis helped to develop a clear plan for the gradual, step-by-step mastery by students of creating various media products, ranging from basic multimedia presentations and online surveys to virtual choirs.

**Table 1**

Content components of the model	Preparatory stage		Experimental and formative stage					Final analysis stage										
	I semester	II semester	III semester	IV semester	V semester	VI semester	VII semester	VIII semester	Final assessment									
	Educational components																	
Multimedia presentations	Pedagogy, History of Music		History of Ukraine, Pedagogy, Psychology, History of Music		History of Music, Political and Legal Studies, Pedagogy, Psychology, Methods of Teaching Music Arts		Pedagogy, Psychology, Methods of Teaching Music		Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course " Art" and methods of teaching it		Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course " Art" and methods of teaching it		Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Teaching Internship		Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Music Education		Methodology of Music Art Teaching	

TRAINING FUTURE TEACHERS OF MUSIC AND OF THE INTEGRATED COURSE “ART”  
TO CREATE ORIGINAL EDUCATIONAL MEDIA PRODUCTS

Content components of the model	Preparatory stage		Experimental and formative stage					Final analysis stage	
	I semester	II semester	III semester	IV semester	V semester	VI semester	VII semester	VIII semester	Final assessment
	Educational components								
Online exercises, surveys		School choir singing	History of Music, Pedagogy, Psychology, Methods of Teaching Music	Pedagogy, Psychology, Methods of Teaching Music	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course “ Art” and methods of teaching it	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course “ Art” and methods of teaching it	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Teaching Internship	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Music Education	Methodology of Music Art Teaching

Content components of the model	Preparatory stage		Experimental and formative stage					Final analysis stage
	I semester	II semester	III semester	IV semester	V semester	VI semester	VII semester	VIII semester
	Educational components							
Audio recording, video recording			Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course " Art" and methods of teaching it, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course " Art" and methods of teaching it, Analysis and arrangement of vocal and choral works, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting, Teaching practice	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting
								Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting, Choral class

TRAINING FUTURE TEACHERS OF MUSIC AND OF THE INTEGRATED COURSE "ART"  
TO CREATE ORIGINAL EDUCATIONAL MEDIA PRODUCTS

Content components of the model	Preparatory stage		Experimental and formative stage					Final analysis stage
	I semester	II semester	III semester	IV semester	V semester	VI semester	VII semester	VIII semester
	Educational components							
Audio and video mastering			Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting	Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course " Art" and methods of teaching it, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course " Art" and methods of teaching it, Analysis and arrangement of vocal and choral works, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Analysis and arrangement of vocal and choral works, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting, Teaching Internship	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting
								Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Main musical instrument, Voice training, Choral conducting, Choral class

Content components of the model	Preparatory stage		Experimental and formative stage					Final analysis stage
	I semester	II semester	III semester	IV semester	V semester	VI semester	VII semester	VIII semester
	Educational components							
Fundamentals of Media Product Music Directing					Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course " Art" and methods of teaching it, Choir class	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Integrated course " Art" and methods of teaching it, Analysis and arrangement of vocal and choral works, Choral class	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Analysis and Arrangement of Vocal and Choral Works, Choral Class, Teaching Internship	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Multimedia technologies in music education, Choir class
						Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Multimedia technologies in music education, Choir class	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Multimedia technologies in music education, Choir class	

TRAINING FUTURE TEACHERS OF MUSIC AND OF THE INTEGRATED COURSE "ART"  
TO CREATE ORIGINAL EDUCATIONAL MEDIA PRODUCTS

Content components of the model	Preparatory stage		Experimental and formative stage					Final analysis stage	
	I se- mes- ter	II se- mes- ter	III se- mes- ter	IV se- mes- ter	V se- mes- ter	VI se- mes- ter	VII se- mes- ter	VIII se- mes- ter	Final assessment
	Educational components								
Virtual choir					Choir class	Choir class	Choir class	Methodology of Music Art Teaching, Multimedia technologies in music education, Choir class	Choral conducting, Choral class

**Stages of implementation of the model's content components in various  
educational components**

*Source: developed by the authors*

The results of the experiment present changes in the levels of key components of the students' competence under study under the influence of the proposed experimental learning model.

For further analysis of the experiment results, Table 2 is provided, which shows the dynamics of changes in the levels of M, D, and R in the experimental sample of students, as well as their integrated competence index K, before and after the implementation of the experimental model. This table will allow us to clearly see the impact of the methodology on the formation of key components of the ability to create original media products.

**Table 2**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Before implementing the model</b>	<b>After implementing the model</b>
Level M	3.0	4.7
Level D	2.7	4.5
Level R	3.1	4.8
Index K	2.93	4.67

**Average indicators of students' media literacy skills before and after the implementation of the experimental model**

*Source: developed by the authors*

This table presents significant positive changes in the levels of media creation competence components in future teachers of music and of the integrated subject “Art” after the implementation of the experimental model. In particular, the average level of musical and general artistic-pedagogical and methodological knowledge and skills, as well as performing skills and the ability to interpret musical works (M), increased from 3.0 to 4.7 points, which indicates the effectiveness of the model in deepening professional knowledge and skills. The level of digital skills (D), which are critical for creating original educational media products, also showed significant growth – from 2.7 to 4.5 points, indicating that students have successfully mastered digital technologies, allowing them to confidently work with modern digital tools for artistic and educational purposes.

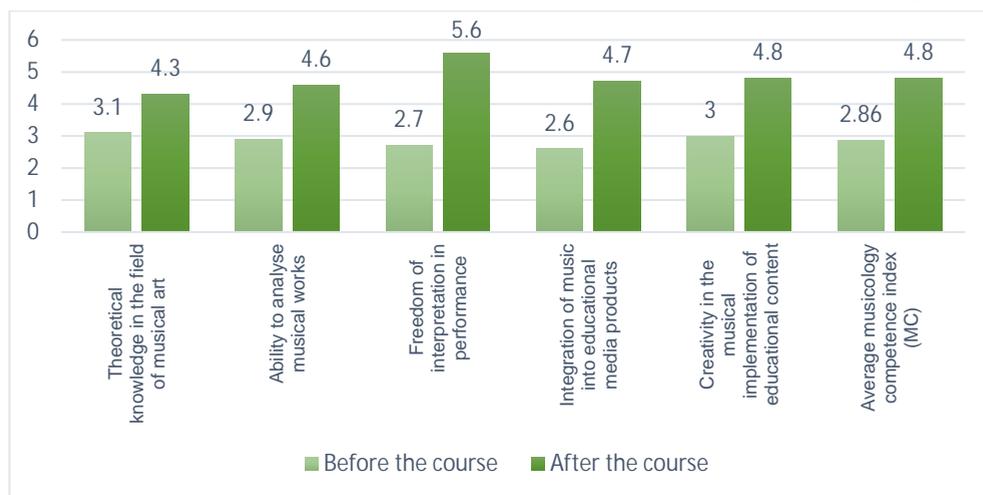
Reflectiveness, based on emotional and value-based attitudes towards musical art and art in general, as well as one’s own musical and pedagogical activities (R) – the ability to evaluate one’s own performance and productivity – increased from 3.1 to 4.8 points, which also indicate an increase in the level of self-awareness and critical thinking in students, necessary for professional self-development. The overall competence index (K), which is the average integrated value of the three components, increased from 2.93 to 4.67, representing a significant qualitative leap in the comprehensive development of the professional qualities of future teachers of musical art and of the integrated course “Art”.

At the initial stage of the study, it was found that most students had sufficient, but mainly a formal level of musicological knowledge, with a low level of emotional and value-based attitude to music and the ability to perform their own interpretations.

The experimental educational influences involved students mastering audio and video recording technologies for their own performances, learning about performance, musical-pedagogical, and interpretative analysis, and mastering a range of digital tools. Additionally, they learned to create original

media products within the context of musical-pedagogical education. At the final analytical stage of the experiment, an increase in the average score was recorded, which indicates the effectiveness of the experimental model implemented. Students began to apply artistic analysis more broadly and thoughtfully in their own educational developments and performance interpretations, demonstrating not only a deeper understanding of musical material but also an ability to interpret freely. The results of the expert evaluation showed an increase in creative independence, originality of solutions and methodological soundness (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**



**The dynamics of changes in musicological knowledge and the performance and interpretation skills of students**

*Source: developed by the authors*

Analytical data confirm that teaching students to create original educational multimedia products has become a catalyst for interdisciplinary integration, contributed to the expansion of cognitive horizons and the activation of creative potential, which has had a positive impact on students' motivation for further professional development and self-education. In addition, during the process of creating media products and their collective analysis, there was an increase in interpersonal interaction, collective discussion of creative ideas, joint analysis of various methodological approaches, and coordination of interpretative decisions. Such activities enhanced the development of communicative competence and provided social support for the creative process.

According to the survey, interpretative freedom, as one of the key components of performance skills, increased by 51.79% compared to the initial level. Students noted in the questionnaires that working on media products allowed them to move away from stereotypical ideas about standard interpretation and experiment with different methods of musical analysis, creation and implementation of a performance image, which had a positive effect on their performance and pedagogical confidence.

One of the notable results of the study was the positive change in students' attitudes towards the creation and use of original media products as a valuable educational tool. While at the initial stage most respondents perceived media products mainly as auxiliary tools – visual or technical support for theoretical material in school lessons – after the implementation of the author's model, a qualitative transformation of their pedagogical thinking took place. During the experimental training, students not only mastered the tools for creating digital content but also began to realize its potential as a means of influencing the educational process, student motivation and artistic perception of musical material.

According to the results of the questionnaire, at the final stage of the experiment, 78% of participants acknowledged that media products could be the primary means of presenting educational material. In contrast, at the beginning, only 24% believed this to be the case. At the same time, 65% of students noted that creating original media products contributes to their more profound understanding of lesson content, the structure of educational material, and learning objectives. The dynamics of students' attitudes towards the use of original media products in professional and pedagogical activities are presented in Table 3 and Figure 4.

**Table 3**

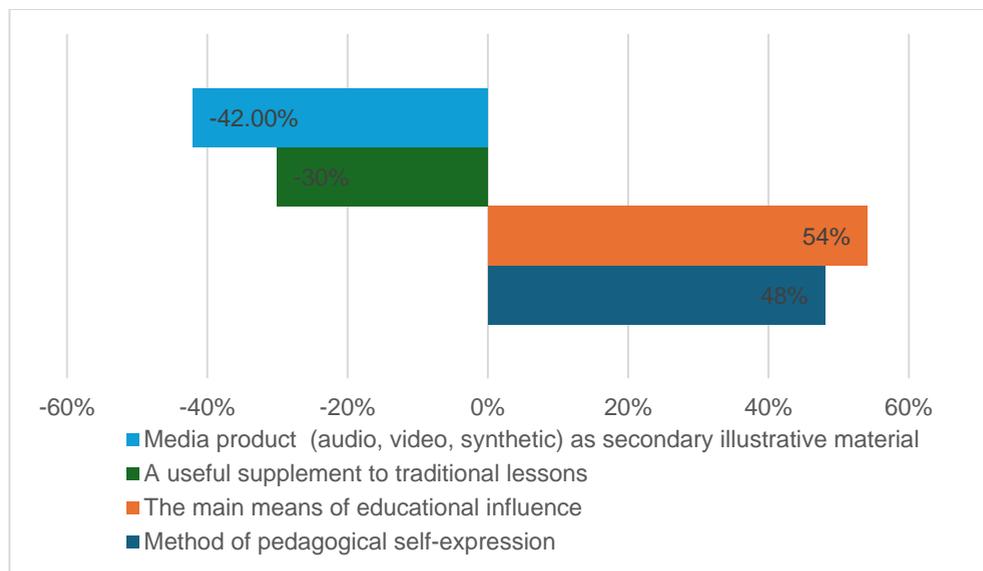
	After the implementation of the experimental model	After the implementation of the experimental model	Dynamics
Media product (audio, video, synthetic) as secondary illustrative material	56%	14%	-42%
Functional supplementary element to traditional lessons	68%	38%	-30%
Primary means of educational influence	24%	78%	+54%
Method of pedagogical self-expression	17%	65%	+48%

**Changes in students' attitudes towards the use of copyrighted media products in education before and after the implementation of the experimental teaching model**

*Source: developed by the authors*

Let us illustrate the results of comparing students' attitudes towards the use of copyrighted media products in their professional activities before and after experimental training in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**



**The dynamics of students' attitudes towards the use of copyrighted media products in professional teaching activities before and after the implementation of the experimental teaching model**

*Source: developed by the authors*

In addition, the students' subjective position has significantly strengthened: in their final open-ended responses, they emphasized the importance of the author's approach as a manifestation of pedagogical autonomy. Many of them began to view media products not as a tool for transferring ready-made knowledge, but as a means of pedagogical interpretation and personal self-expression within the educational process.

A separate vector of positive dynamics was the expansion of the range and level of development of students' creative skills in the process of creating audio, video, synthetic and interactive educational resources. Participants in the experimental training not only mastered the technical tools for media production but also demonstrated a noticeable increase in their ability to conceptualize their own ideas, seek non-standard ways of presenting material and create aesthetically coherent, stylistically balanced products. An analysis of student work shows a gradual shift from template-based presentations to creative, original solutions. The projects began to feature elements of video lessons with

original editing and sound design, podcasts with original scripts and interviews, as well as interactive tasks combining animation, gamification, and didactic principles of art education. Students learned to create media products that were not only functional but also artistically expressive, taking into account the logic of composition, emotional impact, and the reaction of the target audience (Table 4).

**Table 4**

Type of media product	Examples of tools used	Share in total (%)	Distinctive features	Time spent per unit of product (average)
Video lessons	OBS Studio, Canva	32%	Own video editing, music samples, titles, subtitles	4 hours
Podcasts	Anchor by Spotify, Audacity	18%	Script, unique text, background music	2.5 hours
Interactive exercises	Canva, Wordwall	10%	Animation, hyperlinks, tasks with visual accompaniment	2 hours
Audio lessons	BandLab, Audacity	15%	Voice recording, music inserts	3 hours
Presentations with embedded video/audio	Canva, PowerPoint	11%	A combination of different formats	1.5 hours
Virtual choirs	Audacity, Adobe Audition, Reaper, Logic Pro X (macOS), Cubase	15%	Combination of different formats	3 hours

**Typology of the Author's Media Products**

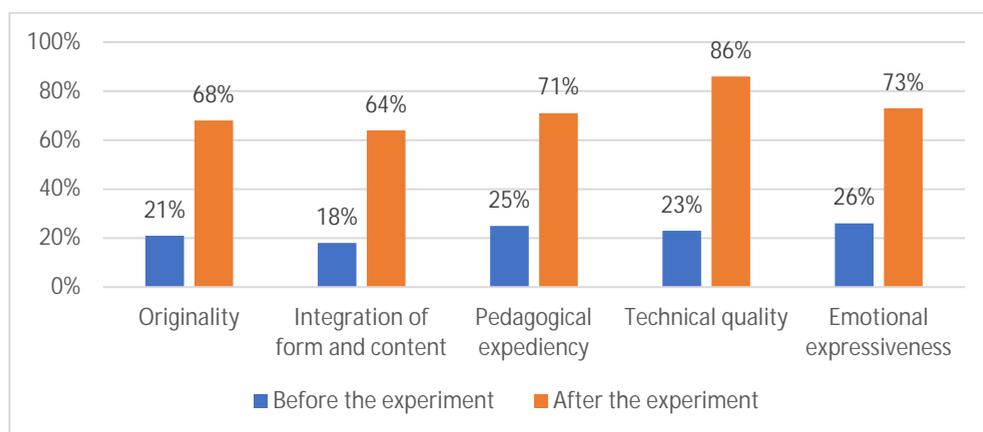
*Source: developed by the authors*

The percentages in the table reflect the share of each type of media product among all those created by students during the experimental stage of training, i.e. in the process of implementing the author's training model. The most common format was video lessons (34%), which indicates an increase in students' willingness to work with video editors and integrate different types of content (sound, images, text, animation) into a single learning structure. Podcasts and interactive exercises were also popular (21% and 19% respectively); they required less technical complexity, while still demanding scenario thinking and digital design tool proficiency from students.

Presentations with embedded elements accounted for the smallest share (11%), likely due to their less innovative format, as well as audio lessons (15%), which students primarily chose during the initial stage of skill formation. The easiest to implement were linear formats with minimal interactivity (presentations, audio lessons), while the most difficult were those that required a deeper understanding of multimedia editing and structured design of educational material (video lessons, interactive exercises, virtual choirs). It should be noted that the virtual versions of choral works created by students were not included in the statistical analysis, as they became a mandatory form of work and one of the forms of reporting during the qualification exam in the final attestation process.

An expert assessment of the level of creativity in student media products showed a significant increase in creative initiative based on the conscious use of musical and pedagogical knowledge in combination with technological tools (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**



**Improvement in the quality of original media products**

**Source: developed by the authors**

The most dynamic growth was observed in technical quality, increasing from 23% to 86%, which indicates a significant improvement in digital tool skills. High growth was also observed in terms of pedagogical relevance (from 25% to 71%) and emotional expressiveness (from 26% to 73%), which indicates a more profound understanding by students of the educational function of media content and the ability to communicate content expressively through artistic means. The indicators of originality (an increase from 21% to 68%) and the integration of form and content (an increase from 18% to 64%) confirm the development of the author's vision and ability to think structurally in the process of creating an educational product.

After implementing the experimental training model, students showed a significant increase in their musical and pedagogical knowledge, digital skills, and reflective abilities, based on an emotional and value-based attitude towards art and their own artistic and pedagogical activities. The overall index of competence formed increased significantly, confirming the effectiveness of the comprehensive model for developing the professional competence of future music teachers in media creation and the integrated course “Art”.

## 5. Discussion

The study revealed that working with educational media products, which required a deep understanding of each stage of the creative process, played a special role in shaping the professional self-awareness of future teachers of music and of the integrated course “Art”. Students gradually developed the ability to see themselves not only as performers, but also as active initiators of purposeful pedagogical influence, responsible for the quality of communication with their future audience. The central category of this process is reflection, which allows students to interpret their own activities not only from the perspective of external assessment criteria, but also through the prism of internal professional values and identity.

A significant improvement in reflectivity indicators, manifested primarily through an increase in scores in the assessment of the ability to perform original interpretations, emphasized the importance of this personal and professional phenomenon in the field of music education. Similar conclusions were reached in the work of Gyamfi et al.<sup>30</sup> The authors emphasized that integrating structured support into the assessment process has a positive impact on the quality of the content created and the development of critical thinking. They also noted the importance of developing students’ ability to self-analyze and provide constructive feedback, which contributes to a deeper understanding of the teaching material and the development of professional competencies. The authors claimed that the organization of collective reflection is key in educational media initiatives and enhances their pedagogical value.

Zhang et al. noted that integrating creative content creation into the learning process helps develop critical thinking, logical analysis, and problem-solving skills, which are key components of professional thinking.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Gyamfi, George, Hanna, Barbara, Khosravi, Hassan. “Supporting Peer Evaluation of Student-Generated Content: A Study of Three Approaches.” In *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 47(7), 2021, pp. 1129–1147.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.2006140>

<sup>31</sup> Zhang, Yifan, Mirzaei, Amanda M., Mouza, Chrystalla, Pollock, Lori, Guidry, Kevin. “Examining Computational Thinking across Disciplines in Higher Education Classrooms: Learning

We agree with the authors' conclusions. The value of students creating media products was also noted by Kenna, who studied the potential of student podcasts as a tool for science education, and Hall and Jones, who researched student podcasts as an effective tool for distance learning.<sup>32</sup>

The study showed that the use of modern digital tools allows expanding opportunities for active student engagement in the learning process, ensuring individualization of the educational experience and creation of adaptive media products. In addition, technology stimulates the development of students' creative potential, allowing them to experiment with different formats for presenting musical and artistic material in general and to create multimedia content that meets modern educational requirements. Similarly, in her work, Gül found that the use of digital platforms, software for creating and analyzing music, interactive presentations and online resources significantly contribute to increasing student motivation, enriching their musical experience and individualizing the learning process.<sup>33</sup>

Parkita concluded that the use of modern digital platforms, mobile applications, and online resources significantly expands the possibilities of music education, especially in the context of distance or blended learning.<sup>34</sup> We agree with Parkita's conclusions. In turn, Stefanova et al. noted that the creation of digital content stimulates students' involvement in creative activities, which is consistent with the results of research on the relevance of creating media products in the field of musical art.<sup>35</sup>

The study found that the use of digital multimedia technologies in education also contributes to the development of metacognitive processes, in particular self-reflection and critical thinking, as students are allowed to

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Outcomes from Student-Generated Artifacts." In *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-024-09425-1>

<sup>32</sup> Kenna, Therese. "Podcasting Urban Geographies: Exploring the Usefulness of Student-Generated Academic Podcasts for Deep Learning and Education for Sustainable Development." In *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 47(4), 2022, pp. 533–552. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2022.2122030>; Hall, Naomi M., Jones, Jason M. "Student-Produced Podcasts as a Teaching and Learning Tool." In *American Journal of Distance Education*, 37(1), 2021, pp. 53–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2021.1995256>

<sup>33</sup> Gül, Gülnihal. "Use of Technology-Supported Educational Tools in General Music Education and its Contribution to the Process of Music Education." In *Acta Educationis Generalis*, 13(2), 2023, pp. 63–81. <https://doi.org/10.2478/atd-2023-0014>

<sup>34</sup> Parkita, Ewa. "Digital Tools of Universal Music Education." In *Central European Journal of Educational Research*, 3(1), 2021, pp. 60–66. <https://doi.org/10.37441/cej/2021/3/1/9352>

<sup>35</sup> Stefanova, Petya, Stefanov, Pavel, & Doychinov, Yordan. 2021. "Creating Digital Educational Content – Opportunities and Perspectives for Creative Interaction in Music Education." In: *13th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies*." IATED, 2021, pp. 4606–4611. <https://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2021.0958>

analyze and adjust their own activities. Rahmaturrizki and Sukmayadi noted that resources such as educational videos on YouTube can significantly complement traditional educational materials.<sup>36</sup> We agree with Yan and Xia, who showed that the use of technologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence significantly enhances the effectiveness of students' learning, primarily by increasing engagement and personalizing the learning experience.<sup>37</sup> In their work, Michałko et al. came to conclusions that are consistent with the results of research on media products in music education.<sup>38</sup> However, the authors also emphasized that the effective use of technology should not be limited to technical support for lessons, but should contribute to a deeper, more meaningful musical experience.

### 5.1. Limitations

The study involved a limited sample, which may affect the representativeness and generalizability of the results obtained. Additionally, the focus on a specific group of students of art majors and specializations in higher pedagogical education institutions limits the applicability of the conclusions in a broader educational context.

### 5.2. Recommendations

Recommendations for further research include expanding the sample by involving students from different levels of higher education and different institutions of higher pedagogical education. It is also advisable to study the impact of technology integration on the professional development of teachers in the process of continuing education.

## 6. Conclusions

The study found that the integration of musical and pedagogical knowledge, performance and interpretation skills, digital skills, and reflexivity contributes to a significant improvement in the professional training of future teachers of music and the integrated course "Art". The introduced model for developing the competence to create original educational media products,  $K = f(M, D, R)$ , has proven its effectiveness, as reflected in a significant increase in all components – musicological, performance and interpretation,

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<sup>36</sup> Rahmaturrizki, Muhammad I., & Sukmayadi, Yudi. "YouTube as Audio Visual Media Learning in Music Education." In: *3rd International Conference on Arts and Design Education*. Atlantis Press, 2021, pp. 297–303. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210203.064>

<sup>37</sup> Yan, Jin, Xia, Xiongjun. "Interactive Audio-Visual Course Teaching of Music Education based on VR and AI Support." In *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 40(13), 2023, pp. 3552–3559. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2023.2190668>

<sup>38</sup> Michałko, Aleksandra, Campo, Adriaan., Nijs, Luc, Leman, Marc, Van Dyck, Edith. "Toward a Meaningful Technology for Instrumental Music Education: Teachers' Voice." In *Frontiers in Education*, 7, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.1027042>

digital, and psychological and pedagogical. The overall competence index (K), which is the average of the three components, increased from 2.93 to 4.67, confirming the high pedagogical potential of the developed experimental teaching model and its effectiveness in forming integrated musical and digital competencies of future teachers of music and of the integrated course "Art".

The study yielded results indicating a significant improvement in all components of students' media literacy after the implementation of the experimental teaching model. The level of musical and pedagogical knowledge and performance and interpretation skills (M) increased from 3.0 to 4.7, digital skills in working with media technologies (D) increased from 2.7 to 4.5, and reflectivity (R), which is responsible for self-assessment and critical analysis of one's own activities, increased from 3.1 to 4.8 points. The overall competence index (C), which is a function of these three components, almost doubled – from 2.93 to 4.67.

The study also revealed positive dynamics in the level of interpretative freedom, indicating the ability of students to go beyond traditional performance canons and introduce innovative approaches into musical and pedagogical practice. The results showed that a comprehensive approach combining music and pedagogical education with technological support and reflection provides a deeper understanding of the professional role of a teacher of music and the integrated course "Art" and forms a stable motivation for professional self-improvement. In addition, the results confirmed that musicology and performance aspects are not only a necessary theoretical and practical basis, but also an active factor in the development of students' professional and creative qualities. The study showed that the integration of musicological knowledge and performance skills into the process of creating educational media products stimulates interpretative freedom and contributes to the formation of the creative personality of future teachers of music and of the integrated course "Art", which meets the modern requirements of professional education.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the development and testing of a comprehensive model for the formation of important professional competencies of future teachers of music and of an integrated course "Art", which requires musical and pedagogical knowledge, performance and interpretation skills, digital skills, and reflexivity. The practical value of the work is manifested in the creation of recommendations for the implementation of the author's educational media products in the educational process, which contributes to improving the quality of music and pedagogical education and developing the creative potential of students in the context of modern technological challenges. Prospects for further research include refining the criteria for evaluating educational media products, developing a typology of integrated artistic media formats, and examining their impact on student motivation in school courses for musical arts and the integrated course "Art".

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## OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE SOUND PLANE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OVERALL MUSICAL STRUCTURE

CIPRIAN PARA<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** In this paper, we aim to define the concept of the sound plane and its relationship with the musical ensemble. We have further detailed the notion of the musical ensemble, emphasizing its formation as a gathering of multiple sound sources. Additionally, we have created several diagrams to present the structure of a musical ensemble, both choral and vocal-symphonic, as well as its evolution through different musical periods. Finally, we have made observations regarding the distribution of sound planes within various types of musical ensembles. All of these ideas have been presented from the perspective of the conductor, who must understand and apply them in the interpretation of a musical work.

**Keywords:** conductor, musical ensemble, choir, sound plane

### Motto

*"The artist reveals to humanity the path to harmony,  
which is happiness and peace"*

**George Enescu**

### Introduction

In this paper, we believe it is absolutely necessary to attempt to define the concept of the sound plane. It is indeed true that, in general, all musicians have a somewhat clear idea of this notion, but we find it useful to present a definition that will assist us in the process of completing the proposed topic.

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The sound plane is one of the fundamental components of the musical ensemble, shaping numerous practical manifestations within it.

We wish to make an important clarification, namely that sound has the following qualities: pitch, duration, intensity, timbre (density)<sup>2</sup>.

We need not dwell on the first four qualities, as they have always been well known. Regarding density, it is difficult for us to provide a definition at the level of this research. However, we know that this quality exists and that it forms the basis for the overall balance of the ensemble. Therefore, we attempt to provide a provisional definition: density is the quality of sound to be more or less consistent, regardless of its intensity.

We have associated density with intensity because there are still significant confusions between the loudness of sound (resulting from intensity) and the consistency of sound (resulting from density); it should be clarified that density is not determined by intensity.

The term is often used as a metaphor, but we emphasize that this does not cover the meaning we wish to assign to it. If, in this provisional definition, we have attempted to define density as the consistency of sound, as a final concession in this expression, we could also say that density represents the weight of the sound. Therefore, the term could be defined somewhere between weight and consistency.

### **The conductor's perspective<sup>3</sup>**

Regarding the notion of the sound plane, we begin with an initial consideration, namely that multiple sound sources can either unfold independently or be grouped into sound planes. What does this mean? It means that, most often, sound events are more numerous than the sound planes.

This is most clearly explained within the "technological disciplines" where musical notation is taught, starting with 2-3 voices and continuing up to 4 voices (it is very rare to learn musical notation for more than 4 voices in a technological discipline).

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<sup>2</sup> We need not dwell on the first four qualities, as they have always been well known. Regarding density, it is difficult for us to provide a definition at the level of this research. However, we know that this quality exists and that it forms the basis for the overall balance of the ensemble. Therefore, we attempt to provide a provisional definition: density is the quality of sound to be more or less consistent, regardless of its intensity.

<sup>3</sup> Para, Ciprian, *Conceptia interpretativă în demersul dirijoral (Interpretive Concept in the Conducting Approach)*, Editura Media Musica, Cluj-Napoca, p. 34, 2015

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE SOUND PLANE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
OVERALL MUSICAL STRUCTURE

Today, it seems natural for us to speak of soprano, alto, and bass from a “fugue” for organ or harpsichord by J.S. Bach, just as it is equally normal to speak about the “bass” in a harmonic writing within Beethoven’s piano works, for example.

If a voice = sound plane, then what is a part?

If, in an Oratorio, at a certain point, the trumpet, flute, first violin, and soprano from the choir all intone the same melodic line, it means they naturally form a sound plane. However, in the same work, the same melodic line will only be intoned by the first violin in the context of a section attributed solely to the string orchestra.

We have made these observations to suggest the complexity of the concept of the sound plane, without which, as we will see further, it will not be possible to define the concept of the musical ensemble.

In other words, the melody of a soprano in a vocal quartet is a sound plane, but it can also take the form of a sound plane of a vocal part in a choir; or, in the case of the vocal-symphonic (accompanied in the corresponding registers by flute, trumpet, first violin), it is another manifestation of the same sound plane.

Closely related to the notion of the sound plane are both the concepts of part and doubling. However, there are clear distinctions between the concept of part and that of doubling. A part serves a sound plane within a timbral unit. For example, the soprano part in a choir means 10-20-30 choir members, similarly, the first violin part in an orchestra means 8-10-14 violinists, etc.

If the melodic line divides, then the same timbral unit opens two sound planes.

The concept of doubling is more complex, as it involves, on one hand, the blending of multiple timbres (the essence of orchestration or certain refinements in choral writing), and, on the other hand, a spatialization of the plane, a dispersal of it across different registers of the general musical scale.

Doubling can create a spectacular dispersal of the sound plane in space; for example: piccolo – double bass, etc.

In conclusion, the sound plane is a consequence of musical writing and cannot be determined by the structure of the ensemble. It is true, however, that for musical writing to be effective, it must take into account the structure of the ensemble, but this structure cannot determine the physiognomy of the sound plane.

Because the complexity of the sound plane issues is closely related to the concept of the ensemble, before delving into details, we consider it necessary to clarify the notion of the musical ensemble.

In contrast to the traditional viewpoint on the idea of the ensemble, we feel compelled to open this paragraph precisely because the issue requires more flexibility in the direction of the observations. An ensemble is far from being a simple association of sound sources, whether they are voices or instruments. However, we can still discern two criteria for associating sound sources within the ensemble, namely:

1. The criterion of belonging to a register (high, middle, low)
2. The criterion of timbral unity

An ensemble formed based on these primary criteria appears as a gathering of multiple sound sources, stratified according to the register criterion and grouped according to timbral criteria. Therefore, the concept of ensemble is fundamentally based on the notion of singing or playing together, which is so suggestively called in German: *“Zusammenspiel.”*

The boundary between singular sound sources (solo) and where various musical formations can rightfully be called a musical ensemble is quite difficult to define. For example: if we consider the complexity of musical writing, we often arrive at paradoxical observations: an organ, a piano, or even a solo cello have much more complex musical writing than a vocal part in a choir, where many more performers participate, and yet in no instance can these solo instruments be referred to as an ensemble.

In everyday language, we refer to Duo-duet, Trio-terzet, quartet, quintet, and from there on, more rarely, sextet, septet, octet, nonet, decet, etc. These terms tend to be replaced by the term “chamber ensemble.”

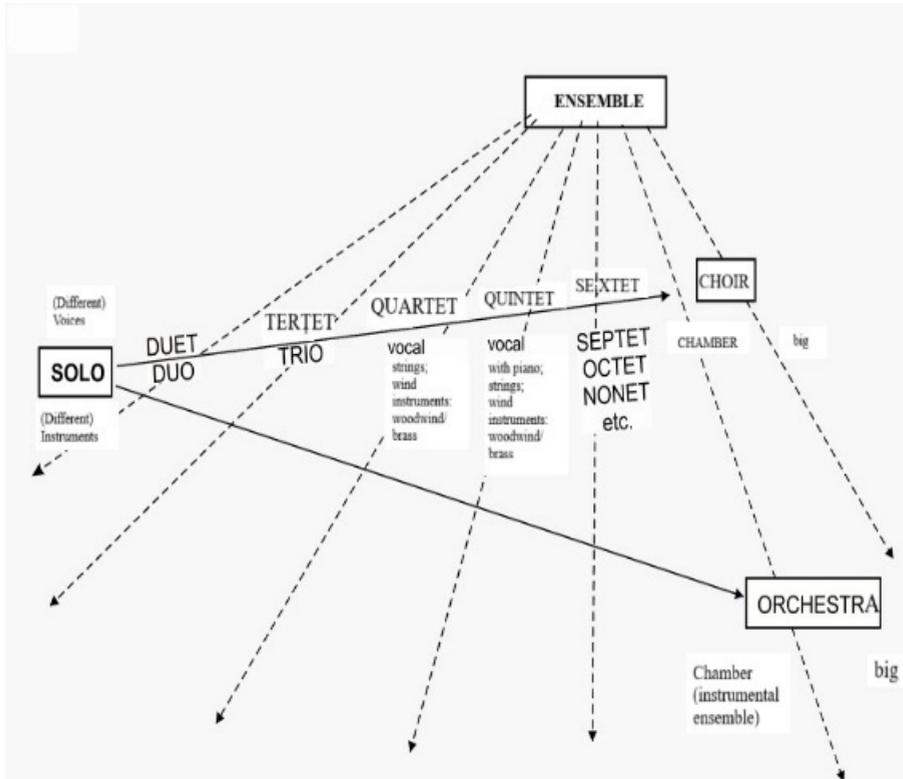
As the number of performers increases, the term is replaced by “orchestra.”

The phenomenon is similar in vocal music, with one clarification: within the vocal ensemble, in its most characteristic form, i.e., the choir, the concept of the part becomes necessary. That is, the gathering of vocal parts forms the choir, while the gathering of voices forms a duet, trio, etc. In a way, the origin of the choir later determined the genesis of the string orchestra (the string ensemble being the only type of ensemble in which we have instrumental parts, similar to the choir). In the case of wind instruments, we distinguish various chamber formations: woodwind octet, brass quintet, etc.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE SOUND PLANE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OVERALL MUSICAL STRUCTURE

Having reached this point, we reproduce a diagram that illustrates the scope of the term “ensemble.” (Figure 1)

Figure 1



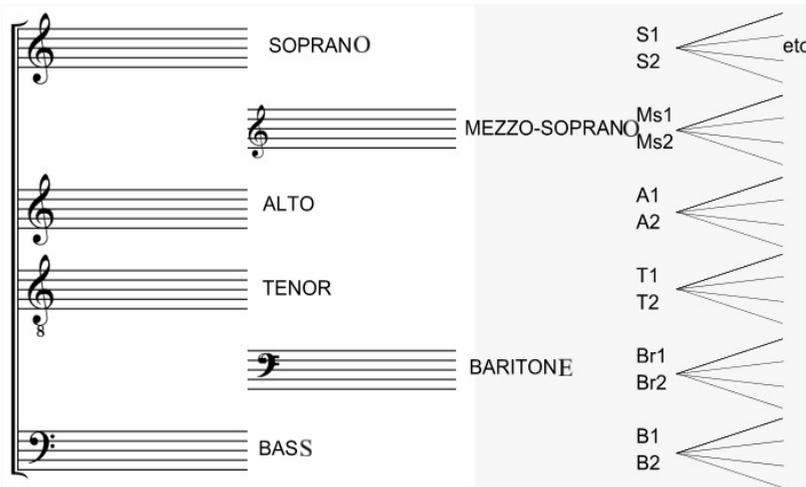
Structure of the Musical Ensemble<sup>4</sup>

Given the observations above, we would like to pause for a moment and focus on the notation of a score intended for the ensemble.

<sup>4</sup> Timaru Valentin. *Ansamblul muzical și arta scriiturii pentru diversele sale ipostaze (The Musical Ensemble and the Art of Writing for Its Various Manifestations)*

In principle, the score takes into account the sound sources' belonging to a specific register and is structured in staves, whose foundation is always the low register. (Figure 2)

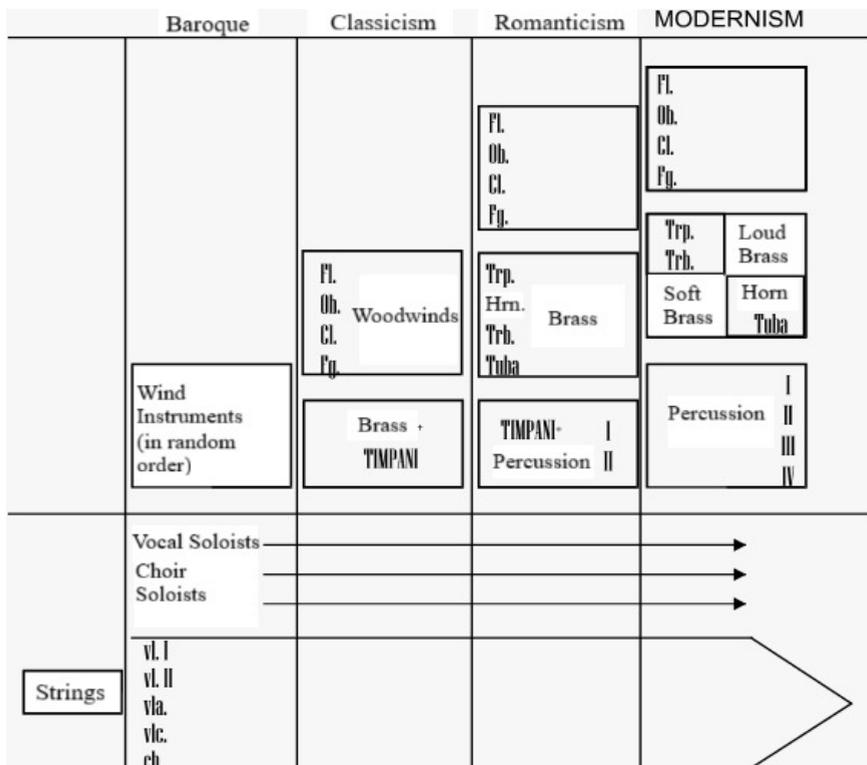
**Figure 2**



### Choral Voices and Musical Keys<sup>5</sup>

In the case of the orchestra, the score has two criteria of notation, which operate simultaneously: first, the one related to the belonging to a register (similar to the choral score), which operates within an instrumental family, and then the overlapping of these systems from various families according to an evolutionary-historical criterion. (Figure 3)

Figure 3



The Principle of Constructing a Score from Different Stylistic Stages<sup>5</sup>

As can be seen, the principle of constructing a complex score is as follows: at the base there is always the string orchestra system (that is, the ensemble that actually generated the concept of the orchestra); above it, other systems were gradually added: first, the wind instruments in a random order, and then their grouping according to their belonging to the instrumental families.

<sup>5</sup> Diagram created by the author, referring to a choral and orchestral ensemble

The evolution of the score followed the principle of a constant “expansion,” so that new instruments were always placed above the string orchestra system.

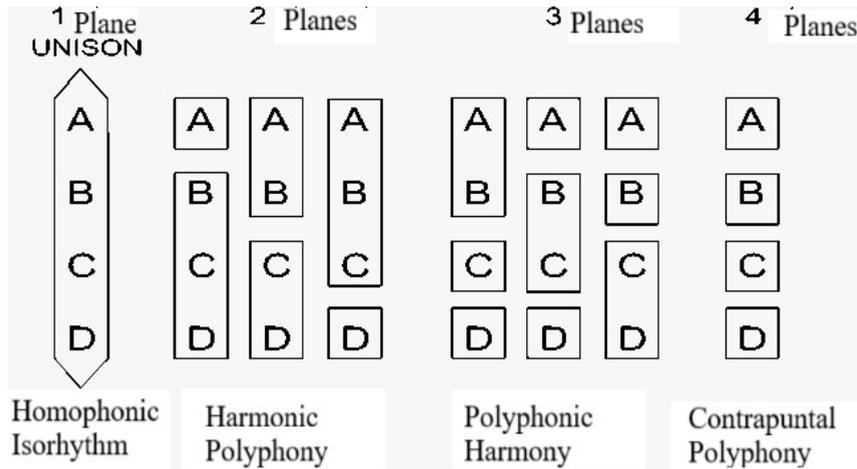
Of course, we often witness certain “licences” that composers take when notating scores. A frequent case is that of the piccolo, followed by horns, percussion, or vocal soloists.

In the case of non-traditional chamber formations, so randomly conceived by contemporary composers, the notation of the score is imposed by the author.

Having reached this point, we believe it is necessary to once again refer to the schematic structure of technological disciplines. This, of course, refers to the fact that both harmony and counterpoint study musical writing primarily up to 4 voices.

If, conventionally, we refer to these voices with the symbols A, B, C, D (this to avoid confusion with the S A T B sound plane in general), then, according to elementary logic, we have the following combinatory possibilities. (Figure 4):

**Figure 4**



**Different Manifestations of the Sound Plane<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>6</sup> Diagram created by the author

On the left, we have mentioned the case of the combination of A, B, C, D into a single sound plane, a case that can be encountered in two manifestations:

- 1) in unison
- 2) homophonic isorhythm

In the case of homophonic isorhythm, we are in the technological domain of harmony.

At the far right of the diagram, we have 4 voices and 4 sound planes, and without going into details, we simply emphasize that this refers to a polyphonic musical discourse typical of what has been studied in counterpoint.

Between these extremes, we can encounter the distribution of voices across 2 or 3 sound planes, a kind of polyphonic harmony or harmonic polyphony.

This schematic of the voices can, of course, be applied to the soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices, as well as to any instrumental family.

Of course, the observation can also be extended to the structure with 5 voices, which is especially useful when discussing brass groups (2 trumpets + 3 trombones or 4 horns + 1 tuba, referring to the most common cases in orchestras). We emphasize only this: a sound plane can exist in a multitude of manifestations. It is enough to substitute the symbols A, B, C, D with the components of the ensemble we wish to observe, and we already have support for developing our observations.

For example, in a string quartet, A = first violin, B = second violin, C = viola, D = cello; if we look at the distribution of the sound planes in the string quartet, from the previous diagram we can see the possibilities of this type of ensemble.

Similarly, we can arrange our observations with any family of instruments.

In the case of combining these, the overlapping of different timbres inevitably comes into play.

Next, we will mention a few essential elements for the formation of the idea of an ensemble, closely related to the awareness of the concept of the sound plane, namely: the formation of an ensemble within the context of a timbral unit, that is, within what we call an instrumental family. In this case, the issues of notation are closely related to balancing registers and the physiological proximity of emission (a phenomenon that is valid for both instruments and voices).

In this context, in the case of homophonic writing, the ensemble must convey a principal timbral homogeneity, without which the musical writing is compromised.

In cases of writing on 2 or 3 sound planes, many more details and refinements of the writing can come into play.

In the case of contrapuntal writing, the situation is much clearer, with the ensemble being shaped alongside the music it performs.

Unison, however, is one of the most controversial issues of the ensemble because it essentially serves a single melodic line.

In the context of the ensemble, we find several manifestations of it. For example: the real unison, in relation to the general musical scale, achieved through sound sources that are differently tensioned, depending on the relationship between the ambitus and the passage that must be intoned.

Here, we again encounter many writing refinements as well as subjective spatialization sensations, such as a tenor voice intoning in the superhigh register a unison with an alto voice, projecting the subjective image of a masculine voice singing above the feminine voice, even though, acoustically, our voices are intoning the same pitches. Why this sensation? Because the tenor tensions in the superhigh register, while the alto sings normally in the chest voice register.

Returning to unison, we mention the other manifestation, namely the spatialized unison, where the same sound plane is intoned in different registers, with the clear intention of contouring the same melodic line at different pitch levels.

We believe this is the appropriate place to add some slight clarifications regarding the homogenization of an ensemble, whether vocal or instrumental.

In the case of the choir, if we take into account the typical physiology of each voice, homogenization has a real chance of success. The essential element is that voices should be used in a unified physiology.

Problematics are the very strong and metallic voices, those “brasses” of the part, which need to be softened and have a high potential for de-homogenization in large nuances: forte, fortissimo. Also, high voices, such as soprano and tenor, have a higher chance of de-homogenization, while lower voices, such as alto and bass, are less prone to this issue.

Homogenization at the level of the vocal ensemble implies homogenization of the timbral spectrum, intonation, rhythm, vocal construction, etc.

In the case of woodwind instruments, we have two subgroups with diametrically opposite characteristics: the first—double reeds—are robust,

very timbrally characteristic in the lower register, extraordinarily malleable in the middle register, capable of very sensitive and gradual nuances from piano to fortissimo, only to lose their timbre gradually in the high register.

On the other hand, there is the flute and clarinet, which are very soft, somewhat sensual in the first sixth of the low register; having almost unlimited possibilities in the middle register but gradually becoming more strident in the high and superhigh registers.

In the case of the string orchestra, the issues are very similar to those of the choir, taking into account, of course, the specific technique. As mentioned at the appropriate time, only the choir and string orchestras face the thorny issue of part homogenization (since, as we well know, wind players are chamber formations that are added optionally in the evolution of orchestral music).

## Conclusions

In the conclusion of this paper, we would like to highlight a few aspects of the relationship between the sound plane and the musical ensemble.

Any type of ensemble has the flexibility to adapt to various types of musical writing, of course, provided that the respective writing takes into account the fundamental characteristics of the ensemble (ambitus, registers, specific execution techniques, dynamic potential, etc.).

As far as we are concerned, we made this observation to emphasize that, in principle, the sound planes of a musical writing are the same.

Returning to the parallelism we made between voices and instruments, we propose naming the sound planes of musical writing with a few established terms closely related to the voice.

- a two-voice writing encompasses the descant plane and the bass plane;

- a three-voice writing includes the high voice, the middle voice, and the low voice;

- a four-voice writing includes: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.<sup>7</sup> (Figure 5)

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<sup>7</sup> As can be seen from the schemes proposed above, each type of ensemble can adapt to a variety of plans determined by the musical writing

**Figure 5**

2 Planes								
	Women's Choir	Men's Choir	Mixed Choir	Strings	Woodwinds	Loud Brass	Soft Brass	Brass
DISCANT	S	T	Women	vl. I vl. II (vln)	Fl. Ob.	Trp.	Horn	Trp., Hrn.
BASS	A	B	Men	(vln) vlc. cb.	Cl. Fg.	Trb.	Tuba	Trb., Tuba

3 Planes								
High	S	T	S	vl. I	Fl.	Trp. <sub>1</sub>	Hrn <sub>1</sub>	Trp.
Medium	MS	Br	A T	vl. II vln	Ob. Cl.	Trp. <sub>2</sub> Trb. <sub>1</sub>	Hrn <sub>2,3,4</sub>	Hrn Trb. <sub>1,2</sub>
Low	A	B	B	vlc. cb.	Fg.	Trb. <sub>2</sub> Trb. <sub>3</sub>	Tuba	Trb. <sub>3</sub> Tuba

4 Planes								
S	S <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	S	vl. I	Fl.	Trp. <sub>1</sub>	Hrn <sub>1</sub>	Trp.
A	S <sub>2</sub> M.S <sub>1</sub>	T <sub>2</sub> Br <sub>1</sub>	A	vl. II	Ob.	Trp. <sub>2</sub> Trb. <sub>1</sub>	Hrn <sub>2</sub> (3)	Hrn
T	A <sub>1</sub> M.S <sub>2</sub>	Br. Br <sub>2</sub>	T	vln	Cl.	Trb. <sub>2</sub> (2)	Hrn <sub>3</sub> (4)	Trb.
B	A <sub>2</sub> C.A	B	B	vlc. cb.	Fg.	Trb. <sub>3</sub> (2)	Tuba	Tuba

**The Sound Plane and Types of Choral Ensembles <sup>8</sup>**

Our intention, in this case, was primarily to synthesize the possibilities of musical writing on one hand and to clearly see the possibilities of combining various types of ensembles, on the other hand.

In other words, from our schema, it quickly becomes apparent the natural doublings, for example: voices – string players, voices – woodwind players, voices – brass players, depending on the particular moment of the work we are analyzing. This way, we can understand why it is natural for the

<sup>8</sup> Diagram created by the author

soprano voice, first violin, flute, and trumpet to form a single sound plane in a tutti section of a vocal-symphonic or opera piece.

From this schematic view, we can also observe why middle voices and instruments are so flexible and mobile, shifting as needed either towards the soprano, bass, alto, or tenor ranges. And so, we could conclude that the foundation of ensemble balance should be sought in these “voices”. For example:

- a good choir is one with strong altos and tenors;
- a good quartet is one with a good viola;
- a good string orchestra is one with strong second violin and viola sections;
- a good woodwind octet is one with good oboes and clarinets;
- in brass sections, the key issue is at the horn level.

In conclusion, a conductor should be aware of these issues, especially when the musical writing does not follow the natural distribution of voices across the planes; they are forced to intervene and correct, as homogeneity tends to suffer significantly in such situations.

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## MEDIA REPRESENTATION IN CONTEMPORARY ACADEMIC PIANO PERFORMANCE: ALEXANDRE THARAUD'S PHENOMENON

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**SUMMARY.** The problem area of the proposed article is outlined by the issue of the development of academic piano performance in the realities of modern life, marked by the search by musicians for new approaches to the interpretation of musical classics in the conditions of rapid renewal of methods of communication with the audience. The innovative element of the investigation is associated with the inclusion of the media space (which is implemented mainly through the system of Internet tools) in the factual base of scientific research, which is a sign of the exclusive role of modern mass media in promoting the performing achievements of musicians. The study of Alexandre Tharaud's releases from the perspective of media representations of his performance work is of exceptional interest, both from the perspective of revealing the performance phenomenon of the French pianist as a media figure, and from the point of view of solving the problem of actualizing academic art in the present, the way of broadcasting the experience of the past through the use of modern forms of presentation and a system of references between objects.

**Keywords:** Modern piano performance, Musical work, Interpretation, Representation, Media space, Communication.

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## Introduction

The evolution of performing academic art is a natural sign of historical movement. This is confirmed by the most significant changes in the status of a musician-clavierist/pianist during the development of his instrument: the universal musician (17th - first half of the 18th century); the composer performing music (second half of the 18th century); the virtuoso creating music (from the beginning of the 19th century); the interpreter of other people's works (from the middle of the 19th to the end of the 20th century). Since the end of the 20th century, a stage of active searches has been taking place in the profession of piano performer, characterized by a wide range of approaches to works of different eras, as well as to the latest works.

The thorough elaboration of the problems of performing interpretology and the psychology of creativity by music analytics of recent times seems to leave no "open" or "undefined" questions. Meanwhile, the processes of globalization, the rapid development of Internet technologies, the accelerated tempo of life, world pandemics and many other factors have contributed to the strengthening of the positions of digital media in the existence of the modern artistic space, turning them into the most promising way for a musician to communicate with the audience. For a performer, this is an opportunity to increase and expand the circle of fans, for a listener - to join a performance that interests him, at any time convenient for him from anywhere in the world.

Before the advent of sound recording technologies, the path to public representation of a musical text went through the stage. Today, releases in the Internet space are becoming a trigger that contributes to the beginning and further development of a musician's concert career. The rapid transition of art from the real time-space of a concert hall to the digital world increasingly requires from a pianist, in addition to purely performing skills, also awareness of marketing - creativity in presenting material, the use of the latest technologies with the involvement of professionals from various industries. Creating a product that is not only professionally high-quality, but also image-unique, that is not lost in the global information "ocean", but occupies a dominant position in the field of professional competition, encourages the search for a new perspective for studying the artistic individuality of a modern performer. This involves understanding the artist's phenomenon through the study of media representation as a tool for popularizing a musician in the media space along with 'promoting' his performing achievements and strengthening the positions of academic art. Theoretical and practical understanding of such

an approach by modern performers can be beneficial in shaping their own creative careers. The work of the outstanding modern French pianist *Alexandre Tharaud*<sup>4</sup> serves as a clear proof of the effectiveness of this strategy.

## Methodology

The artist's creative output is not only large in volume, but also diverse in specificity. As research material, it can certainly be considered both from certain positions of analytical musicology and the concept of performance interpretation. Meanwhile, to assess the originality of the phenomenon of *A. Tharaud* as a media figure, to understand the instruments he used when adapting to the media environment, it turns out to be insufficient to involve only traditional approaches in the study. Performance phenomenology as a process of cognition of the individual experience of a creative personality is oriented towards "to sensory contact with the instrument (reproduction of the piano sound image)", demonstrating/reproducing "the dependence of sound technology on the development of his professional experience in music making and other artistic influences"<sup>5</sup>.

An integral feature of the French pianist's performance style is his connection with various forms of presentation - visual, verbal, plastic, which turns his author's product into original content, which requires the expansion of the methodological base when studying. It seems appropriate to use an interdisciplinary comprehensive approach that involves relevant developments in philosophy, sociology, psychology, political science, marketing. Extrapolation of the scientific theory of representation (Ankersmit, 2002; Gadamer, 1990; Holl, 1997; Wartofsky, 1979 and others)<sup>6</sup> into the field of musicological research opens up a wide field of opportunities for understanding the essence of *A. Tharaud's* creative individuality, which is most fully realized in the creation of a performance version as a model of representative practice. This necessitates

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<sup>4</sup> The pianist was born in 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Kopelyuk, Oleh. *"Ivan Karabyts Piano Art: Phenomenology of Style"* PhD. Dissertation, Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts, Kharkiv: Ukraine, 2018, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ankersmit, Frank. *Political representation (Cultural Memory in the Present)*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, California, 2002.

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the introduction of a representational method that allows for the discovery of references – links to objects or experiences (according to Wartofsky <sup>7</sup>) – between performance versions and objects of the performer’s experience.

## Literature Review

The consideration of musical performance in the system of communications mainly focuses on the relationship between the author’s text and its performing reading, which relies on algorithms of interpretation. Typically, research into the work of a contemporary pianist takes place from the perspective of such issues as “cognitive and motor skills” <sup>8</sup>, “a genuine understanding of what the music is about, its structure and meaning, and a complete mastery of the instrumental technique” <sup>9</sup>, a general systematization of the category “musical performing style” <sup>10</sup>, “comparison of interpretations”<sup>11</sup>, “artistic energy” <sup>12</sup>, “organizing and controlling musical suggestiveness” <sup>13</sup>, “the embodiment of artistic and aesthetic components” <sup>14</sup>, etc. At the same time, the act of performance itself can also be considered as a representation of the composer’s text. Often the concepts of ‘presentation’ and ‘representation’ are perceived as synonyms, but the scope of their use reveals differences in their semantic nuances.

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<sup>7</sup> Wartofsky Marx W. *Models: Representation and the Scientific Understanding*. Springer, Softcover reprint of the original 1st ed., 1979.

<sup>8</sup> Palmer, Caroline. “Music Performance” *Annual Review of Psychology*. 48, 1997, pp. 115-138.

<sup>9</sup> Gabrielsson, Alf. “The Performance of Music” *The Psychology of Music. Cognition and Perception* (Second Edition by Diana Deutsch). Cambridge: Academic Press [First Edition published 1982], 1999, p. 501.

<sup>10</sup> Govorukhina, Nataliya; Smyrnova, Tetiana; Polska, Iryna; Sukhlenko, Iryna & Savelieva, Ganna. “Style as a Topical Category of Modern Musicology and Music Education” *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Musica*. LXVI(2), 2021, pp. 49-67.

<sup>11</sup> Byelik-Zolotarova, Natalia; Zolotaryova, Natalia; Boiko, Viacheslav; Sukhomlinova, Tetiana; & Zaverukha, Olena. A Performance Interpretation of the Viennese Classics by the Example of Fantasia for Piano, Chorus And Orchestra In C Minor, op. 80 By Ludwig Van Beethoven. *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Musica*, 68 (Special Issue 2), 2023, pp. 121–150.

<sup>12</sup> Chernyavska, Marianna; Ivanova, Iryna; Timofeyeva, Kira; Syriatska, Tetiana & Mits, Oksana. “Artistic Energy Of The Performers In The Mirror of Their Repertoire Preferences” *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Musica*, LXVIII (Special Issue 2), 2023, pp. 165-179.

<sup>13</sup> Garaz, Oleg. “The Origin of the Concept of Style in European Musical Thinking”. *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Musica*, LXVII, Special Issue 2, 2022. pp. 7-19.

<sup>14</sup> Batovska, Olena; Grebenuk, Natalia; Kostogryz, Sergi; Dyachenko, Yuriy, & Tkachenko, Viktoria. “Musical Performance in the Context of the Development of Contemporary Musical Art” *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Musica*. LXIX(2), 2024, pp. 139-152.

Presentation is the act of providing or showing something new, or the way in which something is provided, shown. Representation, where the prefix 're' indicates the reversibility of the action, means the repetition of the action anew in the mode of actuality with the creation of references (relationships) between objects (the primary/original and its variant that is reproduced – represented in the process of performing activity) and their contents. Various semantic overtones of representation as a concept are revealed in the works of researchers who are passionate about studying this phenomenon. Thus, H.-G. Gadamer (1990), F. Ankersmit (2002), N. Davey & N. Cynthia (2023) consider representation as a personal reality, a different reality, compared to the prototype, which as a method is very indicative for art. According to F. Ankersmit, representations differ from the represented original, “for the crucial datum here is that we know and expect portraits or representations to be different from what art is all about”<sup>15</sup>. The functioning of representation as a social event (according to É. Durkheim<sup>16</sup>) is the key to understanding collective representations. According to M. Wartofsky, anything can be a representation of another if it has relational properties and under the conditions of recognizing this act of repetition as a representation. An important aspect of representation that directly exists in art is reference – a relationship or reference to reality. Reference, therefore, is part of the activity that we do when we construct representations<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, representation is an intentional object – a product of one's own purposeful intellectual and creative activity and personal forms of perception, the influence of the environment, a reaction to certain social relations. This allows us to consider representation as an event that forms its own symbolic field. According to the concept of S. Holl<sup>18</sup>, objects of representation do not have content by themselves: it is generated in the process of interpretation and communication, encoding and decoding of texts and depends on the cultural context<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Ankersmit, Frank. *Political representation (Cultural Memory in the Present)*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, California, 2002, p. 113.

<sup>16</sup> Durkheim, Émile. (1894). *Les règles de la méthode sociologiques (Rules of the sociological method)*. Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1894. 16e édition. Collection: Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine, 1967. Retrieved from [https://philosophie.universite.tours/documents/1894\\_Emile\\_Durkheim.pdf](https://philosophie.universite.tours/documents/1894_Emile_Durkheim.pdf) (accessed on 05.06.2023).

<sup>17</sup> Wartofsky Marx W. *Models: Representation and the Scientific Understanding*. Springer, Softcover reprint of the original 1st ed., 1979.

<sup>18</sup> Holl, Stuart. “The Work of Representation” *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. Ed. Stuart Holl. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1997, pp. 13-74.

<sup>19</sup> Holl, Stuart. “The Work of Representation” *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. Ed. Stuart Holl. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1997, pp. 17-18.

Generalization of the semantics of performing arts allows us to propose a definition of musical-performing representation<sup>20</sup> as “a social event with its symbolic field, which is formed around a unique artistic personality”<sup>21</sup>, has the ability to present the experience of the past in the present tense through the creation of a reference (correlation) with objects and experience<sup>22</sup>. In the process of perceiving a specific representation, a fundamental multiplicity arises, which changes the vector of reference: it is possible to focus attention on the object of representation, its “prototype”/“original”, which is repeated anew, or on its subject - the one who constructs the representation in the present tense, revealing his Presence. This aspect allows us to discuss self-representation as a concept. The first to introduce this notion was the sociologist Erving Goffman<sup>23</sup>, who defined it as the reflection of one’sself through means that create specific certain situations. His theory was later developed in the works of modern researchers J. Šlerka & L. Merunkova<sup>24</sup>, who analyzed self-representation in social networks, and E. Hollenbaugh<sup>25</sup>, who systematized modern observations on the nature of self-presentation in social networks. Researchers D. Chandler & R. Munday<sup>26</sup> considered the concept of self-presentation in the field of media communication. Also interesting is the scientific work of P. Thagard<sup>27</sup>, who studies self-representation as a phenomenon inherent in musical art, as a system determined by certain mechanisms, which is implemented in such forms as “selfrepresenting” – the skill of the performer, belonging to a school, repertoire; “self-expansion” – (the musician’s stage and performance role, his work as a public act, communication with fans in the mass media); “self-esteem” according to one’s own standards<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> from Latin *representation* – “visual image”.

<sup>21</sup> Voskoboinikov, Yakov. “*French pianist Alexandre Tharaud: aspects of media representation of piano performance*” PhD. Dissertation, Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts, Kharkiv: Ukraine, 2023, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Voskoboinikov, Yakov. “Albums ‘Autograph’ and ‘Le poète du piano’: two versions of the media self-representing the French pianist Alexandre Tharaud” *Aspects of Historical Musicology*. XXXV, 2024, p. 252.

<sup>23</sup> Goffman, Ervin. *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1956.

<sup>24</sup> Šlerka, Josef & Merunková, Lucie. “Goffman’s Theory as a Framework for Analysis of Self Presentation on Online Social Networks” *Masaryk University Journal of Law and Technology*. 13(2), 2019, pp. 243-276.

<sup>25</sup> Hollenbaugh, Erin E. “Self-Presentation in social media: Review and research opportunities” *Review of Communication Research*. 9, 2021, pp. 80-98.

<sup>26</sup> Chandler, Daniel & Munday, Rod. *A Dictionary of Media and Comunication (1ed.)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Thagard, Paul. “The self as a system of multilevel interacting mechanisms” *Philosophical Psychology*. 27 (2), 2014, pp. 145-163.

<sup>28</sup> Thagard, Paul. “The self as a system of multilevel interacting mechanisms” *Philosophical Psychology*. 27 (2), 2014, p. 17.

## Discussion

The most pressing question of modern piano performance has become: how to preserve classical music, how not to lose the feeling of its undeniable value? To what extent can we “actualize” classical art so that the modern generation does not feel “alienated” from this hopelessly outdated work that has nothing to do with modern life? Performers are looking for answers... Unfortunately, there are a significant number of not very successful attempts at a ‘modernized’ presentation of classical music by pianists, bordering on circus acts, trying to ‘stun’ and entertain the audience. However, in this way, the musical work loses its artistic value due to the fact that the “representative” is unable to convey either the content, or the style, or anything other than ‘acrobatics’ and demonstrating (and not from the best side) himself.

### ***Alexandre Tharaud as a Media Figure***

French pianist *Alexandre Tharaud*, who occupies a prominent place in contemporary performing arts, has been successfully representing his artistic individuality through the media space for many years. Continuing the traditions and principles of *Marguerite Long’s* pianism, he attracts the attention of researchers not only by the number of recorded albums (today there are already 42 of them), but also by the scale of the presentation of his own creative activity in the Internet space, which allows us to consider it as a phenomenon of media culture (R. Graham (2011), N. Krafft (2013), A. Ueno (2019), R. Nichols (2020), H. Smith (2020), M. Donelson (n.d.) and others). The originality of *A. Tharaud’s* creative approach is recorded in the variety of creative representations: audio recordings of albums with music by *J.-P. Rameau*, *F. Chopin*, *F. Poulenc*, *L. Beethoven*, in original video presentations of albums presented on the Internet platform YouTube, soundtracks to films with his participation, in the musical accompaniment of films about the pianist. This list is supplemented by *Alexandre Tharaud’s* autobiographical book “*Montrez-moi vos mains*” (2017) and his personal comments, annotations to music albums, texts of his interviews, materials from the pianist’s personal website, websites of record companies and musical instrument companies with which *A. Tharaud’s* activities are associated. Of particular interest are the results of the performer’s compositional searches - his piano cycle “*Corpus volubilis*” (2020) and the piano transcription of *C. Debussy’s* symphonic poem “*Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*” (2019).

This multiplicity of projects implemented by *A. Tharaud* testifies to the extraordinary scale of the personality and conceptualism of the French pianist's work. The musician's universalism is realized at different levels: in the multi-vector nature of his performing repertoire (world piano classics in *A. Tharaud's* albums are represented by a variety of stylistic, national, and genre phenomena); in the use of a large arsenal of pianos from different companies as an appropriate timbre for a particular work (*Yamaha, Steinway, Bösendorfer*); in his interest and realization of his own intentions in cinema (movies "*Amour*" (2012), "*Boléro*" (2024)), in his own compositional searches (cycle of original works "*Corpus Volubils*" (2020)). A unique manifestation of this versatility is the pianist's passion for creating an original media product, born in creative collaboration with a whole team of professionals from different fields: directors, sound engineers, video editors, designers, photographers, musical instrument masters, ballet dancers, marketers and others involved in promoting the pianist's creative content. Any release with the musician's participation - an audio album, video, film soundtrack, etc. - turns into a real artistic event, naturally focusing on it the attention of fellow professionals, music critics, the media, the Internet audience of his fans and simply the general public of classical music lovers.

### ***Alexandre Tharaud's performing work in the focus of media representation***

The well-deserved popularity of *A. Tharaud* is a confirmation of the creative direction he has successfully chosen in today's conditions, when the most relevant issue for piano performance is the issue of preserving the undeniable value of classical music, depriving the listener of the feeling of its obsolescence and undemandingness in modern life. The French pianist offers his model of presenting his own performing work and interacting with the listening audience through the media space - a social space that includes the media market, virtual reality and the global information environment, in which employees of the media industry and society itself are equal participants. The media space should be understood not as a certain set of mass media, but as an independent reality formed from the interaction of the media and society and individual individuals in it. The concept of 'media representation' as one of the forms of representation means the type and location of the broadcast, where the media is a platform that, representing a part of the general culture with its inherent ideas, trends and idealized values, provides conditions for demonstrating one's own identity (individuality) <sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Based on materials IDENTITY – HOW DO I IDENTIFY. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://themediastudentsblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/03/identity-how-do-i-identify/> (accessed on 15.04.2023).

In the context of modernity, media representation becomes one of the tools for promoting performing art. And any performing product (music album, creative release, website or personal channel) due to the original concept and broadcasting of intentional objects can be considered a self-representation of the performer. *A. Tharaud's* presence in the media space is carried out through numerous qualitatively prepared Internet platforms: the YouTube video hosting page <sup>30</sup>, the official website of the pianist <sup>31</sup>, the websites of record companies that promote his work, the websites of instrument companies, etc. It is interesting to trace the stages of formation and certain components of this extensive media environment of *A. Tharaud* in order to understand the strategy of successful promotion of a creative product in modern conditions.

The starting point that determined the beginning of representative practice in *A. Tharaud's* work was the release of the thematic album "Versailles" (2019) with music by harpsichordists of the 17th–18th centuries - miniatures by *J.-P. Rameau*, *J.-B. Lully*, *F. Couperin*, *P. Royer*, *J. Duphy*, *J.-H. d'Anglebert* and works by lutenist *R. De Visée* performed on a grand piano. The album opens with a video presentation of *J.-P. Rameau's Prélude* in the Hall of *Mirrors of Versailles* <sup>32</sup>. In the same interior, *J.-B. Lully's* Turkish march ("*Marche pour la cérémonie des Turcs*") and *P. Royer's* play "*L'Aimable*" were also filmed. It should be noted that the modernization of ancient and classical music is a very responsible process. There are different approaches, one of which is historically oriented performance. Another way is to reproduce the style of sound on a modern piano - an instrument that has much greater sound and timbre capabilities compared to its ancient predecessors. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the desire of many composers of the past to develop the instruments of their era, since the instrument that existed during the lifetime of geniuses did not suit them.

It is well known that *J.S. Bach*, *L. Beethoven* openly declared that they were creating music for the instrument of the future. It is from this position that the performance of harpsichord and classical music on modern high-quality pianos provides the performer with more opportunities to reproduce such works. In this case, the artistic value of the interpretation represents the level of talent and skill of the performer, giving him a wide field for the

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<sup>30</sup> Tharaud, Alexandre. *Alexandre Tharaud*, 2013. Retrieved from <https://youtube.com/@alexandretharaud7056?feature=shared> (accessed on 23.03.2024).

<sup>31</sup> Tharaud, Alexandre. *Alexandre Tharaud. Official website*, n.d. Retrieved from <https://alexandretharaud.com/> (accessed on 14.03.2024).

<sup>32</sup> The CD "*Versailles*", which is more ambitious in concept, became the culmination of the baroque line in *A. Tharaud's* work, presented in his previous albums: "*Alexander Tharaud joue/plays Rameau*" (2001); "*Tic toc choc Alexandre Tharaud joue/plays Couperin*" (2007); "*Baroque Alexandre Tharaud RAMEAU BACH COUPERIN*" (2010).

embodiment of music of any genre and style. Regarding the expressiveness of articulation techniques, mastery of the sound palette, skillful use of dynamics and pedaling in general, one can argue for a long time, since ancient instruments did not have most of such artistic possibilities. It is this (albeit in a specific historical context) that forced musicians to constantly improve the ‘mechanism of finger mechanics’ (*J.-P. Rameau*) of the keyboard instrument, it had to ‘be able to sing’ (J.S. Bach), and each sound of the instrument had to reproduce ‘its own tone’ (L. Beethoven).

In the representations of A. Tharaud, the ‘realization of dreams’ of brilliant composers of the past are clearly traced. By modeling the harpsichord sound on a modern *Steinway* piano, he represents in “*Versailles*” the atmosphere of the French aristocratic culture of the past, without imitating the palace ritual inherent in it – these external signs of the gallant era. It is revealed as a world spiritually close to modern man, full of contrasts and contradictions, virtues and valor. Using the possibilities of the instrument, stylistically faithful touch, dynamics, agogics, phrasing and articulation, A. Tharaud reproduces the harpsichord sound, brilliantly embodies the images of the era, the composer’s innovative ideas, the spirit of the Enlightenment with its energy, as if rediscovering the potential of the musical text.

The discovery of new meanings of musical language is also facilitated by the choice of location for the video presentation, which turns into a kind of visual ‘visit’ to the concert. The performance on a modern grand piano in Versailles does not invite the listener into the past and does not cancel the temporal distance between the past and the present; on the contrary, it emphasizes it as much as possible. The actualization begins in the sound of the grand piano itself. The pianist is not in a doublet, without a wig – therefore this is not stylization; it is also not just a game in the interior, in which this music was born, and the music here is not a museum exhibit, but a continuation of a living national tradition. The choice of a ‘sacred’ place as a concert hall, which embodies the image and spirit of French culture of that era, enhances the perception of music, giving him the most vivid emotional opportunity to experience the work in the context of its time.

If Versailles becomes a symbol of beauty and order, then the dilapidated interior of the dwelling is perceived as a psychological parallel to the dilapidated life of a person. This is the association that arises when you get acquainted with another creative project of the musician – a video recording of the last sonatas of L. Beethoven (op. 109, 110, 111), which made up the soundtrack to the film Mariano Nante “Beethoven: Last Sonatas” (2018). The director places pianist A. Tharaud in the atmosphere of a castle abandoned by time, inviting the viewer to take a journey to the secret corners of his consciousness through the combination of a specific interior and Beethoven’s music. A. Tharaud’s performance makes us wonder: are the heroic and

dramatic, as usual characteristics of Beethoven's music, really the only possible source for representing his music?

It is known that each individual work of any composer is marked only by stylistic components inherent to him – signs and symbols that represent his artistic individuality. They find written expressions through certain configurations in graphic symbols, which, in turn, are perceived by the bearers of a certain musical content. Dynamism, contrast, independent musical layers, drama of the construction of form are specific features of L. Beethoven's music, and if we concentrate these features into a certain musical symbol, then it will be – *fp*, one of the main markers of Beethoven's text, a graphic remark that is indicated in the notes of the piano sonatas by the composer himself. *A. Tharaud* offers his own version of the representation of the symbol-marker *fp*. Rejecting total heroization as the basis for interpreting Beethoven's music, he often treats *f* as a separate timbre, giving the sound a certain space that extends the boundaries of the instrument. After it, *p* is perceived in a new intimate way, a reflection of the previous one, a different sound layer. The feeling of space and instant switching of sound planes of acoustic sound propagation, the huge dynamic and emotional distance between *f* and *p* contribute to the multilayered disclosure of the intonation drama of Beethoven's musical text.

As noted above, any representation forms its own symbolic field. And in musical media representation, the transmission of a whole complex of musical, graphic, sound, pictorial (visual) symbols become possible, which are transformed and fixed in a certain unique form. All the symbolic elements present in the composer's original are refracted through the performing individuality of *A. Tharaud* as a representative of the French piano school. Complemented by the author's directorial concept and a unique video sequence, it gives the musical work a new dimension, freeing it from the layering of performing and listening clichés.

In addition to *A. Tharaud's* numerous references to French music <sup>33</sup> in his performance practice, the albums in which the very concept of 'French' is implemented in the most subtle sense of French charm through the embodiment of images of salon Paris of the 1830s–50s and 'swinging' Paris of the 1920s attract attention. An example of the first is the album "*Chopin: Journal Intime*" (2009) <sup>34</sup>, which is perceived in the media space as the

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<sup>33</sup> "*Poulenc : Pièces pour Piano*" (1996), "*Rameau, nouvelles suites*" (2001), "*Ravel, Intégrale de l'œuvre pour piano*" (2003), "*Couperin, Tic Toc Choc*" (2007), "*Satie: Avant-dernières pensées*" (2009), "*Baroque*" (2010), "*Versailles*" (2019), "*Ravel : Piano Concertos*" (2023).

<sup>34</sup> Tharaud, Alexandre. *Chopin: Journal Intime* [Recorded by Parlophone Records Limited] Chopin: Pièces pour piano. [CD]. Europe: Warner Classics/Erato release, 2009. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy\\_n-6TaHwZKGq2ctndLVdo6iwDif7nlsIOY](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_n-6TaHwZKGq2ctndLVdo6iwDif7nlsIOY) (accessed on 17.01.2025)

pianist's calling card as a representative of *F. Chopin's* music. It contains selected works by the composer, which the performer presents in a new semantic perspective, namely: F. Chopin is 'presented' as French in spirit, and his music is interpreted as a purely Parisian phenomenon<sup>35</sup>. It is necessary to emphasize the originality of the visual design of this disc, which adjusts the listener's perception to chamberness and intimacy: the performer sits on a windowsill with a diary and a pencil in his hand, as if reflecting poetically. In this case, attention is focused on the intimacy of the expression, programming the role of the artist as a medium - a guide through the pages of a 'musical diary'.

The appeal to the pure personal secret is clearly evident in the concept of the album, which embodies *A. Tharaud's* preferences for the work of F. Chopin. The average duration of most of the works is two to three minutes. Three works of medium form - Ballades in *G minor* and *F major* and Fantasy in *F minor*, which sounds about 12 minutes. Three ecoses, op. 72, look especially chamber, each of which lasts no more than a minute. Five exclusively minor Mazurkas, Three Ecoses and one Contradanse outline the genre-dance repertoire of ballroom practice of the first half of the 19th century. The absence of waltzes is noteworthy. The dance sphere of the album is complemented by the 'literary nature' of ballads and fantasies. The emotional-temporal locus of the 'musical diary' is defined by the titles as 'heavy' (*Largo*) and 'night' (nocturnes). Of the two nocturnes, which seem to rhyme with each other the two parts of the "Album", the Nocturne in *C sharp minor* of the 'posthumous edition' is chosen by the pianist as the basis for the video presentation of the disc. An important feature of the performing version by *A. Tharaud* is the interpretation of the *crescendo* designation followed immediately by the *diminuendo* (< >). The pianist perceives this graphic-sound symbol of the composer's text not so much as a sign of dynamics as of agogy: *crescendo* is interpreted by him as an expansion through deceleration, while *diminuendo* is perceived as a compensation of time, accompanied by a slight acceleration. This approach acts as a sign of *A. Tharaud's* representation of Chopin's *rubato*. Such agogy interpretation of the dynamic sign sounds like a certain inhalation and exhalation, which creates representative references to the agogy properties of the "*chanson française*", embedding Chopin's music in the system of French musical culture.

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<sup>35</sup> These cross-connections are also felt in *A. Tharaud's* interpretation of the works of G. Fauré, C. Debussy, and M. Ravel, presented through the prism of F. Chopin's noble refinement and salon style. The basis for this is the historical fact of F. Chopin's influence on the French school of virtuoso piano performance.

The sophistication of the Parisian salon also finds expression in A. Tharaud's album "*Le Boeuf sur le toit. Swinging Paris*" (2012), which includes two compositions by J. Gershwin: "*The Man I Love*" and "*Do it Again*"<sup>36</sup>. Since jazz and the culture of academic music closely interact in the style of J. Gershwin, this poses a number of tasks for pianists. Among them are the feeling and reproduction: agogics and "light breathing", inherent in the vocal jazz manner of intonation of the melody; 'breathing' harmony (with its coloristic "flavor"); the rhythmic nature of the composer's music, with its principle of percussion accentuation in the style of jazz orchestras of the 1920s–30s. All this forms the basis of the performing representation, the artistic feature of which should be the reproduction of the experience of the bright, colorful life of America at that time, marked by the mixing of artistic phenomena of ethnic cultures of different peoples of a multinational country. At the same time, the pianist needs to actualize the musical expression, through the transmission of the spirit of our time, his own life experience and the culture of academic pianism of his national tradition. This is exactly the approach demonstrated by A. Tharaud, representing the French J. Gershwin, combining the original phenomenon of the composer's music with the piano principles of the French performing school. A. Tharaud uses the entire spectrum of expressive means of academic pianism<sup>37</sup>. This interpretation of A. Tharaud is considered the closest to the reference one, demonstrating not only a different level of performing reading of J. Gershwin's piano work, but also a portrait of Paris – multinational and bright – in "*Le Boeuf sur le toit. Swinging Paris*".

### ***Alexandre Tharaud's Artistic Individuality in the Focus of Self-Presentation***

Commenting on E. Goffman's<sup>38</sup> theory of selective self-presentation, E. Hollenbaugh<sup>39</sup> believes that a modern performer has the opportunity to focus the attention of media listeners on specific works of his repertoire at his discretion<sup>40</sup>. These two different versions of A. Tharaud's self-

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<sup>36</sup> The presence of J. Gershwin's music in an album with this title is not accidental, since the musician's work has often been associated with the atmosphere of Paris (for example, in J. Gershwin's famous symphonic poem "An American in Paris").

<sup>37</sup> Voskoboinikov, Yakov. "Jazz transcriptions of G. Gershwin in piano performance of the academic tradition" *Aspects of historical musicology*. XIX-XX, 2020, p. 444.

<sup>38</sup> Goffman, Ervin. *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1956.

<sup>39</sup> Hollenbaugh, Erin E. "Self-Presentation in social media: Review and research opportunities" *Review of Communication Research*. 9, 2021, pp. 80-98.

<sup>40</sup> Hollenbaugh, Erin E. "Self-Presentation in social media: Review and research opportunities" *Review of Communication Research*. 9, 2021, pp. 81-84.

representation in the media space are two albums by the pianist: “*Autograph*”<sup>41</sup>, consisting of 23 tracks (presenting works by 22 composers from the Baroque to the present day) and “*Le poète du piano*”<sup>42</sup>, which combines a variety of names, styles and genres in 63 tracks.

The uniqueness of “*Autograph*” in A. *Tharaud*’s performing work is determined by the novelty of its concept compared to the previous 29 albums recorded by the pianist. Instead of focusing on the work of a single composer, style or historical era, a whole spectrum of musical phenomena is represented here. By combining key works from the artist’s media legacy (from 1997 to 2013), “*Autograph*” became the culmination of the musician’s many years of presence in the media space. The album’s title relates to the idea of a collection of works that are usually performed ‘*encore*’. Regarding this, in one of the interviews, the pianist shared his opinion:

*“I searched for a long time for the name of the album, at first I wanted to call the album – ‘Encore Works’, ‘Best Works’, and then, remembering the feeling after each concert, I came to the conclusion, that it is precisely the moment when I give out autographs to those who wish, that is that special moment, which for me and the listeners is still full of impressions and sounds of those last ‘encore’ works, which seem to be engraved in my autograph.”*<sup>43</sup>

The composition of the album is also determined by an original approach – the pianist’s refusal from large-scale romantic sonatas, ballads, virtuoso etudes and concentration on small pieces with a duration of sounding of each from 2 to 6 minutes maximum. The absence of brilliant virtuoso pieces in “*Autograph*”, traditionally performed ‘*encore*’, once again emphasized A. *Tharaud*’s love for miniature, presenting virtuosity of a different order, dictated by the intellectual type of personality of the musician himself with his inherent approach to the work. The refined play of timbres, the quality of articulation in the piano tone, the intimacy of images, the disclosure of each piece as a unique sound world becomes signs of the musician’s individual performing style. Self-presentation, thus, is realized in “*Autograph*” in a conscious choice of pieces, which, on the one hand, reveal A. *Tharaud*’s performing manner as fully as possible, on the other hand, occupy a special place in his repertoire, which confirms the fact of their

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<sup>41</sup> Tharaud, Alexandre. *Autograph (Encores)*. Warner classics, 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.warnerclassics.com/release/autograph-encores> (accessed on 27.01.2025).

<sup>42</sup> Tharaud, Alexandre. *Le poète du piano* [Recorded by Parlophone Records Limited] Chopin: Pièces pour piano. [CD]. France: Warner Classics/Erato release, 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Tharaud, Alexandre. *Interview pour son album Autograph*, 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxvFCsbxTZY> (accessed on 28.01.2025).

dissonance in previous albums of 1997–2012<sup>44</sup>. Interestingly, 5 tracks from “Autograph” will be included in “*Le poète du piano*” – an album with a new concept, which, as mentioned above, can be considered an example of an expanded self-representation of the most important aspects of A. Tharaud’s inner world, his own ‘self-portrait’<sup>45</sup>.

“*Le poète du piano*” can also be compared to “*Au Château d’Argol*”<sup>46</sup> of piano art, where its owner and at the same time the architect is the pianist himself, who embodies his world of the Imaginary based on his own piano repertoire<sup>47</sup>. Released by A. Tharaud in 2020, it has 63 tracks, lasting more than four hours. The “extensiveness” of the repertoire is admirable, among which there are not only works by composers from different countries and eras, but also transcriptions and original works by A. Tharaud himself. Each of his tracks as a ‘memory’ (of what I love), ‘*Amarcord*’ (after F. Fellini) refers to other albums of the artist and thus actualizes the past. The media world of A. Tharaud presented here was created over three decades. It is presented by various forms of self-realization of the musician: solo performance, chamber and ensemble music making, co-creation with singers. But this is not positioned as a collection of the most spectacular examples, a business card of the master’s virtuosity. On the contrary, the album demonstrates the musician’s attempt to realize the ‘real’ himself through a gallery of selected musical images.

The key to understanding the author’s concept of the entire album is the film adaptation of the piano version of “*Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*” by C. Debussy in A. Tharaud’s transcription, which emphasizes the central role of this track in the musical collection “*Le poète du piano*”<sup>48</sup>. Let us recall that A. Tharaud’s albums of the past years, some of which were mentioned in the article, are also marked by bright musical visualizations. Their central “directorial” idea has always been the projection of emotional and aesthetic

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<sup>44</sup> “*Autograph*” also includes tracks that are later duplicated in future albums (“*Poulenc – Piano Concerto*”, 2018), which creates references between this release and the artist’s work between 2013 and 2020.

<sup>45</sup> For more details on the references between the albums “*Autograph*” and “*Le poète du piano*”: Voskoboinikov, Yakov. “Albums ‘*Autograph*’ and ‘*Le poète du piano*’: two versions of the media self-representing the French pianist Alexandre Tharaud” *Aspects of Historical Musicology*. XXXV, 2024, pp. 251-271.

<sup>46</sup> Julien Gracq’s surrealist novel “*Au Château d’Argol*” (1939).

<sup>47</sup> Only in the period from 2013 to 2020, A. Tharaud recorded the albums: “*Mozart, Jeunehomme*” (2014), “*Bach, Goldberg Variations*” (2015), “*Barbara*” (2017), “*Brahms – Chello Sonates*” (2018), “*Beethoven, Sonatas Opus 109, 110, 111*” (2018), “*Versailles*” (2019), “*Chanson d’Amour*” (2020), “*Schubert*” (2020).

<sup>48</sup> Each of the works, specially recorded for the album “*Le poète du piano*”, was presented with a video clip on Youtube.

factors onto visual effects, which emphasizes the significance of spatial techniques, the movement of the instrument in the frame, and the musical co-creation of the pianist with the grand piano.

The video presentation of the album “*Le poète du piano*” presents an original solution: a variant of intermedial interaction of musical and visual with new components – literature and choreography. The possibility of such an approach was dictated both by the very essence of the referential relationship between musical (Prélude by C. Debussy) and literary (“*Au Château d’Argol*” by J. Gracq) works, and by the representative potential of each of them. Thus, Prélude by C. Debussy (1894), having received several interpretations in the form of piano transcriptions, choreographic incarnations<sup>49</sup>, is also present on the pages of the novel in poetically inspired descriptions of the characters’ musical improvisations, their feelings, the exuberance of natural elements, images of heat, sun, and reverie. These direct analogies of the text with music, as well as freer associations, are emphasized in the video presentation.

Dramaturgically, the clip is composed as a narrative, built on the complex interaction of the plot of *Julien Gracq’s* novel, the symbolism of Claude Debussy’s music and the plasticity of *Chun-Wing Lam’s* dance. This is reproduced in the existing parallels between the heroes of the novel and the actors in the video presentation. A. Tharaud’s piano performance is detailed in a visual sequence (directed by *Raphaël Wertheimer*), which unfolds as a parallel montage of frames of the pianist’s playing on the piano and a self-sufficiently expressive plastic line (choreographer-producer *Wun Sze Chan*, soloist – *Chun-Wing Lam*), complemented by picturesque shots of nature in Brittany, the symbolism of individual objects, images (stone fortress, ocean coast, three stone pillars, sun, book, blood, etc.). Choreography here plays the role of a mediator between the surrealism and mysticism of the literary and the sophistication, non-objectivity’ of musical texts; it complements the picture of the artistic whole by revealing secret impulses, the expression of

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<sup>49</sup> The author’s version for two pianos (1895) was eventually supplemented by piano transcriptions by M. Ravel for four hands (1910), L. Borwick for piano solo (1912); L. Kuhn (1930), V. Gryaznov, G. Richter for 8 hands. A. Tharaud’s own transcription of the Prelude dates back to 2019. As for choreographic readings of C. Debussy’s music, first of all, we should mention the famous 1912 production of the one-act ballet by *Vaclav Nijinsky*, who was inspired by images on ancient Greek ceramics and used plastic stylized as antiquity. His choreography, recorded in numerous photos, symbolized a break with the classical tradition. *Serge Lifar* presented his modern choreographic version on the Paris stage in 1935. The modern choreographic version with piano transcription by A. Tharaud cultivates the poetics of classical ballet. And in this it comes close to Jerome Robbins’ 1953 production, in which the action unfolds in a ballet class. Later, in the 1970s, this choreography was also used by Rudolf Nureyev.

which is beyond the power of either verbalization or sound recording, only dance. The literary source motivates the appearance on the screen of the dancer as the pianist's symbolic double, his conditional 'Avatar' in the field of illusion.

A. *Tharaud's* self-representation through screen images contains a wide range of associations. They create a unique space of intertextual connections, symbolically reflecting the pianist's creative experience, and, at the same time, comprehensively represent the album "*Le poète du piano*". Just as *Julien Gracq's* literary text contains references to the music of C. Debussy's Preludes, *J.-P. Rameau*, to other literary works, the mysticism of the Middle Ages, etc., and the video presentation is full of signs of what is valuable for A. *Tharaud* (what I love) and what corresponds to the poetics of the surrealist novel. Thus, the image of the Book, repeatedly appearing throughout the composition, and especially at the beginning and end of the video, positions the main character of the presentation - pianist *Alexandre Tharaud* - as both a Poet and a person of the Book. The first image-personification, fixed in the very title of the album, is perceived as a metaphor, evoking analogies with the tradition of romanticism. The second - reveals the deep essence of the pianist's creative individuality as a musician-intellectual.

The very specificity of the pianist's authorial approach in creating a transcription of Debussy's work, the nature of its performance appeals to the harpsichord strokes of *J.-P. Rameau*, the virtuoso techniques of filling in the harmonies of F. Chopin, creating pedal allusions. In the texture of his own transcription, Taro uses the experience of pianist composers, many of whose works he has recorded in more than forty albums of music of various styles. The idyllic images of nature in the video, along with the eerie images of the dungeon, establish parallels with other pieces of the album - "*Idylle*" by *E. Chabrier*, "*Le Rappel des oiseaux*" by *J.-P. Rameau*, the images of "*Orphée et Eurydice*" by Ch. Gluck in the piano transcription by A. Siloti. Finally, the author's "*Faune*" by A. *Tharaud* (in the album under No. 47) is perceived as an echo of "*Faune*" by C. Debussy.

The significance of the choreographic component in the video presentation has an autobiographical subtext. For A. *Tharaud* – a person who has been developing since childhood in an atmosphere of constant professional studies in music, theater, ballet<sup>50</sup> – dance, choreography forever became a part of his artistic universe, subconsciously determining the musician's attraction to intermediality, the focus of his perception of the role of the visual component in musical media representations. The youthful experience continued

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<sup>50</sup> The pianist's mother was a ballet master at the Paris Opera, and A. *Tharaud* himself was also fond of choreography.

in subsequent repertoire preferences, when the pianist turned to performing dance miniatures by *J.-P. Rameau* and *F. Couperin*, waltzes and mazurkas by *F. Chopin*, cabaret dances... In the pianist's performing work, dance becomes "Ariadne's thread", which, penetrating eras and centuries, concretizing in historical versions, unites disparate fragments into a single stained-glass window. Commenting on the collection of his own works "*Corpus volubilis*" (2020), most of which are dances, *A. Tharaud* determines that his compositional work is a tribute to the body, its movements, weightlessness<sup>51</sup>. Seven dances from "*Corpus volubilis*" were included in the album "*Le poète du piano*"<sup>52</sup>, emphasizing the significance and expressiveness of the choreographic element in the system of the pianist's creative preferences, its importance for the musician's self-representation.

## Conclusions

In modern culture, the paths of communication between the performer and the listener invariably intersect in the Internet space. Phenomenal virtuosity, multiplied by the dexterity of the impresario and the bribery of newspapermen, could make a name for a musician in the 19th century. Today, somewhat different mechanisms work. A performer cannot focus only on the models of the past. Even high-quality advertising cannot provide the necessary resonance for performing activities in an academic direction, that is, contribute to expanding the circle of listeners and actively promoting work in society. Therefore, an important task for a musician is to create an information platform for his own concert activities. Releases posted on the Internet in audio or video formats with high-quality design not only give an idea of the creative personality of the performer, the originality of his interpretations, their novelty, but also opens him up to the public sphere. Finding ways to solve the problem of the functioning of musical classics in the modern space requires creativity not only from practicing musicians. It is necessary to use new research methods to master these trends.

The concept of media representation makes it possible to focus the research perspective on the study of the creative work of a modern performer in all the complexity of its intertextual connections. Performative representation, as a product of performing intentions, combines intentional objects and

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<sup>51</sup> Tharaud, Alexandre. *Corpus volubilis* livre 1. Retrieved from <https://www.henry-lemoine.com/en/partitions-piano/6627-corpus-volubilis-livre-1.html> (accessed on: 04.03.2023).

<sup>52</sup> In "*Le poète du piano*" are №№ 43–49: *Sama, Rumba, Sicilienne, Avant-deux, Faune, Pavane, Vaudou*.

presents them in another and through another. In interaction with the listener, it can also be subject to certain social influences: the public's reaction to a certain release can determine the course of the performer's repertoire strategy, but the right of final choice still remains with the musician. Performative representation is not devoid of variability in terms of interpreting its content: the interaction of the subject and the vector of research each time adds a new analytical field to performing creativity, such as, for example, representations in the media space. Considering performing art from this perspective allows us to encompass the multi-vector nature of the creative functioning of modern musicians in the world media.

A striking example of such creative self-expression is the professional activity of the contemporary French pianist *Alexandre Tharaud*, a recognized media figure in the world of classical music. The multitude of forms of representation that mark his creative output allow us to interpret the pianist's work as a set of references to objects of other art forms, focusing their content at a certain point in time, namely in a recorded video or audio recording. By analyzing just some of *A. Tharaud's* numerous releases, the importance of all components becomes clear - from the subject matter, the choice of works for forming a playlist, locations for recording to the visual design or montage of frames in video presentations. All these elements of the musician's creative 'message' are constructed and interact in such a way as to create meaningful parallels between the original text and its interpretation, cultural events dispersed in time, literary or historical sources. This gives the right to define the content of *Alexandre Tharaud's* performing representations in the media space as a multifunctional system of media representation objects that are meaningfully combined by the performer into a system of references between them.

The definition of representation as a social event, a container of collective ideas, is realized in *A. Tharaud's* media releases through the breadth of the inter-artistic network, which, in addition to music, encompasses professionals from various fields: sound engineering, literature, photography, graphics, modern cinema, ballet, etc. In parallel, *A. Tharaud* has always been characterized by a high degree of individualization, which is traced in the need to focus on what he loves throughout the pianist's entire creative path in the media space. The need to represent himself, that is, self-representation, was realized by *A. Tharaud* in the creation of transcriptions of works by other composers (G. Mahler, C. Debussy), in his own compositional activity ("*Corpus Volubils*"), in the concept of the albums "Autograph" and "*Le poète du piano*". The video presentation of the album "*Le poète du piano*" becomes a concentrate, which summarizes a certain summary of the performer's creative searches, represented through the music of his own transcription of

C. Debussy's Prelude, choreography, video plot and semantic references to *Julien Gracq's* surrealist novel "*Au Château d'Argol*". The proposed approach to studying the performing achievements of a modern pianist of academic tradition through the prism of media representation acquires the status of a universal one, which can be applied to the work of any musician associated with the media space. The chosen perspective becomes a tool for revealing the multi-vector plurality and systematicity of the artists' creative realizations, the strategy of their success in the conditions of changing reality.

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## SELF-EXPLORATION AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION: REFLECTIVE JOURNALING IN MALAY ART SONG: 'ENIGMA HATI' BY MARZELAN SALLEH

KHAIRUNNISA DIYANA MD NOOR<sup>1</sup> , MARZELAN SALLEH<sup>2</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** Reflective journaling emerges as a strong instrument for artists seeking self-discovery and artistic progress in the arena of music, where emotion and creativity intersect. This research endeavors to investigate the utilization of reflective journaling within the framework of acquiring proficiency in performing the Malay art song “Enigma Hati,” composed by Marzelan Salleh. The objective of this study is to provide insight into the various advantages of engaging in reflective journaling in the context of music performance. Specifically, it seeks to emphasize the potential of reflective journaling to improve musicians’ understanding of their performance process, strengthen their self-awareness, and boost their overall set of skills. Through the utilization of a first-person standpoint, the researcher-singer explores the profound influence of reflexive practices, underscoring their effect on the behaviors, thoughts, values, and identity of a performer. The study not only highlights the importance of engaging in reflective journaling but also examines other facets of music performance, encompassing the difficulties associated with phrasing, dynamics, spoken dialogue, and high notes. The researcher demonstrates the potential to address these problems and achieve emotionally impactful performances through diligent practice and the application of mental imagery techniques. In summary, this research offers a thorough exploration of the realm of music and the utilization of reflective journaling as a methodological approach. This analysis emphasizes the essential significance of emotional attachment, technical expertise, and imaginative interpretation in the execution of art songs, while also demonstrating the transformational and empowering potential of reflective journaling as a means for musicians to enhance their pursuit of artistic excellence.

**Keywords:** malay art song, artistic research, reflective journaling, interpretation

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## Introduction

In the realm of music, where creativity and emotions come together, a simple notepad transforms into a pathway, to self-discovery and artistic development. Keeping a journal is a practiced technique across various domains like nursing education, teacher training, physical therapy, sports science education and music performance. Known as writing well, this process enables musicians to explore their practice more profoundly by addressing their feelings, thoughts and convictions concerning their music. This introspective journey can significantly aid musicians as they navigate the intricacies of their odyssey<sup>3</sup>.

The concept of practicing as research for musicians has garnered attention in times by acknowledging that artistic practice can yield insights and knowledge. Through embracing journaling musicians can proactively assess their practices and develop a deeper comprehension of their artistry. Reflective journaling allows musicians to critically examine their playing, explore their emotions and thoughts related to their musical performance, and gain new perspectives on their own musical abilities and growth. Through the act of reflective journaling, musicians become more aware of their feelings and knowledge, ultimately transforming their beliefs and perspectives. This transformative process can be highly beneficial to musicians in particular.

The main goal of this research is to investigate the use of journaling in enhancing proficiency in performing the Malay art song “Enigma Hati,” composed by Marzelan Salleh in 2022. It also aims to explore the advantages of using an approach to support performers through the learning and performance phases of a complex art song. This study serves as an investigation for journaling, serving as an evolving mechanism for discovery.

As the singer and researcher in this study I have intentionally chosen to adopt a first-person perspective to showcase two points. Firstly, I aim to demonstrate how reflective journaling can significantly enhance a performer understanding of their performance process. Secondly, I aim to highlight that engaging in practice can deepen a performers’ insight into their actions, thoughts, values and identity while improving their awareness, observation skills and expertise<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Aggett, C. (2014). *Australian art song: Pedagogical learning and teaching strategies framed for singers and singing teachers* (thesis). University of Western Sydney, Sydney.

<sup>4</sup> Health professionals and students’ experiences of reflective writing in learning: A qualitative meta-synthesis. *BMC Medical Education*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-02831-4>

## Reflective and Reflexive Exploration of Poetry's Role in Shaping Art Songs

Practicing self-reflection and introspection is becoming more crucial in the music industry, enabling musicians to delve deeper into their performances and enhance their skills. According to a study conducted by Barrett in 2004 it is essential to provide musicians with opportunities to express their thoughts through mediums and engage in analysis. This method helps musicians interpret their experiences and advance their learning process. Another study, by Barrett highlights the significance of encouraging musicians to discuss, reflect on and write about their journeys. This does not aid in understanding their progress. It also contributes to their professional development<sup>5</sup>. The concept of being a practitioner is widely acknowledged in music education.

Journaling reflections on singing serves as a tool for singers to enable them to record and assess their experiences and personal growth methodically. Through journaling singers can scrutinize their vocal development journey effectively gaining meaningful insights into their progress, as singers. Additionally keeping a journal while singing can serve as a way for singers to assess their own performances pinpoint areas needing improvement and establish goals, for future growth. This practice helps singers deepen their understanding of their techniques and abilities, fostering development and progress. The process of journaling allows singers to track their learning journey recognize challenges they face along the way and monitor their advancements over time. By engaging in journaling singers do not document their experiences but also gain insight into their vocal development while nurturing self-reflection and personal growth. This approach encourages individuals to evaluate their thoughts, actions and experiences in a way. Overall maintaining a journal provides singers with a tool for self-reflection and enhancement of skills. Reflective journaling in singing offers advantages to singers on a level. It can also serve as a valuable tool, for educators. Teachers can leverage these journals to evaluate student development pinpoint areas needing enhancement and offer tailored feedback and support. Ultimately incorporating journaling in singing benefits singers by promoting self-reflection and personal development while simultaneously enriching the experience, in vocal training<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Forsblom, A., & Ala-Ruona, E. (2012). Professional competences of music therapists working in post-stroke rehabilitation. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v12i3.647>

<sup>6</sup> Rodríguez Marconi, D., Morales Cárdenas, C., Gaete Antilen, L., Garrido Ormeño, M., & Pardo Reyes, C. (2018). Level of physiological, anatomical and pathological knowledge of the singing voice on the part of professional and amateur singers. *Revista CEFAC*, 20(5), 621–631. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-021620182054118>

Journals serve as a tool to support self-learning and promote the growth of practitioners. Through engaging in journaling singers can deepen their self-awareness. Enhance their understanding of their vocal techniques. Reflective journaling is commonly used by professionals, in areas like teacher training and science education to improve learning outcomes and encourage introspection. It offers singers a platform not to track their progress and development but to ponder over their learning journey and obstacles they encounter. Additionally reflective journaling enables singers to identify patterns in their progress, offering insights into areas of strength and areas needing improvement. The focus of the journal entry revolves around Art Song, a genre of music that combines poetry with music. Originating in Europe towards the century especially in Italy Art Song features concise lyrics and emotive melodies to convey thoughts and emotions effectively. Performances of Art Songs require attention to detail with singers showcasing their prowess to breathe life into the poetic text.

Art songs aren't just compositions; they're a blend of artistic expression and skilled singing. According to Proehoeman (2013) art songs involve more than singing. They require diction to convey meaning. Singers performing art songs must focus on pronunciation, enunciation of vowels and consonants and even the ending sounds of words. The accompaniment plays a crucial role in art songs. It provides a harmonic and melodic foundation for the singer, enhancing the overall musical experience. The piano is the most common instrument used for accompaniment in art songs. Its versatile and expressive nature allows it to complement the vocal line and add depth to the composition. The role of the accompanist is to support and interact with the singer, creating a seamless musical partnership. They must have a deep understanding of the style and structure of the art song, as well as the ability to interpret the nuances of the text<sup>7</sup>.

Poetry holds a significant place in art songs. The use of poetry in art songs adds depth, emotion, and meaning to the music<sup>8</sup>. The text of the poem is carefully chosen to evoke specific emotions and create a narrative within the song. Using carefully selected poems, art songs have the power to transport listeners to a different world and evoke a range of emotions. Art songs are not just about music; they are a fusion of poetry and music, creating a unique artistic expression. Art songs provide a platform for artistic expression,

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<sup>7</sup> Bowen, J. A. (1996). Performance practice versus performance analysis: Why should performers study performance. *Performance Practice Review*, 9(1), 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.5642/perfpr.199609.01.03>

<sup>8</sup> Zamani, M. F., & Abd Gani, A. F. (2020). Razak Abdul Aziz's 10 pantun settings: Imagery behind the chosen texts. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(6). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbs/v10-i6/7465>

allowing composers and performers to convey emotions, tell stories, and connect with audiences on a deeper level. Through the combination of music and poetry, art songs offer a unique opportunity for composers and singers to express their creativity and interpretive skills. Art songs allow for the exploration of complex emotions and themes, as well as the opportunity to showcase the technical and expressive abilities of both the composer and performer. The composition techniques in art songs are highly sophisticated, particularly when it comes to piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment in art songs is not simply a background support, but rather an equal partner to the vocal line<sup>9</sup>. It intertwines with the voice to create a harmonious and expressive musical experience.

The composer's emotional involvement, intellectual grasp, and physical understanding of the text inform their music and shape the composition of the art song<sup>10</sup> (Abd Wahab & Md Noor, 2022). They carefully select and interpret the poems, considering the historical context, poetic and musical form, as well as the internal harmonic, melodic, and motivic structures. These compositional choices are aimed at enhancing the emotional impact of the music and effectively conveying the poet's ideas through musical expression. Art songs are often based on lyrics from famous poets, adding a highly literary element to the composition. Furthermore, the compositional structure of art songs can also be influenced by social and cultural factors. The creative process of composing an art song involves a combination of cognitive competence and technical abilities. Composers draw on their knowledge of music theory, harmony, melody, rhythm, and form to create a cohesive and meaningful musical structure. They skillfully navigate the complexities of musical composition, employing techniques such as modulation, counterpoint, and thematic development to craft a compelling and evocative musical narrative.

## **Journaling Enigma Hati**

### **The Composer**

Marzelan Salleh, a contemporary Malaysian composer, combines his multicultural background with Western classical music. He believes in the connection between art and intercultural influences. Salleh explores traditional

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<sup>9</sup> Mohamed Razali, C. S., & Salleh, M. (2021). Intercultural creativity and exploration through Gamelanistic elements in Marzelan Salleh's Puteri Gunung Ledang and John Cage's dream. *Revista Música Hodie*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.5216/mh.v20.65011>

<sup>10</sup> Abd Wahab, A. F., & Md Noor, K. D. (2022). From Forest to a song; a process of extracting the soundscape of nature into art songs. *Formosa Journal of Applied Sciences*, 1(3), 285–292. <https://doi.org/10.55927/fjas.v1i3.1080>

music as a source of creative ideas and techniques. He integrates both traditional and foreign styles, exploring new dimensions in music by incorporating elements from different cultures. Marzelan's modern intercultural music blends Malaysian and foreign elements, resulting from personal experiences and synthesis of two worlds. He critically analyzes compositional processes, employing foreign compositional techniques.

### **Learning the poem**

The first thing that I will do when I get a new art song is trying to understand the poem. Understanding the poem is essential to fully grasp the meaning and emotions behind the song. By analyzing the figurative language and imagery used in the lyrics, I can gain a deeper understanding of the poet's intentions and purpose. Additionally, understanding the poem also helps in effectively conveying the message of the song to the audience. Listening to music is an enjoyable experience, but if we do not grasp the meaning of the song through understanding the figurative words commonly used in the song, our appreciation for the music may be limited<sup>11</sup> (Bowen, 1996).

As a performer, having a comprehensive understanding of the poem's narrative plays a crucial part in expressing a single feeling throughout the song. When we first learn about art songs, we must understand the poem that the song's lyrics are based on. Understanding the poem is important because it helps us figure out how to understand and enjoy the art song. When we listen to a poem as part of an art song, it's important to understand what it means and how it works. By understanding the poem, we can get a sense of the feelings, themes, and images that the composer wants to show through the music. Enigma Hati enlightens us on a song that offers a prayer to God, asking for inner serenity and direction. We can acquire a more profound comprehension of the verse's subject matter as well as its message if we examine the indirect phrases and symbols contained within the poem. An examination of the indirect phrases contained in a poem can make it simpler for the reader to comprehend the poem's subject matter and unearth the poem's underlying significance. In addition, looking closely at the odd words and phrases that are contained inside the verse might reveal extremely helpful insights on the meaning that the poet was going for.

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<sup>11</sup> Bowen, J. A. (1996). Performance practice versus performance analysis: Why should performers study performance. *Performance Practice Review*, 9(1), 17–34.  
<https://doi.org/10.5642/perfpr.199609.01.03>

### ENIGMA HATI

Tertanyaku mengapakah kau hadir  
Debarannya oh hati ini bila kau tiba  
when you arrive  
Getarnya menusuk disanubariku  
Oh inikah rahsia cinta oh benarkah

Degup hati apabila kau muncul  
Ku merasa oh bahagia dalam jiwaku  
Denyutan mencengkam dalam hati ini  
Oh inikah dinamakan kasih yang sebenar

Kau dengarlah hatiku ini memanggilmu

Ya tuhan kau berikan kekuatan  
untukku tempuh semuanya

Aku mencari sesuatu  
Yang belum lagi kutemu

Enigma hatiku ini keliru  
Oh tuhan kau kurniakan  
Kekuatan buatku trima segalanya

Oh dan ku reda

### MYSTERY OF THE HEART

I wonder why you have appeared  
The palpitations, oh my heart,

The tremors pierce through my soul  
Oh, is this the secret of love, is it true?

My heart races when you appear  
I feel happiness deep within my soul  
The throbbing grips my heart  
Oh, is this what true love is called?

Can you hear my heart calling out  
to you?  
Oh Lord, grant me the strength  
to face it all

I am searching for something  
That I have not yet found

The enigma of my heart is confused  
Oh Lord, you have bestowed  
Strength upon me to accept  
everything  
Oh, and I am content

### Poem: Enigma Hati by Marzelan Salleh

When I read the poem, it sounds like a love song, but that's just the surface. What's really going on is that it's a metaphor for why God is with us and how worried we are when we talk to God. By looking at how "Enigma Hati" uses indirect language, I can figure out its greater spiritual meaning and learn more about the poet's relationship with God. When I think about God, I feel love and peace. This poem's reading is based on how the reader feels about love and faith, which may differ for each person. I can also tell from the poem that the writer talks about how God gives her strength to get through the trip and guidance when things are hard or unclear. This is clear in words like "In every trial, I find strength" and "God's love is my anchor in the storm." These phrases show that the poet looks to God for help and support. By using heuristic reading, hermeneutic reading, and looking at hypograms and intertextual connections, we can dig deeper into the layers of meaning in "Enigma Hati." Heuristic reading means going into the work with an open mind and letting our own experiences and feelings help us figure out what it means.

### Phrasing with Poetry: Connecting Lyrics and Music

One of the difficulties that I found when practicing this song is phrasing. The phrasing from bar 5 until bar 19 is quite demanding because of the long phrases. Long-phrase singing requires careful breath management and consistent vocal support throughout the passage. To effectively convey the intended message and emotion of a musical phrase, I precisely articulate it essentially for the listener to understand and connect with the lyrics when I sing. Utilizing the correct phrasing technique allows for the seamless flow of musical phrases, enhancing the overall musicality of the performance<sup>12</sup>. This is where the technique of singing to improve singers' phrasing comes into play. By practicing singing through a piece, singers can develop their awareness of the phrasing and learn how to connect each musical phrase in a cohesive manner<sup>13</sup>.

Fig. 1

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Enigma Hati' by Marzelan Salleh. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 5 to 8, and the second system covers bars 9 to 12. Each system includes a vocal line (S. Solo) and a piano accompaniment (Pno.).

**System 1 (Bars 5-8):**

- Vocal Line:** Starts with a box labeled 'A' and 'A tempo'. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, and *mp*. Lyrics: "Ter - ta - nya ku me - nga - pah - kah kau ha - dir\_\_\_\_\_".
- Piano Line:** Starts with a box labeled 'A' and 'A tempo'. Dynamic is *pp*.

**System 2 (Bars 9-12):**

- Vocal Line:** Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, and *mp*. Lyrics: "De - ba - ran - nya\_ oh ha - ti i - ni\_ bi - la kau ti - ba".
- Piano Line:** Continues the accompaniment.

Bar 5 – bar 12, Enigma Hati by Marzelan Salleh

<sup>12</sup> Suzuki, M., Hosoya, T., Ito, A., & Makino, S. (2006). Music Information Retrieval from a singing voice using lyrics and melody information. *EURASIP Journal on Advances in Signal Processing*, 2007(1). <https://doi.org/10.1155/2007/38727>

<sup>13</sup> Zhang, D., & Wang, X. (2022). Optimization of vocal singing training methods based on multimedia data analysis. *Mathematical Problems in Engineering*, 2022, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/7609516>

In addition, using imagery or metaphor to explain what the music should sound like can also greatly enhance a singer's understanding and execution of phrasing. For example, comparing a certain musical phrase to the graceful flight of a bird or the gentle flow of a river can help students visualize and embody the desired expressive qualities in their singing<sup>14</sup>. Precise articulation of speech sounds is crucial for conveying the intended message and emotional impact of musical phrases. Without clear and accurate articulation, the listener may struggle to understand the lyrics being sung, leading to a disconnect between the performer and the audience. Good vocal projection is also important for efficient vocal adjustment, especially in large performance environments. By projecting their voice effectively, singers can ensure that their message is heard clearly even in larger spaces. Addressing these aspects of singing technique and phrasing early on in students' singing lessons is crucial for developing a better singing voice performance.

Some exercises to improve better phrasing include practicing breath control by consciously controlling the breathing rate according to the length of the musical phrase<sup>15</sup>. This helps prevent the vocal organs from becoming rigid and allows for a smoother and more fluid delivery of the phrases.

In addition, incorporating vocal practice that utilizes memory is also essential for improving phrasing. By remembering prior tones as reference points for future tones, students can develop a sense of continuity and coherence in their singing. They can also focus on memorizing tones within phrases and larger segments, which helps in maintaining the structure and shape of the music. Overall, teaching expressive performance and improving phrasing in singing involves a combination of techniques such as singing through a piece, using imagery or metaphor, focusing on developing accurate articulation and vocal projection, and incorporating exercises that improve breath control and utilize memory.

Other exercises to have longer phrasing include practicing sustained notes, where students hold a pitch for an extended period of time. This helps develop breath control and allows singers to explore the nuances and variations within a single note. Improving the level of singing work also requires training in the breathing method<sup>16</sup>. Conscious control of the breathing rate

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<sup>14</sup> Merrill, J., Sammler, D., Bangert, M., Goldhahn, D., Lohmann, G., Turner, R., & Friederici, A. D. (2012). Perception of words and pitch patterns in song and speech. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2012.00076>

<sup>15</sup> Martinez, J. (2008). Effects of singing classes on pulmonary function and quality of life of COPD patients. *International Journal of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.2147/copd.s4077>

<sup>16</sup> Su, L. (2022, August 29). The Use of Thinking Visualization Techniques in College Teaching Based on Improved Genetic Algorithms. <https://scite.ai/reports/10.1155/2022/8508787>

based on the length of the phrase is necessary to prevent rigidity in the vocal organs. Additionally, singing therapy has shown promise in improving speech difficulties related to neurological disorders. In summary, accurate articulation of speech sounds is crucial for the listeners to understand the message of musical phrases.

Vocal warmup to improve phrasing in singing can include exercises such as lip trills, sirens, and tongue twisters. These exercises help in developing flexibility and control over the vocal muscles, allowing singers to navigate through phrases with ease.

### Expressive Dynamics: Conveying Emotion Through Singing

This song witnesses a quite significant change in dynamics and is among the challenges when singing this song. The use of dynamics such as *pp*, *p*, crescendo, and decrescendo is present in section A and only switches to forte in section B. Singing with dynamics in section A is quite demanding. Firstly, after getting the melody of the song, I practiced by listening to my tone when singing *pp* dynamics. I recorded the singing during practice sessions and listened back to analyzing my voice tone and controlling it during performances.

Fig. 2

The musical score for Section A of 'Enigma Hati' by Marzelan Salleh consists of two staves. The top staff is for the Soprano Solo (S. Solo) and the bottom staff is for the Piano (Pno.). The S. Solo part begins at measure 5 and contains the lyrics: 'Ter - ta-nya ku me-nga-pah-kah kau ha - dir'. The dynamics for the S. Solo part are marked as *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, and *mp*. The Pno. part provides accompaniment with a steady rhythm and dynamic markings of *pp* and *p*. The tempo is marked 'A tempo' and the articulation is 'legato'.

### Section A, Enigma Hati by Marzelan Salleh

Fig. 3

The image shows a musical score for a vocal solo and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It starts at measure 36 with the instruction 'poco accel.' and a dynamic marking of 'f'. The tempo is marked as '♩ = 76 Hopeful, uplifting'. A section marker 'B' is placed above the first measure of the vocal line. The lyrics are 'nar Kau de - ngar - lah ha - ti - ku - i -'. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp and a time signature of 4/4. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The piano part includes a dynamic marking of 'mf' and triplet markings in the right hand.

### Section B, Enigma Hati by Marzelan Salleh

To sing dynamic *ppp*, I must maintain a soft and delicate vocal quality while still projecting enough sound to be heard. To achieve this, I must carefully control my breath support and vocal technique to produce a subtle and controlled sound. For good singing, it is important that a singer should maintain the basic tonal concept and core of his/her vocal production, even when expressing different moods, or altering phrasing and dynamics. This ensures consistency and stability in the singer's vocal performance, allowing them to effectively convey the intended emotions and musical expression. Additionally, the singer must also pay attention to their articulation and vocal projection.

To improve the ability to sing soft dynamics and maintain control, it is crucial for singers to incorporate vocal warm-up exercises into their practice routines. These warm-up exercises can include *messa di voce* exercises, which involve gradually increasing and decreasing the volume of a sustained note. These exercises are comparable to turning the radio volume knob up and down, as described by Titze<sup>17</sup>. By regularly practicing *messa di voce* exercises, singers can develop the necessary control and coordination of their vocal muscles to achieve soft dynamics with ease. In addition to vocal warm-up exercises, singers can also benefit from mastering diaphragmatic breathing techniques. This involves engaging the diaphragm muscle to support the breath and provide a strong foundation for vocal production.

<sup>17</sup> Aggett, C. (2014). *Australian art song: Pedagogical learning and teaching strategies framed for singers and singing teachers* (thesis). University of Western Sydney, Sydney.

Fig. 4

2

13

S. Solo

*mp* *mf*

Ge-tar-nya me-nu-suk di - sa-nu-ba - ri - ku Oh -i -ni -kah\_ rah

Pno.

*pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *mp*

### Enigma Hati by Marzelan Salleh

To ensure that the dynamics are conveyed correctly, I use words within the lyrics to evoke more emotion. What I always do is use mental images. For example, for the word “Debarannya” (nervousness) in bar 9 and “getarnya” (trembling) in bar 13, I think of things that are related to me that are nerve-wracking, like when my child fell ill. I try to imagine the feelings I had at that moment and bring them out when I sing. This can help me become more expressive, which can be seen through facial expressions and vocal tones. Practicing dynamic changes using mental images can be a valuable technique for singers looking to infuse their performances with more emotion and expressiveness. It begins with a deep understanding of the song’s lyrics, identifying key phrases that demand dynamic variation. These phrases serve as focal points for creating vivid mental images that connect with the intended emotions. As singers, I close my eyes and immerse myself in these scenarios, I can feel how these emotions naturally affect their body and voice. This practice not only helps in adjusting vocal dynamics but also facial expressions and overall performance demeanor. Regularly recording these practice sessions allows singers to assess their progress and refine their technique. Over time, this method helps singers deliver more authentic and moving performances that resonate deeply with their audience.

### Spoken Dialogue in Art Song: Adding Depth to Vocal Performance

One of the interesting parts in this song is from bar 51 to 53, where the composer included a spoken dialogue. Initially, it was a bit challenging for me to articulate these lines while singing. I sought guidance from the composer regarding the appropriate tone for delivering the text and the emotions, aiming

to gain a clear understanding of the composer's intentions. During rehearsals, I experimented with different vocal tones and had discussions with the composer to determine the most suitable approach. What was particularly intriguing was that, when singing this part, the vocal tone for the spoken dialogue was distinct, possibly due to my warmed-up voice and a somewhat higher voice placement. Nevertheless, I still attempted to convey the dialogue with a whispered and emotional delivery.

Fig. 5

The image shows a musical score for a spoken dialogue section. It consists of two staves: a vocal staff (S. Solo) and a piano accompaniment staff (Pno.). The vocal staff is marked with 'Whispering voice with quasi pitch' and 'ppp'. The lyrics are 'A ku men-ca-ri\_ se-sua-tu\_ yang be lum la gi\_'. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and dynamic markings of 'p' and 'mp'. The score is numbered 51 at the beginning and 5 at the end.

### Spoken Dialogue, Enigma Hati by Marzelan Salleh

Spoken dialogue in art songs, while less common than in opera or musical theatre, is still occasionally used as a stylistic choice to convey specific dramatic or narrative elements within a song. This technique can be found in certain pieces of classical and contemporary art song repertoire. For example, composers like Benjamin Britten, in his song cycle "Les Illuminations," incorporate spoken sections between the sung portions to emphasize certain text passages. These spoken segments can provide contrast, highlight important phrases, or create a unique expressive effect. Additionally, some modern composers and songwriters may experiment with spoken word sections in art songs to explore new ways of combining text and music, adding a contemporary twist to the genre. While spoken dialogue is not a standard feature of art songs, its occasional use can be a creative means of enhancing the expressive and narrative qualities of the music.

Mastering spoken dialogue in art songs is pivotal for me to deliver a compelling and emotionally resonant performance. For me, it begins with my thorough understanding of the song's lyrics and the narrative they convey. I find that when I analyze a story, characters, and emotional context within

a song, it is equally crucial. I think it's important to speak pronounce words accurately and deliver my lines in a way to connect with the audience. Creating a bond, with the text and using vocal variety to match emotions are key parts of how I bring my dialogue to life. I also use gestures and body language appropriately to make my performance more expressive. Practicing regularly with music playing in the background helps me get the timing right when speaking. Working with coaches and recording my practice sessions for feedback are ways for me to improve my dialogue skills. Ultimately, I strive to make my characters. Their stories come alive adding richness and authenticity to my art song performance that will touch your heart with every word spoken.

### **Passaggio in Art Songs: The Vocal Bridge to Expressive Performance**

I utilize this journal as a platform for documenting my observations and reflections pertaining to the vocal technique of producing high notes. The highest pitch in this musical composition is B5, which necessitates a delicate vocal execution due to the lyrical substance associated with this note, namely, "I am content." To sing high notes in an aria for soprano with a light and airy quality, I need to focus on my vocal technique and breath control. I should begin my practice sessions with a thorough vocal warm-up, gradually working my way up the scale to prepare my vocal cords for the higher notes. Proper breath support is crucial for sustaining high notes, so I should practice diaphragmatic breathing and engage my abdominal muscles. I keep tension at bay by ensuring my jaw, neck, and shoulders remain relaxed while singing. On a daily basis, I engage in the process of documenting my practice sessions, wherein I reflect upon my personal encounters and articulate my experiences as I strive to achieve a mellifluous and serene vocal quality devoid of any semblance of vocal strain or excessive vocal projection.

To achieve a lighter tone in my high notes, I imagine my voice resonating in my head or mask area instead of my throat or chest. I will dedicate time to practicing scales and arpeggios that cover the range of high notes in the aria. These exercises build muscle memory and control in my vocal cords. Additionally, I incorporate vocal exercises like lip trills, sirens, and vowel sirens to improve my agility in the upper register. When I sing high notes, I consider modifying my vowels slightly to achieve the desired lightness. I will experiment with slightly narrower vowel shapes, but I need to be cautious not to create excessive tension. I will analyze the aria's score to understand its context and emotion, allowing me to deliver a more expressive performance. It is really helpful to record my practice sessions, for self-evaluation. When I listen back, I focus on pinpointing areas where I can improve. Currently I am looking for advice from a soprano repertoire coach who can offer personalized

feedback and help me perfect my technique. It is important to keep in mind that mastering the light and effortless quality of notes takes time and consistent practice. I need to be patient with myself and committed to my training journey. With dedication I will progress in singing notes in arias with the desired grace and ease, over time.

## Conclusion

After reflecting on my experience, with keeping a journal while exploring the Malay art song "Enigma Hati" by Marzelan Salleh I have gained insights and faced various challenges as a singer/researcher. Throughout this process I have dived into understanding the emotional essence of the poem honing my skills in phrasing, dynamics, dialogues within the song and reaching high notes. This journey has not enhanced my abilities but also allowed me to appreciate the intricate layers of artistic expression that define art songs as a distinctive and captivating musical genre.

Keeping a journal has proven to be a tool for tracking my development, emotions and obstacles along the way. It has provided me with a platform to gain insights into how text and music intertwine in art songs. Grasping the subtleties of the poem has been essential for conveying my message and establishing a profound connection with listeners. Mastering phrasing and dynamics have posed both expressive challenges during my performances. I've discovered that dedicated practice sessions and visualization techniques have been instrumental in mastering these elements ensuring an emotionally engaging rendition of the song.

The use of dialogue woven into the music adds a captivating element, to how I present my art. I need to change my style and approach. It's crucial to think about what the composer intended and the emotions of the character. Understanding the story and using language to make it relatable to the audience is key. In short, my experience with writing in a journal has shown me how complex performing art songs can be. It highlights the importance of connecting mastering techniques and interpreting creatively when bringing these pieces to life. Through practicing self-reflection and deepening my understanding of this art form I can keep improving my performance of "Enigma Hati" and broaden my appreciation for the genre of art songs. Journaling is a tool for growth that boosts understanding and skill in this unique musical style.

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SELF-EXPLORATION AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION: REFLECTIVE JOURNALING IN MALAY ART  
SONG: 'ENIGMA HATI' BY MARZELAN SALLEH

- Zamani, M. F., & Abd Gani, A. F. (2020). Razak Abdul Aziz's 10 pantun settings: Imagery behind the chosen texts. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(6). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v10-i6/7465>
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## PERFORMANCE PRACTICES OF TRANSYLVANIAN LATIN IN ECCLESIASTICAL MUSIC

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**SUMMARY.** The question of Ecclesiastical Latin pronunciation continues to be a subject of debate in the performing arts circles. While Latin is often labeled a “dead” language, one may argue that it remains vividly alive through performances – whether in liturgical or concert practices. For this reason, the pronunciation of Ecclesiastical Latin is not only an academic concern but an essential aspect of vocal authenticity within established religious aesthetics. Although it is widely acknowledged that no regional form of Ecclesiastical Latin mirrors the Classical Latin pronunciation of antiquity, the question today is whether performers should follow the scholarly reconstruction of local practices or adhere to Papal standardization. This is also the case with Transylvanian Ecclesiastical Music, which, based on historical evidence proves its alignment with the Hungarian-Germanic practices. Today, the performer’s pronunciation of Latin in Transylvania is often a hybrid language, blending Germanic and Italianate features. Using the International Phonetic Alphabet, this paper analyzes the fixed forms of the *Ordinarium Missae* comparing the German pronunciation suggested by Valentin Lanzrein with the Italian pronunciation model instructed by Michael de Angelis as per Vatican’s requirements, while describing the Transylvanian performing practices in its main communities: Hungarian, Saxon and Romanian. Ultimately, this study argues the local need for development of specialized vocal performance programs focused on Western sacred repertoire, a curriculum distinct from those centered on opera and Byzantine music.

**Keywords:** IPA, *Ordinarium Missae*, Transylvania, Ecclesiastical Latin, vocal performance, historical performance practices

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## 1. Performing Ecclesiastical Latin

Why would performers study the pronunciation of a “dead” language such as Latin? The voice, as a medium of expression, embodies historical memory through performances, carrying with it the cultural, linguistic, and spiritual context of the repertoire. An example of this embodiment can be found in the Vienna Boys Choir, whose performances of complete settings of Masses by Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms reflect not only high levels of musicianship and vocal skill, but also a strong knowledge of liturgical context. Through training, their Germanic pronunciation of Latin becomes inseparable from their liturgical literacy, showing how performing Ecclesiastical Latin can retain vocal authenticity and meaning when informed historically and theologically.

The spirit of one’s voice, whether innate or cultivated through training, can transpire as an identifiable vocal feature. In fact, by reexamining the act of listening, as Nina Sun Eidsheim proposes, we become aware that we do not merely hear race; we also hear one’s spirituality. What “we perceive through sound is not objective or neutral, but rather culturally constructed, historically contingent, and politically loaded”<sup>3</sup>.

In search for comparable performing models, one may find performances artistically unconvincing, although commonly portrayed as acceptable practice. Vocal, artistic, and aesthetic authenticity require a deeply rooted inner dimension, one that must be actively sought and cultivated. This inner dimension - whether understood as spiritual or as a sense of root or “origin of place” constitutes a necessary foundation for authenticity in vocal performance. Without it, the music risks being rendered lacking its essential meaning.

### *1.1 Historically Informed Practice and the Centralization of Liturgical Latin*

Performance practices refer to general principles that guide musicians in interpreting a piece of music according to its style, historical context, composer’s desire or genre. Historically informed performance practices indicate the practices that aim to perform music as it would have been in the time it was composed. Ecclesiastical Latin defines a specific vocal and musical tradition that highly varied throughout time and region. These practices have evolved over centuries and may differ based on specific religious denominations, local traditions, and the presence of various cultural influences as it is the case with the region of Transylvania in Romania.

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<sup>3</sup> Eidsheim, Nina Sun. “The Micropolitics of Listening to Vocal Timbre” In *Postmodern Culture Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2014 (accessed November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024).

Up to 20<sup>th</sup> century, Latin's pronunciation reflected local linguistic habits in schools, choirs, courts and universities. Composers such as Bach, Telemann expected a Latin in the vernacular style of their region<sup>4</sup>. Erasmus's treatise *De Recta Latini Graecique sermonis pronuntiatione (On the Correct Pronunciation of Latin and Greek)*, first published in 1528 encourages the use of reconstructed Classical Latin. Erasmus exposed various national pronunciation of the Latin, which he found unacceptable<sup>5</sup> hoping for a gradual improvement through the application of his 1528 book. However, both French and English seem not wanting to change the national ingredient of their own Latin pronunciation<sup>6</sup>. Even though Erasmian Latin became standard in Northern European Universities, the Catholic Church retained the Italianate ecclesiastical pronunciation, which is still used in Vatican today. As a response to the Protestant Reformation, the Council of Trent, which took place from 1545 to 1563 initiated the standardization of Church Latin, codified the Latin Mass, and published in *Missale Romanum* of 1570 under Pope Pius V establishing Latin as the universal liturgical language of the Roman Catholic Church<sup>7</sup>.

The Council of Trent did not dictate how Latin should be pronounced, priest and choirs continued to pronounce Latin using vernacular-influenced styles. The pronunciation of Latin in the church wasn't formally standardized until 20<sup>th</sup> century under Pope Pius X. Between 1903-1914, under the music reform and chant restoration of Pope Pius X, the Vatican reedited the chant books: *Graduale Romanum* and *Liber Usualis* and encouraged a single "Roman" pronunciation - essentially Italianate Latin<sup>8</sup>. By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century teachers, clergy and choir directors were being trained to use Italian-style Ecclesiastical Latin. Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome continues to teach this standard to seminarians and musicians. The USA, a music hub of the 20<sup>th</sup> century quickly aligned with the music reform of the Catholic church, while Europe had a slower pace in changing its regional customs.

More recently, in November 2012, Pope Benedict XVI published a *motu proprio Latina Lingua* to establish *Pontificia Academia Latinitatis* in Vatican with the purpose of reintroducing Latin to civil society and schools, based on Pope Pius X centralization of Latin using the Italian pronunciation<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Lanzrein, Valentin. Cross, Richard. *The Singer's Guide to German Diction*. Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 237.

<sup>5</sup> Allen, W. Sydney. *Vox Latina. The Pronunciation of Classical Latin*. Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 107.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 106.

<sup>7</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Missale Romanum, Promulgation of the Roman Missal*, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1969, cf. Apost. Const. *Quo primum*, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1570. papalencyclicals.net (accessed July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> Pope Pius X. *Papal Letter to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome – December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1903, Tra Le Sollecitudini (On Sacred Music)*. papalencyclicals.net (accessed July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025).

<sup>9</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Motu Proprio Latina Lingua*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012 vatican.va (accessed August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025).

Meanwhile, Vienna Boys Choir continues its singing local tradition with the use of Germanic pronunciation. Historically informed performances of early French music compositions in Latin such as *Leçons de Tenebrae*, traditionally sung during *Tenebrae* services - evenings of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of the Holy Week - use the Hebrew letter followed by the Latin text from the Book of Lamentations, *Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetiae*. *Leçons'* phonetics blend French sounds such as nasal vowels, or the [y] sound of *u* vowel with Italian Ecclesiastic Latin sounds. Although it is widely acknowledged that no regional form of Ecclesiastical Latin matches the Classical Latin pronunciation used centuries earlier in academic settings, the question today is whether performers should follow the scholarly reconstruction of local practices or adhere to Papal standardization, using the Italian Latin?

### 1.2 Tracing Transylvanian Ecclesiastical Latin Usage

Transylvania, a region with a mixture of ethnicities has initially a history of Catholic and later Protestant liturgical music. From 1002 until 1526, Transylvania was part of the Kingdom of Hungary, during which time the region was Christianized mainly in the Roman rite. When the Mongol invasion took place in 1242, the Hungarian kingdom colonized Saxon settlers. After 1526, when Hungary fell under the Turks and Transylvania became an autonomous principality, the Saxon areas became Lutheran respecting the Lutheran Reformation from the Germanic regions, while some Hungarian communities became also Lutherans, Calvinists and Unitarians. Roman Catholic churches were transformed, wight-washed embracing the new denomination. During the period of its Principality (1526-1683) the Roman Catholics remain without a bishop, each community following its own vernacular Latin tradition. When King Saint Stephen of Hungary created Roman-Catholic dioceses, and administrative units for the church – of which the oldest is Diocese of Transylvania from 1009, today's Archdiocese of Alba Iulia – Latin language became not only a cultic language but also an administrative language.

In the mid of 13<sup>th</sup> century, during the Kingdom of Hungary, the founding of Milcov diocese in today's Romanian Moldova brought with it Christianization of the Cumans and Pechenegs who were taking refuge from the Mongol invasion. Later, these populations were displaced within the Hungarian territory. The Milcov bishopric was maintained by Dominican monks from Italy, who, alongside the Franciscans - throughout history and to the present day - have undertaken Catholic missionary work in Moldova. This is the reason why the Ecclesiastical Latin used here differs from Transylvanian's Latin. Maintaining ties to its missionary origins (Passau, Bavaria), Transylvania

used the Latin pronunciation of the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation throughout the Middle Ages and during the restoration period after 1683.

Less known in today's Transylvania is the work of Ioannes (János) Sylvester (cc. 1504 – cc.1552), who was born in Szatmár county (at that time in East of Hungary, today Seini, Romania). Sylvester was a humanist from Leonard Cox's Erasmian circle, professor of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, whose work was extensive "on the improvement of his mother tongue in Erasmus's and Luther's spirit"<sup>10</sup>. His book *Grammatica Hungarolatina* was first published in 1539, as a "prestudy to the great task, the Hungarian New Testament"<sup>11</sup>.

When János Kájoni (1629-1687) came to the cultural landscape of Transylvania during the principality period (1526-1683), although of Romanian origin<sup>12</sup>, he had his name in both Hungarian and German languages (Johannes Caioni), while also being latinized (Joannes Kajoni). At a young age, he entered the Catholic monastic order at Sumuleu Ciuc – still one of the most significant Hungarian Catholic pilgrimage sites today. János Kájoni is largely remembered and celebrated within the Hungarian culture rather than Romanian, and he stands as a representative figure of the Catholic musical tradition through his musical and liturgical contributions as well as his secular collections. Kájoni's *Cantionale Catholicum* (1676) contains 247 ecclesiastical hymns in Latin and 545 in Hungarian, while the 826 pages introduce a motto in Hungarian which translates: "I wanted to serve my beloved country and give others the opportunity to praise God without hindrance through this small work of mine"<sup>13</sup>. Among other languages used in his *Codex* of 346 musical pieces, the Ecclesiastical Latin used here survived today primarily within Hungarian-speaking communities. "Even as more than a third of historical Hungary was either directly occupied by the Ottoman Empire or under Ottoman suzerainty for much of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this music (in his review of Kájoni's *Codex Vietorisz*) falls distinctly within the scope of Western practice"<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Sylvester, Ioannes. *Grammatica Hungarolatina*. Hungarian Academy of Science, Argumentum Publishing House – István Bartók, Budapest, 2006, pp. 7.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Domokos, Pál Péter. „,édes Hazámnak akartan szolgálni...”. Szent István Társulat, Budapest, 1979, pp. 102.

<sup>13</sup> Kájoni János, *Cantionale Catholicum*, [https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/RMK\\_I\\_1188-RM\\_I\\_4r\\_0316/?pg=5&layout=s](https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/RMK_I_1188-RM_I_4r_0316/?pg=5&layout=s) (accessed August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025)

<sup>14</sup> Pomerantz, Ian. "Delights from Baroque Carpathia". In *The Boston Musical Intelligencer*, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, <https://www.classical-scene.com/2021/05/12/delights-carpathia/> (accessed July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025)

Johannes Honter's activity (latinized Honterus, 1498-1549) also falls during the period of principality of Transylvania. A humanist schoolmaster with extensive knowledge in Latin and Greek, Honterus kept in touch with Martin Luther and may have known of Desiderius Erasmus's book. He wrote schoolbooks in Latin printed in Brasov, Transylvania. His *Odae cum Harmoniis ex diversis Poëtis in usum Ludi literarii Coronensis decerptae* (1548) is such an example, setting music on Latin text of ancient authors as Horatio, Vergil, Boethius, Prudentius, Ambrose, Borbonius, Lactantius as well as of humanists' contemporaries of Honterus<sup>15</sup>. Although Ecclesiastical Latin was going to be slowly changed into German language of the time - the New High German of 1350-1650<sup>16</sup> as per Martin Luther's reform, preserving the relationship with the German church, would assure that the Latin used by Honterus in schools phonetically had Germanic influences. This evidence can be heard today in the performance practices of the Transylvanian Saxon communities. Trained at the University of Viena and having worked in Germanic speaking regions (Basel), Honterus published in Brasov his *Compendii grammatices libri duo* as a Latin grammar for students, eleven years after Erasmus' 1528 book written for the restoration of Latin's classical pronunciation, but in the same year as János Sylvester's *Grammatica Hungarolatina*.

Meanwhile, the cultic language in the extra-Carpathian regions was Slavonic, which was later changed to Romanian. Being under Habsburg rule for 176 years (1691-1867), and later under Austro-Hungarian rule (1867-1918) Transylvania belongs to Romania since 1918, after the collapse of Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War II. Transylvania has a Romanian cultural history of only 107 years.

Liturgical Latin texts and music are shown in the following Transylvanian towns dating as early as 1300's, according to the Usuarium database<sup>17</sup>, a Hungarian digital library for the study of Latin Liturgical History in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period.

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<sup>15</sup> Hanke, M. Ecaterina. "The Collection *Odae cum harmoniis* by Johannes Honterus". In *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov*, VIII, Vol. 10 (59). No. 2, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Lanzrein, Valentin. Cross, Richard. *The Singer's Guide to German Diction*. Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 5.

<sup>17</sup> <https://usuarium.elte.hu/books?q=Romania> (accessed June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025).

Table 1

Origin	Date	Genre	Manuscript/Title	Usuarium ID
Alba Iulia	1462	Breviary	OFM Güssing Cod. 1/34	1201
Cisnădie	1300-1400	Missal	Parohia Cisnădie (no shelf mark)	4778
Gheorgheni	1428	Missal	Parohia Gheorgheni	4779
Oradea	1460	Breviary	BAV Vat. lat. 8247 (Vatican manuscript)	6500
Sibiu	1300-1400	Missal	Brukenthal Sibiu 9.V.1.	3384
Sibiu	1394	Missal	Brukenthal Sibiu 665	3383
Sibiu	1430	Missal	Brukenthal Sibiu Mss. 3.V.1 (shelfmark uncertain)	3385

### List of Ecclesiastic Latin texts in Transylvanian towns according to Usuarium

The Batthyáneum Library from Alba-Iulia, who cares the name of its founder, the Roman-Catholic bishop Batthyány Ignác (Ignatius) contains manuscripts, incunabula, printed books and the famous Codex Aureus. The core of Batthyány's Library represents 8000 volumes bought by the bishop from Christoph Anton von Migazzi, archbishop of Viena<sup>18</sup>. These non-local Transylvanian sources along with the local ones are no longer in the property of the church, research access being regulated by the Romanian Ministry of Culture.

## 2. Roman-Catholic *Ordinarium Missae* and Phonetic Practices

The Roman Catholic *Ordinarium Missae* refers to the set of fixed texts within the Roman Catholic Mass that remain unchanged throughout the liturgical year, regardless of a particular holyday. These texts form the core of the musical and spoken liturgy and are often set on music by composers throughout history. The five main parts of the *Ordinarium Missae* are named in Latin: *Kyrie* - the prayer asking for mercy; *Gloria* - the hymn of praise omitted during Lent and Advent; *Credo* - the declaration of faith, also called the Nicene Creed; *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* - the acclamation during the Eucharistic Prayer and, *Agnus Dei* - the prayer for mercy and peace, sung during the breaking of the bread. Meanwhile, *Proprium Missae* changes depending on the liturgical calendar and includes *Introit*, *Gradual*, *Alleluia*,

<sup>18</sup> Schatz, Elena-Maria. Stoica, Robertina. *Catalogul Colectiv al Incunabilelor din România*. CIMEC – Institutul de Memorie Culturală, 2007, pp.15.

*Offertory*, and *Communion*. Some practices in Transylvania include the *Proper* chanted in Gregorian or vernacular forms, while the *Ordinary* is sung occasionally polyphonically, particular during feast season.

### 2.1 *The Fixed Structure of the Missa: IPA-based Pronunciation Analysis and Liturgical use in Transylvania*

The following section will discuss the Ecclesiastical Latin with Germanic and Italianate pronunciation for the fixed forms of the *Ordinarium Missae: Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus- Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei* and it will explain how these are used in Transylvania. The IPA symbols are those recommended by Valentin Lanzrein for German Latin in his book *The Singer's Guide to German Diction* (2018) and by Michael de Angelis for Italian Latin or Romano Latin as per Papal centralization of Ecclesiastical Latin. Father Michael de Angelis, an Italian-born, Ph.D. Professor of Latin, Italian and Liturgy at the Immaculate Conception Seminary, at the Seton Hall College, at the Newark Diocesan Institute of Sacred Music, and Rector of St. Joseph's Church in New Jersey published in 1937 *The Correct Pronunciation of Latin according to Roman Usage with Phonetic Arrangements of the Texts of the Ordinary of the Mass, Requiem Mass, Responses at Mass and Hymns* in response "to a general demand on the part of scholars, teachers, choirmasters, organists and singers who desire to obtain the option of a qualified authority on the much-debated question of the true Roman pronunciation of Latin"<sup>19</sup>. At that time the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols were not extensively used as they are today, and the phonetics are explained through the American English sounds, using words syllabification and uppercase letters for the accented syllable, also providing word samples in American English. His work was so effective that even today the region uses Italian Latin in all musical works, in disregard to the composers' origins<sup>20</sup>.

Promoting *unus cultus, unus cantus, una lingua*, the book shows documents and letters between the Pope and its Cardinali, urging the need to "pronounce Latin more romano"<sup>21</sup> all throughout the world. Pope Pius X wrote in a 1912 letter to the French Archbishop of Bourges, Louis Ernest Dubois that "the question of the pronunciation of Latin is closely bound up

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<sup>19</sup> De Angelis, Michael. *The Correct Pronunciation of Latin according to Roman Usage with Phonetic Arrangements of the Texts of the Ordinary of the Mass, Requiem Mass, Responses at Mass and Hymns*. G.I.A. Publications, Inc. Chicago, 1965, Nicola A. Montani's note, pp. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Lanzrein, Valentin. Cross, Richard. *The Singer's Guide to German Diction*. Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 237.

<sup>21</sup> De Angelis, Michael. *The Correct Pronunciation of Latin according to Roman Usage with Phonetic Arrangements of the Texts of the Ordinary of the Mass, Requiem Mass, Responses at Mass and Hymns*. G.I.A. Publications, Inc. Chicago, 1965, pp. 5.

with the restoration of the Gregorian chant [...], the accent and the pronunciation of Latin had great influence on the melodic and rhythmic formation of the Gregorian phrase and consequently it is important that these melodies should be rendered in the same manner in which they were artistically conceived at their first beginning [...] Finally the spread of the Roman pronunciation of Latin should continue with the same zeal and consoling success which has marked its progress hitherto [...]”<sup>22</sup>. Meanwhile, Michael de Angelis talks about that even the Italian Latin “was not uniform”, having “*substrati* particularly in the cities along the coasts, in the Lazio district and in upper Italy”, where influences of Greek and Gallic were present. He, then compares how the Italian phonetics differ between Neapolitan, Sicilian or Tuscan regions, just as English differs in different parts of the world or within one country<sup>23</sup>. Despite these mentions, Michael de Angelis advocates for the Vatican’s Ecclesiastical Latin in both music performance and liturgical services.

Valentin Lanzrein, a German lyric diction professional, strongly promotes the use of German Latin for all German composers, especially when written for German performers and audiences, arguing that German composers’ word syllabification of Ecclesiastical Latin is a strong indicative that German composers expected the German Latin phonetics. “Bach in the autograph of the *B Minor Mass*, often did not make any separation [syllabification] at all and simply wrote over the bar line, but, when forced to, because of a new line or new page, he made the separation *sus-cipe* in the *Gloria*, and *as-cendit, des-cendit* in the *Credo*”<sup>24</sup>.

Table 2

Latin	German Ecclesiastical Latin Pronunciation in IPA according to Valentin Lanzrein	Italian Ecclesiastical Latin Pronunciation in IPA according to Michael de Angelis
<i>Kyrie eleison</i>	[ˈky:rie leˈleɪsɔn]	[ˈki:.ri:ɛ ɛˈleɪ.sɔn]
<i>Christe eleison</i>	[ˈkris.te leˈleɪsɔn]	[ˈkri:s.tɛ ɛˈleɪ.sɔn]
<i>Kyrie eleison</i>	[ˈky:rie leˈleɪsɔn]	[ˈki:.ri: ɛ ɛˈleɪ.sɔn]

### *Kyrie* – IPA of German and Italian Latin

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Lanzrein, Valentin. Cross, Richard. *The Singer’s Guide to German Diction*. Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 238.

The main two differences are: (1) *Kyrie* is pronounced with a [y] sound in German Latin, the equivalent of the long, close *ü* vowel in German, while in the Vatican's version is pronounced with an [i:] the equivalent of a long, close *i* vowel in Italian; (2) Lanzrein indicates a glottal separation between the two words as per German pronunciation rules for words starting with a vowel and preceded by a word ending also with a vowel sound. The accent of the words is the same and is marked with ['] in front of the accented syllable.

Another fixed form in the *Ordinarium* is *Agnus Dei*, also usually short in length and sung three times.

**Table 3**

Latin	German Ecclesiastical Latin Pronunciation in IPA according to Valentin Lanzrein	Italian Ecclesiastical Latin Pronunciation in IPA according to Michael de Angelis
<i>Agnus Dei</i>	[ˈag.nʊs ˈdeː.i]	[ˈaŋ.nʊs ˈdeː.i]
<i>qui tollis peccata mundi</i>	[kvi: ˈtɔlɪs pɛˈkaː.ta ˈmʊn.di]	[kwi: ˈtɔl.ɪs pɛˈkaː.ta ˈmʊn.di]
<i>miserere nobis</i>	[miˈsɛːreːre ˈnoː.bɪs]	[miˈsɛːrɛ ˈnɔ.bɪs]
<i>dona nobis pacem</i>	[ˈdoː.na ˈnoː.bɪs ˈpaː.tsem]	[ˈdɔ.na ˈnɔ.bɪs ˈpaː.tʃɛm]

### ***Agnus Dei* – IPA of German and Italian Latin**

Although *s* intervocalic would have a [z] sound in both Germanic and Italianate modern languages in Latin *s* is sung voiceless [s] in both pronunciations. Sidney Allen, a Cambridge scholar of Classical Latin backs up this practice: “In very early times intervocalic *s* had generally developed to voiced [z], but this sound was not maintained in Latin and was changed to [r]”<sup>25</sup>. Also, in *Agnus Dei* letter *s* remains unvoiced in Germanic pronunciation of Lanzrein and in the Italian Latin of Father Michael de Angelis. Visibly different pronunciation occurs for the letter groups: (a) *gn* which becomes [gn] and [ŋ]; (b) *qu* which reads [kv] and [kw] respectively; and (c) *ce* which sounds [ts] in German Latin and [tʃ] in Italian Latin.

Performance practices in Transylvania show that the Hungarian and German ethnics stay closely to the Germanic pronunciation of the Latin, while the Romanians mix the two phonetic systems: Italian and German. The Romanians keep the voiced *g* sound in *agnus* and the affricate [kv] in *qui* from German phonetics, but they Italianize the *pacem*, using the affricate [tʃ] instead of [ts] adding also the modern voiced *s* intervocalic, [z] sound from the Romanian language.

<sup>25</sup> Allen, W. Sydney. *Vox Latina. The Pronunciation of Classical Latin*. Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 35.

Table 4

Latin	Transylvanian – Saxon/ Hungarian Pronunciation in IPA	Transylvanian - Romanian Pronunciation in IPA
<i>Kyrie eleison</i>	[ˈky:rie eˈleɪsɔn]/[ˈki:rie]	[ˈki:ri:ɛ eˈleɪ.sɔn]
<i>Christe eleison</i>	[ˈkʁɪs.te eˈleɪsɔn]	[ˈkri:s.te eˈleɪ.sɔn]
<i>Agnus Dei</i>	[ˈag.nʊs ˈde:i]	[ˈag.nʊs ˈde:i]
<i>qui tollis peccata mundi</i>	[kvi: ˈtɔlɪs pɛˈkɑ:ta ˈmun.di]	[kvi: ˈtɔlɪs pɛˈkɑ:ta ˈmun.di]
<i>miserere nobis</i>	[miˈsɛːre:re ˈno:.bɪs]	[miˈzɛ:re ˈnɔ.bɪs]
<i>dona nobis pacem</i>	[ˈdo:na ˈno:.bɪs ˈpa:.tsɛm]	[ˈdɔ.nɔ ˈnɔ.bɪs ˈpa:.tʃɛm]

**Kyrie and Agnus Dei – IPA of Transylvanian Latin in Hungarian,  
Saxon and Romanian communities**

Let's now take a look at *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* and notice how these movements would be sung in the two Latin pronunciations considering that the main word accent falls on the first syllable. *Coeli* is pronounced [ˈtsø:li] in Germanic Latin, while in the Italian Latin is [ˈtʃɛ:.li]. The rule applied in phonetics is when *c* followed by a frontal vowel the sound changes into a [ts] sound for German and into a [tʃ] sound for Italian. Lanzrein insists on a glottal stop every time German language would employ it. Initial *h* is mute in Italian and pronounced [h] in German. Allen affirms that “*h* is basically a weak articulation, involving no independent activity of the speech-organs in the mouth, and is liable to disappear”<sup>26</sup>. While Allen documents how *h* has been lost in colloquial Latin of the classical period, notes “but we may be sure that the writing and pronunciation of *h* continued for a long time to be taught in the schools and cultivated in polite society – as St. Augustine complains [...] and it is therefore not surprising that we find it replaced by *ch*, where *ch* probably has the value of the German *ich-Laut*”<sup>27</sup>.

Table 5

Latin	German Ecclesiastical Latin Pronunciation in IPA according to Valentin Lanzrein	Italian Ecclesiastical Latin Pronunciation in IPA according to Michael de Angelis
<i>Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth</i>	[ˈsɑŋktʊs ˈdɔmɪnʊs ˈde:ʊs ˈsɑ:bɑɔt]	[sɑŋk.tʊs ˈdɔ.mi.nʊs ˈde:ʊs ˈsa.ba.ot]
<i>Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua</i>	[ˈplɛ:ni sʊnt ˈtsø:li ɛt ˈtɛra ˈglo:ria tu:a]	[ˈplɛ.ni ˈsʊnt ˈtʃɛ:.li ɛt ˈtɛr.ra ˈglo:rɪ.a ˈtu:.ɑ]
<i>Hosanna in excelsis</i>	[hoˈsana ɪn ɛksˈtɛlsɪs]	[oˈzan.na ɪn ɛkˈtʃɛl.stɪs]
<i>Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini</i>	[beneˈdɪktʊs kvi ˈve:nɪt ɪn ˈno:mɪne ˈdɔmɪni]	[ˈbɛ.nɛ.dɪk.tʊs kvi ˈve.nɪt ɪn ˈnɔ.mi.ne ˈdɔ.mi.ni]

**Sanctus and Benedictus – IPA of German and Italian Latin**

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 43.

<sup>27</sup> Allen, W. Sydney. *Vox Latina. The Pronunciation of Classical Latin*. Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 45.

Table 6

Latin	Transylvanian – Saxon/ Hungarian Pronunciation in IPA	Transylvanian - Romanian Pronunciation in IPA
<i>Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth</i>	[ˈsanktus ˈdominus ˈde:us ˈsa:baot]	[sank.tus ˈdɔ.mi.nus ˈdɛ:.us ˈsa.ba.ot]
<i>Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua</i>	[ˈple:ni sunt ˈtsø:li et ˈtɛra ˈglo:ria tu:a] / [ˈtse:li]	[ˈple.ni ˈsunt ˈtʃe:.li et ˈtɛr.ra ˈglo:.ri.a ˈtu:.a]
<i>Hosanna in excelsis</i>	[hoˈsana in eksˈtsɛlsis]	[hoˈsan.na in ekˈtʃɛl.sis]
<i>Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domin.</i>	[beneˈdiktus kvi ˈve:nit in ˈno:mɪne ˈdɔmɪni]	[ˈbɛ.nɛ.dɪk.tus kvi ˈvɛ.nɪt in ˈnɔ.mi.ne ˈdɔ.mi.ni]

**Sanctus and Benedictus - IPA of Transylvanian Latin in Hungarian,  
Saxon and Romanian communities**

Most Hungarian communities use [ˈtse:li] instead of the Germanic [ˈtsø:li]. Although the Germanic Latin has a more consonantal pronunciation, particularly in the [k] and [s] sounds, the mix with the Italian pronunciation found in the practice of Romanian performers does not necessary justify phonetically this blend, even though the Italian vowels and the absence of the glottal separation provide a more melodic flow and softer consonants. In the *Gloria* movement, all the differences mentioned above apply distinctively to the Transylvanian communities.

Table 7

Latin	Transylvanian – Saxon/ Hungarian Pronunciation in IPA	Transylvanian - Romanian Pronunciation in IPA
<i>Gloria in excelsis Deo</i>	[ˈglo:ria in eksˈtsɛlsis ˈde:o]	[ˈglo:.ri.a in ekˈtʃɛl.sis ˈdɛ:.o] or [ˈglɔ:rja in ekˈtʃɛl.sis ˈde:o]
<i>et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.</i>	[et in ˈtɛra paks hoˈmi:nibus ˈbo:nɛ volunˈtɑ:tɪs]	[et in ˈtɛr.ra paks ɔˈmi:.ni.bus ˈbo:.ne vo.lunˈta:tɪs] or [et in ˈtɛr.ra ˈpaks hoˈmi:nibus]
<i>Laudamus Te, benedicimus Te,</i>	[lauˈda:mus te beneˈdi:tsɪmus te]	[lauˈda:.mus te beneˈdi:.tʃi.mus te] or [laɥda:mus te beneˈdi:tʃimʊs te]
<i>adoramus Te, glorificamus Te.</i>	[adoˈra:mus te glorifiˈka:mus te]	[a.doˈra:.mus te glo.ri.fiˈka:.mus te]
<i>Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam,</i>	[ˈgrɑ:tsias ˈɑ:gɪmus ˈti:bi: ˈprɔptɛr ˈmɑgnɑm ˈglo:riɑm ˈtu:ɑm]	[gra:.tsi.as ˈɑ.dʒi.mus ˈti:.bi ˈprɔp.tɛr ˈmɑgnɑm ˈglo:.ri.ɑm ˈtu.ɑm] or [grɑ:tʃɑs]
<i>Domine Deus, rex coelestis, Pater omnipotens,</i>	[ˈdɔmɪne ˈde:us reks tsøˈlɛstɪs ˈpɑ:tɛr ɔmˈni:pɔtɛns]/[ˈtse:lɛstɪs]	[ˈdɔ.mi.ne ˈdɛ:.us reks tʃɛˈlɛs.tɪs ˈdɛ:.us ˈpɑ.tɛr om.ni.poˈtɛns]
<i>Domine Filii unigenite, Jesu Christe.</i>	[ˈdɔmɪne ˈfi:lɪi uniˈge:nɪte ˈje:su ˈkrɪste]	[ˈdɔ.mi.ne ˈfi:.li u.niˈdʒɛ.ni.te ˈje:.zu ˈkʁi:ste]

Latin	Transylvanian – Saxon/ Hungarian Pronunciation in IPA	Transylvanian - Romanian Pronunciation in IPA
<i>Domine Deus, Agnus dei, Filius Patris, Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis</i>	[ˈdɔmɪnɛ ˈdeːʊs ˈagnʊs ˈdeːi ˈfiːliʊs ˈpɑːtrɪs kvi ˈtɔlɪs pɛˈkɑːtɑ ˈmʊndi] [mɪsɛˈrɛːrɛ ˈnoːbɪs]	[ˈdɔ.mi.ne ˈdɛ.:us ˈagn.us ˈdɛ.:i ˈfi:.li.us ˈpa.trɪs kvi ˈtɔlɪs pɛˈkɑːtɑ ˈmʊndi] [mi.zeˈrɛ.:re ˈno:.bis]
<i>Suscipe deprecationem nostram</i>	[ˈsʊstɪpɛ dɛprɛkɑtsi ˈoːnɛm ˈnostrɑm]	[ˈsʊf.tʃi.pe dɛ.pre.kɑˈtsi.o.nɛm ˈnos.trɑm]
<i>Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris miserere nobis</i>	[kvi ˈsɛːdɛs ɑt ˈdɛkstɛrɑm ˈpɑːtrɪs mɪsɛˈrɛːrɛ ˈnoːbɪs]	[kvi ˈsɛ:.dɛs ɑd dɛksˈtɛ:.rɑm ˈpɑ.trɪs.mi.zeˈrɛ.:re ˈno:.bis]
<i>Quoniam Tu solus sanctus, Tu solus Dominus,</i>	[ˈkvoːnɪɑm tu ˈsoːlʊs ˈsɑŋktʊs tu ˈsoːlʊs ˈdɔmɪnʊs]	[ˈkvo.njɑm tu ˈsoː.lʊs ˈsɑnk.tʊs tu ˈsoː.lʊs ˈdɔ.mi.nʊs]
<i>Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.</i>	[tu ˈsoːlʊs ɑlˈtɪsɪmʊs ˈjɛːsu ˈkrɪstɛ]	[tu ˈsoː.lʊs ɑlˈtɪs.si.mʊs ˈjɛː.zu ˈkʁiːs.te]
<i>Cum Sancto Spiritu</i>	[kʊm ˈsɑŋkto ˈspiːrɪtu]	[kʊm ˈsɑnk.to ˈspi.ri.tu]
<i>in gloria Dei Patris.</i>	[ɪn ˈgloːrɪɑ ˈdeːi ˈpɑːtrɪs]	[ɪn ˈgloː.ri.ɑ ˈdɛ.i ˈpɑ.trɪs]
<i>Amen</i>	[ˈɑːmɛn]	[ˈa.mɛn]

**Gloria - IPA of Transylvanian Latin in Hungarian,  
Saxon and Romanian communities**

In addition to the differences previously mentioned, several words present different phonetics within the *Gloria* movement of the Mass. *Jesu* is pronounced with an unvoiced s [ˈjeːsu] and maintains its voiceless sound in Italian Latin (cf. Michael de Angelis pp. 22, and Sydney Allen 35), even though Lanzrein indicates a voiced intervocalic s, [z] in this case for the Italian Latin<sup>28</sup>, as Transylvanian Romanian performers use [ˈjeː.zu]. The use of unvoiced s in Ecclesiastical Latin is also confirmed by Moriarty<sup>29</sup>. The word *suscipe* is syllabified differently: *sus-ci-pe* and it reads [ˈsʊstɪpɛ] in German Latin, but *su-sci-pe* in Italian Latin and it sounds [ˈsʊf.tʃi.pe]. The letter group *ge/gi* keeps its hard sound in German Latin as in [uniˈgeːnɪtɛ] and [ˈɑːgɪmʊs] while it softens in the Italian Latin as in [unɪdʒɛˈniːtɛ] or [ˈa.dʒi.mʊs].

Although the Church has historically tolerated a degree of variation in Latin pronunciation, the commonly held assumption that Ecclesiastical Latin is synonymous with modern Italian pronunciation is often questioned by both linguists and musicologists. Performers who are unfamiliar with Roman Catholic musical traditions or with the custom of a particular region, may apply by-ear heard pronunciations or a combination of these. This is evident in the hybridized Latin pronunciation found in Romanian performances, where the two versions of pronunciation are mixed regardless of composer's and audience's origins. It

<sup>28</sup> Lanzrein, Valentin. Cross, Richard. *The Singer's Guide to German Diction*. Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 256.

<sup>29</sup> Moriarty, John. *Diction*. Shirmer Music Company, 1975, pp. 161.

is possible that the Roman-Catholics of Moldova cultured under the Franciscans and Dominicans who were speaking Italian Latin, mixed the German Latin with the Italian Latin. As Romania comprised throughout history of Moldova and Wallachia, this hybrid Latin may have reached from Moldova into the South. Romanian performers keep today this version of pronunciation. This mix is not singular in the use of Latin language. For example: “Latin in England was taught through the medium of French, by French schoolmasters, and this resulted in the introduction of some peculiarities of the French pronunciation of Latin”<sup>30</sup> to English speaking communities. France has been resistant to Papal centralization of Latin through its later *Société des amis de la prononciation française du Latin*<sup>31</sup> and earlier in the history through Gallicanism, despite the Ultramontanism’s efforts to support Papal authority. Consequently, what pronunciation practice best aligns with historical and musical authenticity for soloists or choirs performing Latin repertoire if Papal standardization is not to be considered? In the case of Transylvania, the historical answer is clear: German Latin.

### 3. Performing Faith: Vocal Authenticity within Religious Aesthetics

There are many local performers whose vocal sound, although classical, keep a very distinct quality of the orthodox vocal tradition from a technical aspect: a chest-pressed tone, a prominent forward jaw action which favors a more pharyngeal resonance, a vibrato rate of the voice quite low. The vocal sound feels generally pulled downward by inner actions of the body while trying to protrude outside of it, a sense of heaviness and unease that the body also manifest while singing, caught in a sound production that vehemently wants to dominate. The audience has been already conditioned to expect this specific vocal feature. Meanwhile, most Western vocal traditions use the light vocal mechanism through which the voice learns to have agility and firmness, and a *chiaroscuro* quality that is not too dark, which assures not only the singer’s vocal longevity, suppleness and beauty but the authenticity of the repertoire discussed.

The native language is also a dominant component of the vocal timbre and singing style. Nina Sun Eidsheim challenges the assumption that the voice reveals race and identity directly. When people say a voice “sounds Black”, that impression isn’t based on inherent acoustics, but filtered through cultural expectations, media representations and historical stereotypes<sup>32</sup>. Not only that one hears a clear African American timbre, a Korean vocal sound, an

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<sup>30</sup> Allen, W. Sydney. *Vox Latina. The Pronunciation of Classical Latin*. Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 102.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 107.

<sup>32</sup> Eidsheim, Nina Sun. *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music*. Duke University Press, 2019. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11hpntq>. (accessed August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025).

Italian tenor timbre, a Russian bass voice, or an American Broadway performer but one may surely assert the vocal orthodoxy of Callas, Anna Netrebko and Angela Gheorghiu. In the sense that voice represents a culture<sup>33</sup>, one may identify hundreds of Romanian female student and teacher performers duplicating Callas' or Gheorghiu's voice mechanics and behavior as well as their stage appearance. These characteristics of the vocal timbre become requirements of a classical trained singer in the respective region. These then dictate the vocal trend and the educational framework. Due to imitation, timbre richness, in many cases is not a natural occurrence as it may be for the original performer, but an overload of pharyngeal pressure, physique stiffness and extreme protrusions of vocal sound, an *impostazione della voce* that targets way beyond the field of a natural biologically vibrating instrument. The goal for a graduate becomes then one's ability to sing grandiose mature opera roles of Verdi and Puccini as early as possible. This is why Richard Miller points out the heavy vocal mechanism of the Eastern-European singing schools which train religiously the Balkan singer. The aesthetics of vocal timbre should follow though "the Western ideal of beauty"<sup>34</sup>.

Romanians, Hungarians and Saxons of Transylvania do not question which Latin pronunciation to use in performance. Each community and performer tend to adopt the version of Latin passed down through teachers, churches, schools, or heard informally in local performing practice. Despite ongoing processes of musical and cultural assimilation, Transylvania remains educationally and culturally diverse. Nonetheless, vocal practices originating outside the Carpathians, brought here other phonetic system, styles and vocal features, who have gradually become dominant. Among these, one finds the use of a hybrid Ecclesiastical Latin coating a heavy vocal mechanism. As a result, the pursuit of performance authenticity in this repertoire has diminished, and the regional identity has been supplanted.

Cultural preferences play a significant role in shaping the vocal behavior of young singers, The need for the development of specialized vocal performance programs outside of church, focused on Western sacred repertoire stays valid. Such a curriculum, distinct from those centered on opera or Byzantine music, would include the study and the performance of the Mass, oratorios, and sacred cantatas within their appropriate liturgical and historical context. The vocal and expressive demands of this repertoire differ from those of operatic styles or Byzantine sacred music. The performer is advised to have arguments when choosing to follow vernacular Latin of today's communities, or a scholarly reconstructed Latin of a region or the Papal standardization. Ultimately, seeking and remaining faithful to the vocal style in which one's voice finds its natural expression and authenticity also entails a deep artistic integrity.

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<sup>33</sup> idem.

<sup>34</sup> Miller, Richard. *The Structure of Singing*. Shirmer, 1986, pp. 206.

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## GREGORIAN CHANT IN THE PRACTICE OF THE SAXON UNITARIANS IN TRANSYLVANIA PART 1

ANETTE PAPP<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** This study investigates the function and adaptation of Gregorian chant within the liturgical and musical practice of the Saxon Unitarian community of 17th-century Transylvania. Focusing on the manuscript gradual MSU 1042 (Cluj, 1622), compiled by the Saxon cantor Lorenz Budaker under the episcopate of Valentin Radecke, the research situates the source within the broader framework of post-Reformation chant transmission. Although the repertoire exhibits stylistic and textual affinities with German Lutheran and medieval Hungarian models, it also demonstrates deliberate revisions consistent with Unitarian (Antitrinitarian) theological principles. Comparative analysis with contemporary Hungarian Unitarian sources reveals a strikingly independent evolution of the Saxon repertory, underscoring the bilingual and confessional diversity of early modern Transylvanian musical culture. Despite its limited number of chant items, the MSU 1042 gradual provides unique evidence for the persistence and contextual redefinition of Gregorian idioms within a heterodox Protestant milieu.

**Keywords:** Gregorian chant, Unitarianism, Saxon Unitarians, Transylvanian music culture, manuscript gradual

### 1. The Unitarian Church - the Saxon Unitarians of Cluj

The Unitarian (or, in contemporary terms, the Antitrinitarian Church) was founded in the last third of the 16th century, starting from Transylvania. The spiritual father and founder of Unitarianism in Transylvania was Francis David (Ferenc Dávid), who, after studying the question of the Lord's Supper

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and the simplicity of the rite, joined the Helvetic movement and first expressed his doubts about the doctrine of the Trinity in 1564. The new doctrines spread rapidly throughout the Principality of Transylvania, thanks to the support of Prince John Sigismund, who himself adopted the new confession. Soon, many pastors and large congregations embraced Dávid's ideas. This rapid flourishing came to an end with the death of János Zsigmond in 1571. István Báthory of Somlyai, who succeeded him as prince, immediately and forcefully began to suppress the Antitrinitarians. As a result, after a few decades, most noble families were discouraged from supporting them, and the number of adherents of the new church was reduced by about half. The study of these books shows that Hungarian Unitarians in Transylvania, like the Hungarian Lutheran and Reformed churches, sought to preserve and incorporate into their liturgy traditions inherited from the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the number of Hungarian Unitarian gradual movements (Hungarian-language Gregorian chants) and the diversity of Gregorian genres remain considerably lower than in the Hungarian Evangelical and Reformed repertoire.

The apparently vivid and colourful liturgical map of the Middle-Ages is in fact based on stable centres with long, continuous traditions. Since the Unitarian denomination rejects the separate divine personhood of Jesus and the Holy Spirit—that is, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity—it soon became distinct from other Protestant churches in its organizational structure<sup>2</sup>. The overwhelming majority of Unitarians were native Hungarian speakers, and the surviving Unitarian graduals, most of them manuscripts, are also in Hungarian. Today, nearly thirty manuscript graduals are known to have been in use by Hungarian Unitarians<sup>3</sup>. The study of these books shows that Hungarian Unitarians in Transylvania, like the Hungarian Lutheran and Reformed churches, sought to preserve and incorporate into their liturgy traditions inherited from the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the number of Hungarian Unitarian gradual movements (Hungarian-language Gregorian chants) and the diversity of Gregorian genres remain considerably lower than in the Hungarian Evangelical and Reformed repertoire.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information see: Kovács, Sándor. *Lapozgató. Az unitáriusok rövid története (Turning the page. A short history of the Unitarians)*. Ed. Hungarian Unitarian Church-Protestant Theological Institute, Cluj-Napoca, 2021. 15-28.

<sup>3</sup> We are in the fortunate position that the number of sources cannot be considered definitive yet, since the systematic collection of sources in Transylvania really started only a few years ago. On the current state of the work, see: Kovács, Sándor. "Kéziratos graduálok az Erdélyi Unitárius Egyházban" (*Manuscript graduals in the Unitarian Church of Transylvania*). In *Református Szemle* 104/4, 2011, pp. 423–439., and see also: Hoppál, Péter. "XVI–XVII. századi kéziratos énekeskönyvek a Homoród- és Küküllő-menti unitárius parókiákon" (*XVI–XVIIth century manuscript hymnals in the Unitarian parishes of Homoród and Küküllő*). In *Magyar Egyházzene* IX, 2001/2002, pp. 427–430.

There were few centers for Saxon Unitarians outside Cluj-Napoca<sup>4</sup>. At the time of the Reformation—and even into the 17th century—Cluj-Napoca was a bilingual city<sup>5</sup>. As Edit Szegedi observes: “The ritualized bilingualism or even trilingualism (Hungarian-German, Hungarian-Latin-German) played a fundamental role in the life of the city, being the visible foundation of its political structure and functioning”<sup>6</sup>. Transylvanian Unitarism, from its beginnings until the end of the 17th century, should be imagined as a motley collection of trends, groups, and subgroups, including many smaller, even geographically dispersed centers<sup>7</sup>. For at least a century and a half, several groups of “Nonadorantists” and more moderate “Socinians” comprised the church<sup>8</sup>, now known simply as Unitarian. By the first third of the 17th century, an intellectual dispute between the Nonadorantists and Socinians had intensified, making an internal split within the Unitarians a real danger. The Unitarian Church in Cluj was also internally divided<sup>9</sup>. It was in this tense context that Valentin Radecke, a Polish-born priest of the Cluj congregation, arrived in 1615 and soon became bishop of the Unitarian Church<sup>10</sup>. Radecke, originally from Danzig, had gained extensive experience in unifying the anti-Trinitarian movement in Poland, which was gradually consolidating from its extreme factions. This

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<sup>4</sup> For more on the Saxon Unitarians, see Keserű, Gizella. “Klausenburger sächsische Unitarier in 16/17. Jahrhundert”. In *Ein Entwurf = Radikale Reformation. Die Unitarier in Siebenbürgen*. Ed by. Wien, Ulrich, A. Brandt, Julianne. Balogh, András, Köln, Weimar, Wien, Böhlau Verlag, 2013. (Studia Transylvanica, 44). pp. 153–178.

<sup>5</sup> For more information see Szegedi, Edit. “A reformáció Kolozsváron” (“*The Reformation in Cluj*”). In *Keresztény Magvető* 113/1, 2007, pp. 39–51.

<sup>6</sup> Szegedi, Edit. “Valentin Radecius és az egyházi hagyomány legitimitása” (“*Valentin Radecius and the legitimacy of the ecclesiastical tradition*”). In *Keresztény Magvető* 117/3, 2011, pp. 287–296. p. 289.

<sup>7</sup> For more, see: Szegedi, Edit. “A reformáció Kolozsváron” (“*The Reformation in Cluj*”). In *Keresztény Magvető* 113/1, 2007, pp. 39–51.

<sup>8</sup> The so-called *Nonadorantist* view did not acknowledge any divinity of Jesus, and taught that he was not to be worshipped or invoked. The *Socinians* advocated worshipping and invoking Christ. For more, see: Balázs, Mihály. “Hitújítás és egyházalapítás között”. (“*Between the renewal of faith and the establishment of the church*”). In *Tanulmányok az erdélyi unitarizmus 16-17. századi történetéről*. Kolozsvár, 2016. (A Magyar Unitárius Egyház Kolozsvári Gyűjtőlevéltárának és nagykönyvtárának kiadványai. 8.), pp. 201–230.

<sup>9</sup> See: Kovács, Sándor. *Lapozgató. Az unitáriusok rövid története (Turning the page. A short history of the Unitarians)*. Ed. Hungarian Unitarian Church-Protestant Theological Institute, Cluj-Napoca, 2021, pp. 67–80.

<sup>10</sup> On the life of Radecke, see Molnár, Dávid. “Valentin Radecke, Radecke életpályája püspökké választásáig” (“*Valentin Radecke, Radecke’s career up to his election as bishop*”). In *Keresztény Magvető* 121/1, 2015, pp. 22–39. And see: Molnár, Dávid. “Valentin Radecke, Radecke életpályája püspökké választásától plébánossá választásáig (1615–1622)” (“*Valentin Radecke, Radecke’s career from his election as bishop to his election as parish priest (1615–1622)*”). In *Keresztény Magvető* 121/2, 2015, pp 155–191.

experience may have contributed to his invitation, which was significant both for Cluj and the broader Unitarian Church.

Upon his election as bishop, Radecke quickly set to work: he convened synods and meetings and published two collections of singable items—the first, a printed canonical<sup>11</sup> and the second a manuscript gradual. Both volumes are the first, albeit probably incomplete, books of the Antitrinitarian Saxons and form part of the bishop's efforts to consolidate the church. While the canonical contains no music, the gradual preserves a small but valuable amount of musical notation.

## 2. Manuscript gradual of the Saxon Unitarians

The source marked MSU 1042 is a manuscript in German, produced in 1622, for the use of the Saxon Unitarians of Cluj<sup>12</sup>. As the title page of the gradual shows, it essentially contains the corrected hymnal of Valentin Radecke, produced in 1622 by the Saxon cantor Lorenz Budaker with the consent and agreement of István Radnóthi and Lőrincz Filstich, churchmen<sup>13</sup>.

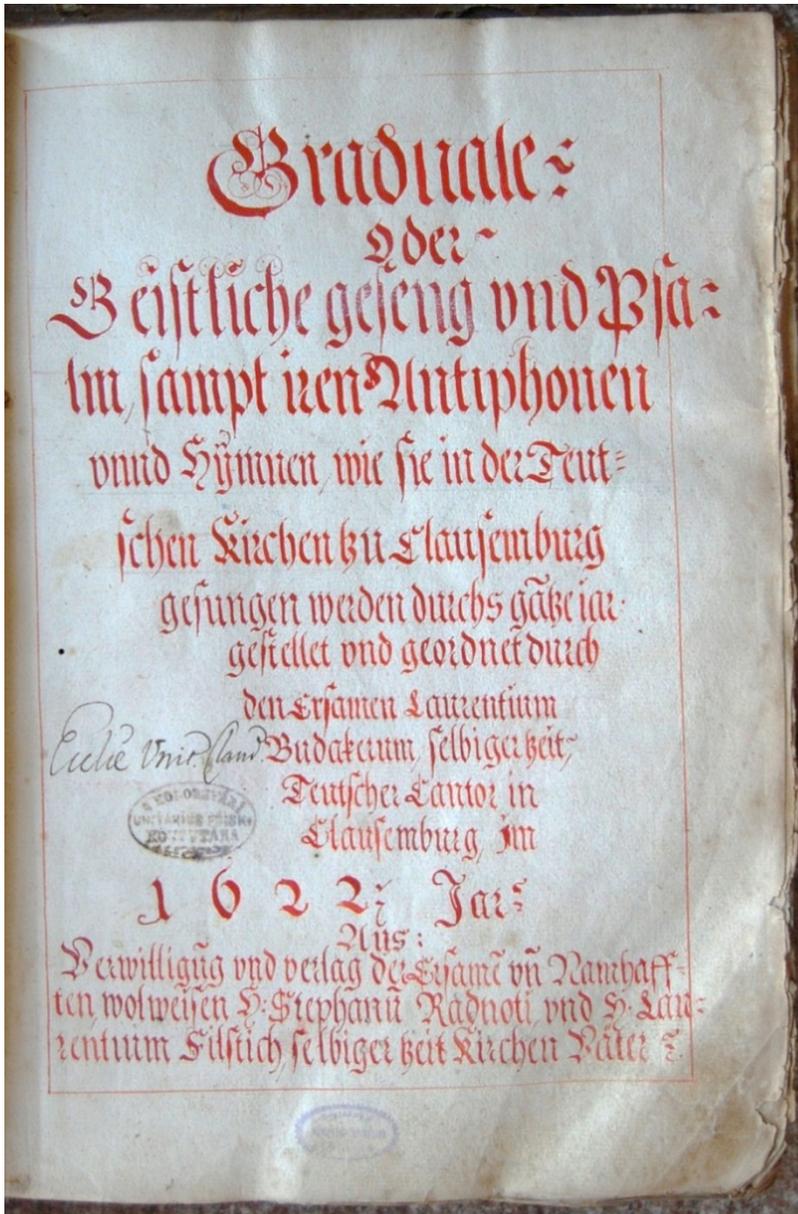
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<sup>11</sup> Valentin Radecius: *Geistliche Gesänge*. Ed. Clausenburg, 1620. RMNy 1225/1. For more information on this volume, see: Szegedi, Edit. "Valentin Radecius és az egyházi hagyomány legitimitása" (*"Valentin Radecius and the legitimacy of the ecclesiastical tradition"*). In *Keresztény Magvető* 117/3, 2011, pp 287-296.

<sup>12</sup> *Graduale oder Geistliche geseng vnd Psalm sampt ihren Antiphonen und hymnen...* Library of the Cluj branch of the Romanian Academy Ms. U. 1042. The source was first described by Adolf Schullerus. See: Schullerus, Adolf. "Zwei Graduale der Teutschen Kirchen tzu Clausemburg vom Jahre 1622 und 1659". In *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* XVIII/1–2, 1895, pp. 18–20. It was already stated in the first description of the manuscript that the main part of the manuscript could have been written in 1622, but parts of it were certainly written after 1622. The register of items dates from 1656.

<sup>13</sup> On the volume, see: Molnár, Dávid. "Valentin Radecke, Radecke életpályája püspökké választásától plébánossá választásáig (1615–1622)" (*"Valentin Radecke, Radecke's career from his election as bishop to his election as parish priest (1615-1622)"*). In *Keresztény Magvető* 121/2, 2015, pp. 176. And Molnár, Dávid. "...az nagy tengerből való folyóvíznek sebessége..." *Kolozsvári unitárius levéltári dokumentumok és nyomtatványok gyűjteménye Bethlen Gábor és I. Rákóczi György fejedelmek korából (1613-1648)* ("...the speed of the flowing water from the great sea..." *Collection of Unitarian archival documents and printed matter from the era of the princes Gábor Bethlen and György Rákóczi I. (1613-1648)*) = Publications of the Collecting Archives and Great Library of the Hungarian Unitarian Church in Kolozsvár: 7. Ed Kolozsvár, Hungarian Unitarian Church, 2015, pp 32.

Picture 1



Front page of the source MSU 1042

The musical notation on the 285 numbered pages is excellent, and the notation, with clefs and end-of-line custos is carefully executed. There is no musical deterioration typical of Hungarian Protestant graduals. The music of Lorenz Budaker, cantor of the Saxons, testifies to his solid musical training. Although the title might suggest that the majority of the material is native Gregorian chant, the gradual contains few Gregorian movements. The bulk of the volume consists of congregational hymns. The Gregorian chants in musical notation for use by the Saxon Unitarians are as follows:

### 2.1 *Passion according to St. Matthew (ff. 197-f 241)*

The model for this movement is presumably Johannes Keuchenthal's *Kirchen-Gesenge Latinisch vnd Deudsch...*, a Protestant hymnal compiled for German Lutherans and published in Wittenberg in 1573<sup>14</sup>. Keuchenthal's book was well known and used by the Transylvanian Evangelicals, as several copies can still be found in Transylvanian Lutheran libraries<sup>15</sup>. The Passion in musical notation is one of the basic elements of both the Hungarian Protestant graduals and the Hungarian Unitarian graduals, though it employs the minor formulas known from Hungarian medieval practice. The Saxon Unitarians, on the other hand, like the Saxon Lutherans, used the major formula set known throughout Europe<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Keuchenthal, Johannes: *Kirchen-Gesenge Latinisch vnd Deudsch sampt allen Euangelien Episteln vnd Collecten auff die Sontage vnd Feste nach Ordnung der zeit durchs gantze Ihar Zum Ampt so man das Hochwirdige Sacrament des Abendmals vnsers HERRN IHESV CHRISTI handelt ... fur die Euangelischen Kirchen in Deudscher sprach gestellet vnd verordnet sind zusammen gebracht. Vnd jtzund erstlich. Wittenberg, 1573.*

<sup>15</sup> Hermannstadt, Bibliothek des Brukenenthal-Museum: V III 770; Nationalarchiv Hermannstadt, Sammlung Brukenenthal: SA B J.J. II 1086.

<sup>16</sup> On the history of the Hungarian Protestant Passion, see Bárdos, Kornél. "Harcok a passió éneklése körül Magyarországon" (*Struggles over the singing of the Passion in Hungary*). In *Theologiai Szemle* U.f. XIV, 1971, pp. 296–303. And Hoppál, Péter. "A magyar nyelvű passió írott, nyomtatott és hangzó forrásai" (*Written, printed, and audio sources of the Passion in Hungarian*). In *Socia exsultatione – A Rajeczky Benjamin születésének 100. évfordulóján tartott tudományos ülészek előadásai*, MTA – LFZE Egyházzenei Intézet, Budapest, 2003, pp. 127–134. On the Hungarian Unitarian Passion tradition, see: Hoppál, Péter. "A hiányzó láncszem: a Bánffy-hunyadi Passió" (*The missing link: the Bánffy-Hunyadi Passion*). In *Magyar Egyházzene* V, 1997/1998, pp. 425–434. And: Hoppál, Péter. *A magyar protestáns passió (The Hungarian Protestant Passion)*. DLA doctoral dissertation, 2005, unpublished.

Picture 2

197

**H**istoria Von dem Leide  
Vnd Sterben vnser Heilandes Je-  
su Christi. Matth: xxvi.

**H**ört das Leiden vnser Herren Jesu Christi  
wie es beschreibet der Heilig Ewangelist Mattheus.

**H**ört das Leiden vnser Herren Jesu Christi  
wie es beschreibet der Heilig Ewangelist Mattheus.

**H**ört das Leiden vnser Herren Jesu Christi wie es  
beschreibet der Heilig Ewangelist Mattheus.

**H**ört das Leide vnser H. J. C. wie es beschreibet der H. Evan. Mattheus

MSU 1042, f 197

Historia des Leidens Christi.

**Disc.** **D** Als Leiden vnfers Herrn Ihe su Chri-  
 ft/ wie es beschreibet der heilige Euangelist  
 Matthe us.

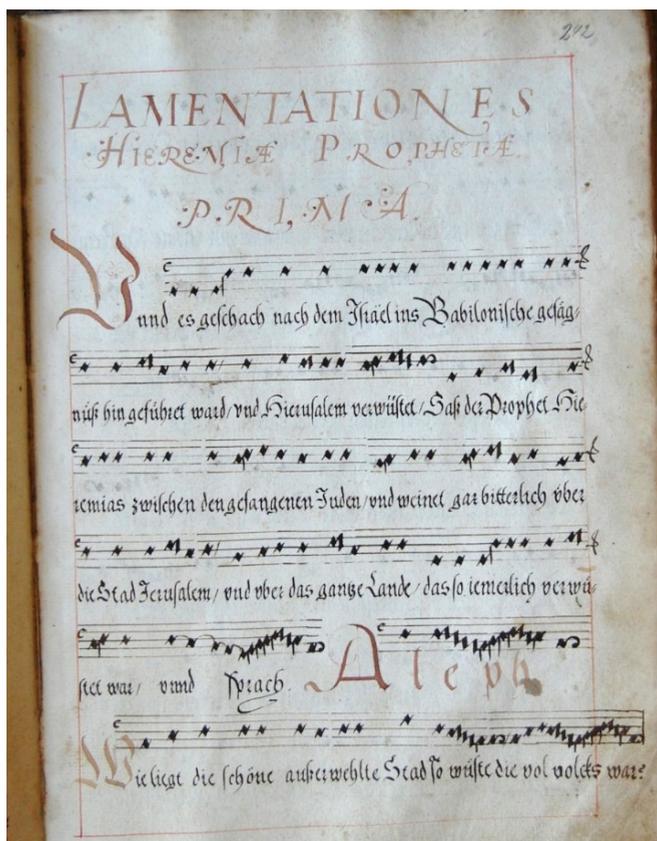
**Den.** **D** Als Leiden vnfers Herrn Ihesu Chri-  
 ft/ wie es beschreibet der heilige Euangelist Mat-  
 the us.

**Euangelist.** **S** Nd es begab  
 sich/da Ihesus al le diese rede volendet hatte/sprach  
 er zu seinen Jüngern: **Ihesus.** Ir wiss  
 set/

## 2.2 Lamentations (ff. 242-f 285)

The first nocturnal readings of the triduum sacrum matutinum-laudes follow a different formula set from other Hungarian Protestant sources<sup>17</sup>. The skeleton of the Lamentation melodies is identical in all Hungarian-language Lutheran, Reformed, and Unitarian sources, and closely resembles the medieval Hungarian formula set. The melody of the Saxon Unitarian source, however, is related to a German Protestant pattern.

Picture 4



MSU 1042, f 292

<sup>17</sup> For more information, see: Papp, Anette. *Nagyheti lamentációk a protestáns hagyományban (Lamentations of Holy Week in the Protestant tradition)*. Egyházzenei Füzetek V/C-3. Ed. Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem Egyházzenei Kutatócsoport és a Magyar Egyházzenei Társaság, Budapest, 2015. And Szabó, András. "A lamentáció". (*The Lamentation*). In *Református Szemle CIV/4*, 2011, pp. 411–416.

The image shows two pages of handwritten musical notation. The top page features a large, ornate initial 'M' and the text 'Tonus vesperi cantada' at the top right. The lyrics are in Hungarian: 'Minek elötte sídoság Babiloniának fűsájában viteték, és Jerusálem el törték, Jeremiás Profeta le ült sírján, és Jerusálem Városának'. The bottom page continues the text: 'Jövendő pusztulásárol szomorú szírel est mondá: Milyenek áll pusztán azok önnön maga a Város mely annak elötte sok néppel vala telyes. Jöveék úgy mint Özevgyé Pégány népeknek Hosszönya Törömányoknak Fejedelmek teteték adó fizetjé. Küntelen való sírást tön césaka, és az ő könyhullatási orszáján el-lefutának. Kínosen neki minden ő Báláti közül, ki ötet meg- vigasztalná. Minden ő Báláti meg utalák ötet, és ő neki lönök ellenségi. Számkiyetésre kényszerítették menni a Sídoság, vagy nyomasztásnak és szolgáltnak miatta Lakosék Pégány' népek'.

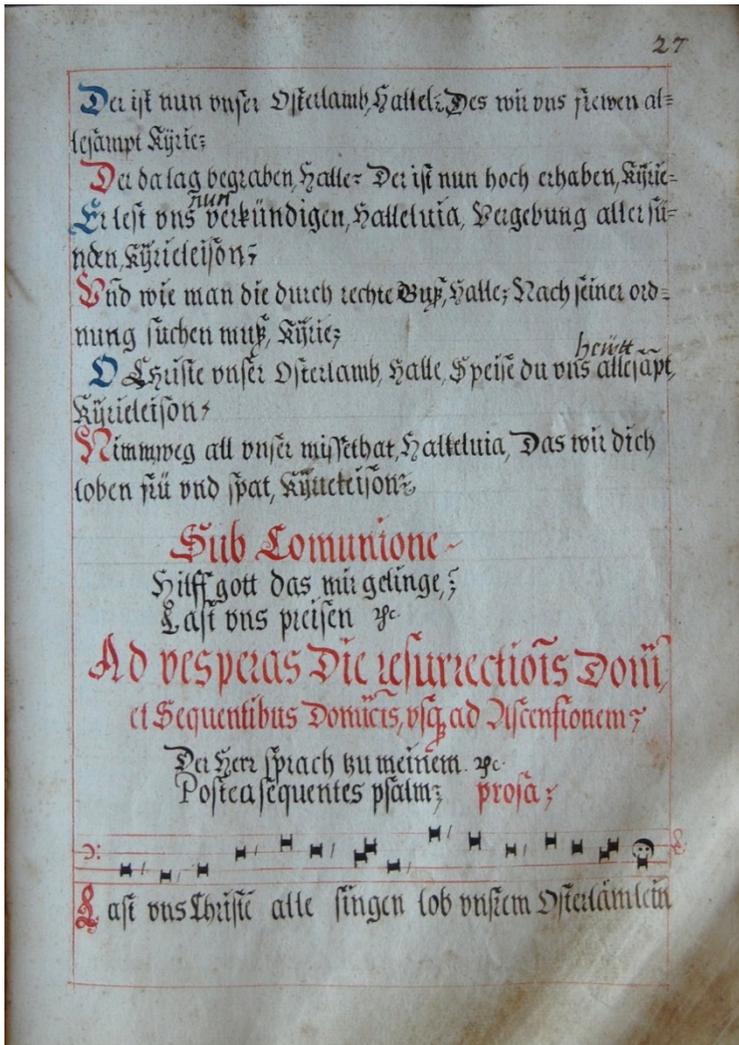
Mihály Kozma's *Passionale*<sup>18</sup> 26v–27r

<sup>18</sup> Source for Hungarian Unitarian use, made by Mihály Kozma in 1747 in Kolozsvár/Cluj.

2.3 Last uns Christen (ff. 27–f 30)

A German version of the Easter sequence *Victimae Paschali laudes* is also found in the Saxon source. The model—although this movement appears in most Hungarian Protestant sources—can also be found in German Lutheran sources.

Picture 6



28

Denn Christus das vn schuldig lāb hat erlöset die Schātzen  
 vnd hat vns sündel bequōt dem Vater Todt vnd lēck  
 die stritten vmb Irthūm wāhin mitter dei Herre des lebens  
 wāgret ewig

**S**iewe dich du liebe Christenheit, sey frölich nu vnd al-  
 lezeit; dein Herre kompt aus dem Todt bequōt vnd öffnet dir  
 des lebens thür. Kyrieleison;

**D**er Todt vnd alles haben leidet. Ist nun dahin in ewig-  
 keit; Sie mögen dich wol sechten abn, Doch gewinnen sie  
 gar nichts dran. Kyrie-

**D**as leben vnd die seligkeit. Ist du durch deinen Herrn  
 bereit; Er hat zerstört das hellsch reich, vnd auffgericht das  
 Himelreich. Kyrie;

**I**n ist die Nacht; Das helle Licht, ganz schön vnd kl-  
 ar daher anbricht; Das selbig vns Herre Jesu Christi abalt wi-  
 der all Puffets list. Kyrie;

**D**es wollen wir in ewigkeit zu dankē dir all sein bereit. Mit sāt  
 dem ewigen Vater din, vnsēn got vnd Schöpfer allan. Kyrieleison

## MSU 1042, f 27–28

2.4 The Largest Material of the Source: The Antiphons<sup>19</sup>

The Saxon Unitarian source contains 17 antiphons, which constitute the most valuable native Gregorian material in the manuscript. A detailed analysis of the antiphons, and their comparison with Hungarian Protestant, Hungarian Unitarian, German Lutheran, and medieval Hungarian and Polish

<sup>19</sup> For an analysis of the antiphons, see the following study.

sources, has already been undertaken in previous studies<sup>20</sup>. Comparatively, the MSU 1042 antiphons reveal a distinctive pattern of adaptation. Whereas Reformed and Lutheran antiphons generally rely on medieval templates—either directly or with modest textual adjustments—the Saxon Unitarian editors exhibit a high degree of independence.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that although MSU 1042 contains few Gregorian chant movements with musical notation, the study of these movements provides valuable insights into the musical practice and religious expression of the 17th-century Unitarian Saxon community in Cluj.

*To be continued.*

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<sup>20</sup> Papp, Anette. "Az MSU 1042 jelzetű forrás antifóna anyaga" ("*The antiphonal material of the source MSU 1042*"). In *Keresztény Magvető* 123/2–3, 2017, pp. 177–200. See Part 2 for a revised version of the study.

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# THE ACOUSTICS OF ORTHODOX CHURCHES BETWEEN BYZANTINE TRADITION, LITURGICAL EXPERIENCE AND MUSICAL CHALLENGE

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**SUMMARY.** The study examines the acoustics of Orthodox churches as a constitutive dimension of the liturgical experience, at the intersection between Byzantine tradition, musical practice and contemporary architectural choices in Romania. Starting from the coexistence of two sonic traditions – psaltic (monodic) and choral (polyphonic) – the research shows how the parameters of space (dome, vaults, iconostasis, materials) shape the intelligibility of the text and the ethos of chant. The results suggest that psaltic chant ‘flourishes’ in ample reverberations with slow tempi and sustained *ison*, while choral chant requires a balance between resonance and clarity for the text and the verticality of harmony. It is proposed that acoustics be integrated from the earliest stages of design and restoration in order to optimize the relationship between timbral beauty and the intelligibility of the word. Conclusion: sacred space must also be thought of as sound space; acoustics, treated as a “sonic icon”, enhances the catechetical, mystagogical, and communal function of liturgical chant.

**Keywords:** Orthodox church acoustics, byzantine chant, liturgical space, speech intelligibility, sacred architecture

## 1. Introduction

The Orthodox liturgical space is defined not only by iconography and architecture, but also by a specific sonorous dimension, in which church chant acquires spiritual and aesthetic power. While in the Byzantine tradition architecture and music developed in an organic connection, in Romania, the situation is unique due to the coexistence of two musical traditions: the psaltic

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and the choral. This diversity calls for careful research into how the liturgical space constructed, especially after 1990, shapes and conditions sung prayer.

Alongside the practical aspects of church music, recent years have also witnessed a growth in scientific research devoted to the acoustics of Orthodox churches.<sup>2</sup> While until recently the specialized literature on this topic was scarce, with Orthodox church acoustics often marginalized, more and more interdisciplinary studies have emerged. In Poland, for example, acousticians have measured the parameters of 20 historic Orthodox churches, noting features such as longer reverberation times at low frequencies due to the domes, but also a relative uniformity of musical clarity across most churches, indicating that Orthodox architecture ensures a certain implicit *acoustic standard*.<sup>3</sup> Other studies compare the acoustics of wooden versus masonry churches, or analyze the effect of the presence of worshippers, the absorption produced by the human body significantly reducing reverberation.<sup>4</sup>

Acoustics is an essential component of the Orthodox liturgical experience. Although church architecture has been analyzed from an artistic and historical point of view,<sup>5</sup> the acoustic dimension has often been overlooked by professors in the field of church music. In the context of Romania, where stylistic diversity abounds – from the wooden churches of Maramureș to monumental stone cathedrals – the study of acoustics becomes indispensable for understanding how sacred space supports and amplifies singing.

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<sup>2</sup> Carvalho A.P., Morgado A.E. (1997), *Relationships between speech intelligibility and objective acoustical parameters for architectural features in Catholic churches*, Journal of Acoustical Society of America, 101, 3051 - 3052; Elicio L., Martellotta F. (2015), *Acoustics as a cultural heritage: the case of Orthodox churches and of the "Russian church" in Bari*, Journal of Cultural Heritage, 16, 912–917; Lubman D., Wetherill E. (1985), *Acoustics of worship spaces*, American Institute of Physics, New York; Małecki P., Wiciak J. (2011), *Acoustic parameters of chosen orthodox churches overview and preliminary psychoacoustic tests using choral music*, Proceedings of 130th AES Convention, London, UK; Martellotta F., Cirillo E., Carbonari A., Ricciardi P. (2009), *Guidelines for acoustical measurements in churches*, Applied Acoustics, 70, pp. 378–388.

<sup>3</sup> Paweł Małecki, Jerzy wiciak, Damian Nowak, "Acoustics of Orthodox Churches in Poland" in: *Archives of Acoustic*, Vol. 42, No. 4, (2017), pp. 579–590.

<sup>4</sup> Mijic M., Sumarac-Pavlovic D. (2000), *Acoustical characteristics of old wooden churches in Serbia*, Journal of Acoustical Society of America, 108, 2648–2648. Rossing T. *Handbook of Acoustics*, Springer, Stanford, (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Marius Porumb, *Monumente istorice și de artă religioasă din Arhiepiscopia Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului*, (*Historical and Religious Art Monuments in the Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac, and Cluj*) Editura Arhiepiscopiei, Cluj-Napoca, 1982; Ene Braniște, *Liturgica generală cu noțiuni de artă bisericească, arhitectură și pictură creștină*, (*General Liturgics with Elements of Church Art, Architecture, and Christian Painting*) vol. I, II, Basilica, București, 2015; Nicolae Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic al monumentelor feudale din București*, (*The Bibliographic Repertoire of Feudal Monuments in Bucharest*) Editura Basilica, 2017; Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, *Orthodox Christianity Volume III: The Architecture, Icons, and Music of the Orthodox Church*, translated from the Russian by Andrei Tepper, St Vladimir Seminary Press, Yonkers, New York, 2008.

Based on the results of previous research, this paper aims to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between the architecture of contemporary churches in Romania and traditional Romanian ecclesiastical music, offering an analysis that combines theological, musicological and scientific perspectives.

The purpose of this work is to demonstrate that the acoustics of Orthodox churches in Romania form a constitutive dimension of the liturgical experience, directly influencing both the quality of chant and the way it is perceived by those present in places of worship. The study aims to emphasize that sacred space must also be considered as a sonic environment, and that acoustics should be integrated into the design, restoration and use of churches.

The objectives of the paper include analyzing the historical and theological foundations that have linked ecclesiastical chant to Byzantine and post-Byzantine architecture. To highlight the musicological particularities of the psaltic and choral tradition in Romania and their acoustic requirements. To examine the psychological and pastoral dimension of acoustics upon faithfulness. To formulate practical recommendations for the design of new churches and the restoration of historic ones.

The methodology adopted in this paper is interdisciplinary, combining several types of approaches: bibliographic documentation, the study of patristic, musicological and architectural sources, as well as international research on the acoustics of sacred spaces.

The importance of conducting a study on the acoustics of Orthodox churches in Romania lies in the fact that liturgical space cannot be understood solely in terms of its architectural or aesthetic dimensions, but also through the quality of its sonic environment. In Orthodox tradition, church chant constitutes an integral part of worship and a privileged means of communion with God, which is why its spiritual and aesthetic efficacy is deeply influenced by the acoustic conditions of the edifice. Acoustic analysis allows not only the enhancement of existing heritage and the foundation of restoration processes, but also the optimization of the design of contemporary churches, so that they meet the requirements of worship and the perceptive expectations of the ecclesial community.

## **2. Historical and theological foundations of the relationship between singing and liturgical space**

In Byzantium, church singing was not conceived as a mere aesthetic addition to worship, but as a theological language and prayer through sound. As early as the 4th–5th centuries, church architecture was designed not only to illustrate the Kingdom of God iconographically, but also to create the

acoustic conditions necessary for the transmission of chant.<sup>6</sup> From the first Christian basilicas to the great modern Orthodox cathedrals, architects and clergy have observed that certain spatial configurations can amplify the unamplified voices of priests and cantors, allowing the sacred message to reach those present clearly. The high domes, harmonious proportions and volumetric distribution of the nave were designed to support Byzantine monody. The internal shape of the church, its dimensions and materials directly influence the way sound is propagated and perceived.

Studies on the acoustics of historic churches show that reverberation times vary from 1.5 seconds in small rural churches to 6 seconds in large urban cathedrals, which profoundly influences the perception of liturgical music. As reverberation increases, chant acquires beauty and depth, seeming to spring from the walls and domes, rather than merely from human voices.<sup>7</sup> This mystical and iconic quality of sound allows music to be perceived as the singing of saints and angels, thus integrating it into Orthodox liturgical theology. Therefore, the acoustics of the church are not merely an aesthetic element but fulfil the essential purpose of the sacred space and chant: to serve as a sonic icon of the Kingdom of God.<sup>8</sup>

In contemporary Orthodox tradition, ecclesiastical chant retains its value as an expression of faith and a means of communion, having a profound soteriological and mystical status. It is not a simple ornament intended to embellish worship, but constitutes the prayer raised by the entire community, a “theology in song” that renders audible the words of Scripture and Tradition. That is why psalmody often has a stronger impact on the soul than preaching, since music conveys the theological message in an affective, participatory form capable of mobilizing the entire being of the believer.<sup>9</sup>

For this function to be fully realized, the acoustics of the liturgical space play a fundamental role. The church is not merely a place of gathering, but also a resonant instrument designed to amplify prayer. Excessive reverberation can obscure textual intelligibility and create a sense of distance, whereas weak acoustics reduce the enveloping power and emotional intensity of chant. Only a harmonious acoustic balance allows both the clarity of the word and the richness of the melody, thus allowing the hymnographic message to

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<sup>6</sup> A. Papalexandrou. *Sacred sound and the reflective cornice. In Architecture and Visual Culture in the Late Antique and Medieval Mediterranean*. Brepols Publishers n. v., Turnhout, Belgium, 2020, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Gould, “Acoustical Considerations in Orthodox Church Design” in: *Orthodox Arts Journal*, nr 6, (2020).

<sup>8</sup> Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949, Clarendon Press, 1961, p. 165.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Lingas, “Performance Practice and the Politics of Transcribing Byzantine Chant.” *Early Music History* 19 (2000): pp. 85–87.

be heard, understood and internalized by the community. An edifying example of how the liturgical space influences music is the Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople.<sup>10</sup>

The Hagia Sophia Cathedral in Constantinople (Istanbul) is the most famous example of synergy between architecture and Byzantine chant. Inaugurated in 537, this monumental edifice astonished not only by its dimension and visual splendor, but also by its exceptional acoustics. Modern measurements reveal that the interior of Hagia Sophia has a reverberation time that can reach 12 seconds at low frequencies (250–500 Hz)<sup>11</sup> -an extraordinary value, indicating a very persistent echo in the lower register.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the acoustics of Hagia Sophia feature both long late reverberation and a relatively long early decay time (EDT), causing sound to ‘float’ in space, becoming spatially diffuse and difficult to localize, creating a unique auditory experience.<sup>13</sup>

This phenomenon results primarily from the reflective nature of the dome and the way in which the dome and marble surfaces diffuse sound in multiple directions. Basically, the sound produced under the magnificent dome (31 m in diameter) is sent to all corners, bouncing between the marble columns, clad walls and side vaults, generating large reverberations, cross echoes and amplification of certain frequencies.<sup>14</sup>

Within this impressive sound bath, the Byzantine chants composed for the cathedral, such as the Cherubic Hymn and the Chinonic, took on a

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<sup>10</sup> Pentcheva, Bissera V. *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017, p. 22–30; Abel, Jonathan. “Simulating the Acoustics of Hagia Sophia.” *Proceedings of the Acoustical Society of America* 2014, pp. 123–128.

<sup>11</sup> ISO 3382-1: RT, EDT, C50/C80, STI, G. ISO 3382-1 parameters (RT, EDT, C50/C80, STI, G) describe how sound decays, how clearly it is perceived, how intelligible speech remains, and how strong it feels within an architectural space — making them essential tools for evaluating and designing the acoustics of worship spaces, concert halls, and other performance venues.

<sup>12</sup> Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim, *How a Historian Stuffed Hagia Sophia’s Sound Into a Studio* – New York Times / Stanford University (2020)art.stanford.eduart.stanford.eduart.stanford.edu (regarding the project of recreating the acoustics of Hagia Sophia: reflections on tempo, melisma, and the manifestation of the Divine presence through sound.). Turgut Erçetin, *Acoustics and Sounds of the Hagia Sophia* – YCBS.eu (2022)ycbs.euycbs.eu (Technical data on the approximately 12-second reverberation in Hagia Sophia and the singular auditory experience shaped by its dome and reflective architecture).

<sup>13</sup> Mila Zaharieva-Scholke, *Acoustics and Sounds of the Hagia Sophia*, Acoustic research on the Hagia Sophia by the Stanford Team and its project, <https://ycbs.eu/en/acoustics-and-sounds-of-the-hagia-sophia/#:~:text=Hagia%20Sophia%20has%20not%20only,Turgut%20Erçetin>

<sup>14</sup> Rowland J. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure, and Liturgy of Justinian’s Great Church*, Thames & Hudson, 1997; Ken Dark & Jan Kosteneč, *Hagia Sophia in Context: An Archaeological Re-examination of the Cathedral of Byzantine Constantinople*, Oxbow Books, 2019/2023.

supernatural dimension.<sup>15</sup> A Cherubic Hymn sung in Hagia Sophia would sound as though performed by a choir of angels, the echo multiplying the voices and making them seem to descend from the vault. Contemporary musicologists have noted that some ancient Byzantine compositions fully reveal their meaning only when heard within the acoustic environment for which they were written. Alexander Lingas, conductor of the Cappella Romana ensemble, discovered this when he reconstructed medieval chants in the virtual acoustics of Hagia Sophia: the tempo had to be slowed down, and those singing in unison made small adjustments to their pitch to synchronize with the maximum resonance frequencies of the space.<sup>16</sup> With these adaptations, the music “came to life” in a breathtaking manner, the sound accumulating in undulating echoes until it simply took off, filling the vault. Such accounts confirm the intention of Byzantine composers: the music was deliberately designed to interact with the cathedral’s echo, allowing verbal information to yield to mystical experience.<sup>17</sup> Hagia Sofia Cathedral remains a unique example in the history of Christianity of the fusion between architecture and music, where the built space is not only a setting for worship, but becomes a liturgical instrument in itself.

Theologians and art historians have described the Orthodox church as a “three-dimensional icon,” in which each element bears symbolic meaning. If the painted icon is theology in color, the architecture of the church is theology in space.<sup>18</sup> In this context, acoustics represents the sound dimension of the icon, complementing the visual image with an auditory experience. The way in which space “responds” to the singing is an integral part of liturgical symbolism. The prolonged echo of the domes suggests eternity and infinity, and the harmony between sound and architecture becomes an auditory image of cosmic communion. In this sense, singing is not isolated from space, but dialogues with it. The believer does not only hear the hymn, but perceives it as a spatial and mystical experience, in which the word is transformed into a vibration that fills the entire building.

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<sup>15</sup> Dimitri Conomos, “Communion Chants in Magna Graecia and Byzantium”, in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1980), pp. 241 -263.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Lingas, “From Earth to Heaven: The Changing Soundscape of Byzantine Liturgy.” În *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Newcastle and Durham, April 2011*, editat de Claire Nesbitt și Mark Jackson, pp. 311-358. Farnham: Ashgate / Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Lingas, Alexander; Pentcheva, Bissera V.; Abel, Jonathan S.; Eruçman, Duygu; Antonopoulos, Spyridon; Canfield-Dafilou, Elliot K.; a.o. *Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia: Medieval Byzantine Chant Sung in the Virtual Acoustics of Hagia Sophia*. Cappella Romana, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. London: James Clarke & Co., 1957, p. 134–136; Leonid Ouspensky, Vladimir Lossky. *The Meaning of Icons*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1982, pp. 45–47.

Thus, the architecture of the church is not acoustically neutral: it determines how chant is received and internalized. Acoustics thus becomes a sonic expression of theology, contributing to the transmission of liturgical mystery and the intensification of spiritual experience.

### **3. The specificity of psaltic and choral singing and its relationship with the liturgical space**

Orthodox church music in Romania has developed in a dual tradition: the psaltic tradition of Byzantine origin, and choral, of Western influence. This coexistence has led to a diversity of sonic practices and, implicitly, a different relationship to the acoustic space of the church.

Psaltic chant, monodic in nature, inherited from Byzantium, is based on Byzantine voices, modes, having a meditative, internalized character with an emphasis on the expressiveness of the text. It is best sustained in spaces with long reverberation, where the sound is prolonged and creates a sense of fluidity and continuity. In such conditions, the melody takes on an ecstatic dimension, close to the ethos of contemplative prayer.<sup>19</sup>

Byzantine music is characterized by the maintenance of a fixed note – the *ison* – over which the upper melody unfolds in small, linear steps. In a space without reverberation, this form of sound may seem simplistic, yet in the ample acoustics of a Byzantine church it takes on an overwhelming force, giving the impression that the edifice itself is singing along with the choir. It is not difficult to understand that this musical tradition was shaped by the acoustics of the great palaces and marble-adorned churches of Roman antiquity, and Byzantine architects continued over the centuries to build places of worship with similar acoustic properties, precisely to support this conservative musical form<sup>20</sup>. Byzantine music, with its elongated notes and absence of contrapuntal polyphony, seems to have been shaped by the spaces in which it resounded. Byzantine hymnographers and composers, often members of the clergy or the imperial court themselves, composed songs that resonated well with domed churches and apses. As mentioned above, a specific singing tradition developed in the most grandiose church of the time, Hagia Sophia: the priestly *ekphonesis* and the cherubic hymn were intoned in a way that took advantage of the cathedral's long echo, creating an almost supernatural atmosphere.<sup>21</sup> Modern musicologists confirm that many early Byzantine

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel Mocanu, "Religious Chants – The Diversity of Church Hymns Types", in: *Studia UBB Musica*, LXV, 2, 2020, pp. 193-224.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Gould, "Acoustical Considerations in Orthodox Church Design" in: *Orthodox Arts Journal*, nr 6, (2020).

<sup>21</sup> Robert Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm", in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 34/35 (1980/1981), pp. 45-75; Robert Taft SJ, "How Liturgies Grow: The Evolution of the Byzantine "Divine Liturgy", in:

compositions have tempos and structures that would not have the same effect in spaces without reverberation and in today's theological and cultural perception.<sup>22</sup>

Psaltic music, due to its monodic nature, highlights each sound, which makes acoustics a decisive factor in the perception of singing. The two essential elements – melody and ison – intertwine in a “sonic carpet” which, in reverberant spaces, acquires an amplified and symbolic dimension. The structure of Byzantine voices, with their specific intervals, generates resonances consonant with the architecture of churches, reinforcing the sensation of sonic fullness.

The dynamics and tempo of the singing are uniform, without sudden contrasts, which allows the echo to prolong the phrases in a smooth flow. However, fast passages are often adapted to space to avoid losing the clarity of the text. Being closely linked to liturgical hymnography, psaltic music aims to convey the sacred word in an intelligible way. Therefore, psalmists make use of the acoustics by prolonging vowels and dosing consonants, so that the text remains intelligible even in the prolonged echo.

Thus, psalmody not only suits the acoustics of the church, but is also composed and performed with full awareness of its interaction with space, transforming the architecture into a living instrument of worship. In these ideal conditions, the faithful perceive psalmody not as mere music, but as prayer in sound, as a call to inner participation. The sacred acoustic space

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*Orientalia Christiana Periodica* XLIII, Roma 1977, p. 8-30. Oliver Strunk: “The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia”, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 9 (1956), pp. 175-202. Articolul lui Oliver Strunk, *The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia* (Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 1956), The author examines the liturgical tradition of the Great Church of Constantinople, emphasizing the distinctions between the “sung” rite (*akolouthia asmatike*) of Hagia Sophia and the monastic liturgical practice. Drawing upon the testimony of a Russian pilgrim from around 1200 and the treatise of Archbishop Symeon of Thessaloniki, the study elucidates how the services of the Great Church incorporated solemn processions, antiphonal psalmody, refrained chants, and complex ceremonial structures that required a large body of clerics and singers. Strunk demonstrates that this tradition represented a unique synthesis of musical and liturgical expression, preserved only in fragmentary form in later Byzantine manuscripts from Athos, Athens, and Thessaloniki. In contrast to the sobriety and interiority of the monastic rite, the “sung” liturgy of Hagia Sophia embodied the grandeur and ceremonial splendor of the urban ecclesiastical life of Constantinople—an expression that gradually declined following the Latin conquest of 1204.

<sup>22</sup> Tsilfidis, Alexandros, Charalambos Papadakos, Elias Kokkinis, Georgios Chrysochoidis, Dimitrios Delviniotis, Georgios Kouroupetroglou, and John Mourjopoulos. “Reverberation and Dereverberation Effect on Byzantine Chants.” *Proceedings of the 134th AES Convention* (2013). Mourjopoulos, John, Charalambos Papadakos, Alexandros Tsilfidis, and Elias Kokkinis. “Optimal Acoustic Reverberation Evaluation of Byzantine Chants in Churches.” In *Proceedings of the Joint ICMC–SMC Conference*, Athens, 2014. Delviniotis, Dimitrios, Georgios Kouroupetroglou, and Sergios Theodoridis. “Acoustic Analysis of Musical Intervals in Modern Byzantine Chant Scales.” *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 124, no. 5 (2008): 3259–3269.

acts as a bridge between the liturgical artist (the psalmist, the choir) and the soul of the listener. Without this bridge, the chant would remain beautiful, but it would not have the same spiritual power. Thus, psaltic music and church acoustics are in a synergistic relationship: the former provides the content, the latter *packages* it and delivers it to the hearts in the most appropriate way.

On the other hand, choral singing entered the Romanian space in the 19th century, through the influence of Western schools and contact with Catholic and Protestant traditions.<sup>23</sup> It is characterized by polyphonic harmony, multi-voice distribution, and a musical notation that requires clarity and balance. While monody can flourish in a space with prolonged echo, choral singing requires moderate acoustics, in which the voices remain distinct, and the harmonic overlaps do not turn into a confusing mass of sound. Typically, an Orthodox choir seeks to benefit from as much reverberation as possible, as this embellishes the singing. However, a problem arises when it comes to the pronunciation of the texts: if the reverberation exceeds approximately 1.5 seconds, it becomes difficult to understand the words. For this reason, in the Orthodox tradition, readings are not done in a normal speaking tone but are sung in a monotone. This keeps the resonance of the building on a single note, avoiding the sound overlap that could obscure the text.<sup>24</sup>

The differences between Byzantine chant and Western church music (Catholic or Protestant) highlight the influence of acoustics. Western Gothic cathedrals, although large, often had architectural features that *shortened low-frequency reverberation*: large stained glass windows and wooden vaults that absorbed or dissipated low-pitched sound.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Western composers were able to develop complex polyphonies and fast bass lines, knowing that the echo of the bass would fade quickly and would not influence the harmony.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast, in the East, stone and marble churches maintained a strong echo at all frequencies, even longer in the low register. As such, Orthodox music remained predominantly monodic; and where later influences (19th-20th centuries), introduced harmonized choral styles, German or Russian,

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<sup>23</sup> Stelian Ionașcu, *Cultura corală bisericească la români. Documente din arhiva Mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei (1876–1897)*. (Church Choral Culture among Romanians. Documents from the Archive of the Metropolis of Ungro-Wallachia (1876–1897) București: Editura Basilica, 2019, pp. 16-83. The volume provides an extensive documentary perspective on the organization, functioning, and cultural life of Romanian church choral music in the decades following 1876.

<sup>24</sup> Hilarion Alfeyev, *Orthodox Christianity*, "Russian Church Singing Church Singing in Kievan and Muscovite Rus'. Znamenny Chant", pp. 306-360.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Gould, 'Acoustical Considerations in Orthodox Church Design'.

<sup>26</sup> Bagenal, Hope. "Bach's Music and Church Acoustics." *Music & Letters* 11, no. 2 (1930): pp. 146–155; Alberdi, Enedina, Miguel Galindo, Ángel Luis León-Rodríguez, and José León. "Acoustics in Baroque Catholic Church Spaces." *Acoustics* 6, no. 4 (2024): pp. 911–932; Johann Sebastian Bach - The Only Funeral Cantata in His Works: 'Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit', BWV 106" de Petruța Maria Coroiu. *Studia UBB Musica*, anul LXIV (2019), nr. 1, pp. 325-330.

they were adapted: chords change very slowly, dwelling on each harmony for a long time (sometimes several seconds per chord) and recitative passages (rhythmic syllabification on the same note) are often used for long texts.

Rapid counterpoint in the bass is avoided, so that Russian choral music, for example, fills cathedrals with sound without the reverberation in the low register creating problems. On the contrary, the Russian tradition has embraced this acoustics: it has pushed the use of extraordinarily low voices (oktavists) and powerful chords in the low register, making the deep “boom” of the bass echo a true cultural hallmark.<sup>27</sup> Thus, both Byzantine Orthodox music and later harmonized choral music were composed specifically to sound good in churches with long echoes, using ison, slow tempos and gradually developing melodies, avoiding elements that would be distorted in such sound environments.

This coexistence of the two traditions influenced the way churches were built and used in Romania. In small churches, the psaltic tradition remained dominant, while in large cathedrals and urban churches, where mixed or male choirs were active, the choral tradition gained particular importance.

#### 4. The relationship between timbre, intonation and reverberation

An essential aspect of liturgical music is the interaction between vocal timbre and acoustic space. In Orthodox churches, where instruments are not

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<sup>27</sup> Wade, Everett. “Developing Bass Sections through Extended Techniques and Auxiliary Registers.” *Choral Journal* 60, no. 2 (Sept. 2019): pp. 56–64; (It explicitly discusses the Slavic choral tradition and the role of the oktavists (low bass singers), illustrating their contribution to the distinctive sonority of Orthodox liturgical music through examples drawn from Rachmaninoff’s works, such as the All-Night Vigil (*Vsenoshchnoye bdeniye*, Op. 37) and the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (*Liturgiya Svyatogo Ioanna Zlatousta*, Op. 31). Galbraith, Robert. “The Case of Rachmaninov’s *All-Night Vigil*.” *Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music* (JISOCM), 2020: pp. 143–162. (The Russian choral performance tradition is distinguished by its exceptional depth of timbre and resonance, achieved largely through the inclusion of oktavists—bass singers capable of producing pitches an octave below the written bass line. Emerging from the liturgical and monastic chant practices of the Russian Orthodox Church, the oktavist voice became a hallmark of Slavic sacred polyphony, providing a profound sonic foundation and a sense of spiritual gravity to the choral texture. Historical ensembles such as the Synodal Choir of Moscow and the Imperial Court Chapel Choir were renowned for cultivating powerful oktavists, whose extended lower register enriched the harmonic spectrum of works by Bortniansky, Tchesnokov, and Rachmaninoff. In modern times, this tradition continues through ensembles like the Don Cossack Choir, the Moscow Patriarchal Choir, and the State Academic Russian Choir, where prominent oktavists such as Vladimir Miller, Glenn Miller, and Mikhail Zlatopolsky have preserved and refined this distinctive vocal art. The presence of oktavists remains a defining feature of the Russian Orthodox choral sound—an audible symbol of spiritual depth and the resonant “earthliness” of the Slavic liturgical ethos).

used, the human voice is the only sound vehicle, and acoustics can amplify or diminish the quality of intonation.

Reverberation has an ambivalent effect. On the one hand, it can enrich the timbre of voices, giving them fullness and brilliance. This characteristic makes psalmody seem more expansive than it actually is, transforming the singing of a single protopsalt into a collective experience. On the other hand, the same reverberation can cover the liturgical text, making the words difficult for the faithful to understand.

The sermon tends to be the sensitive point. A homily cannot be delivered monotonously, and a preacher with a weak and dull voice will be very difficult to understand in a normal church. Fortunately, a strong, clear orator (usually someone who is also a good singer) can adapt their voice to the reverberation of the space and overcome this difficulty. Live acoustics encourage the preacher to speak more slowly, to use dramatic changes in intonation sparingly, and to pause at the end of a sentence until the sound dies away. All of these are good rhetorical techniques, and the acoustics of a church can support a successful sermon. But this requires the preacher to have the humility and auditory sensitivity to work with the acoustics of the space, not fight against them. Like any other aspect of church ministry, preaching in a space with acoustics that favor singing rather than speaking requires ascetic discipline.<sup>28</sup>

Since the word is fundamental in the Orthodox tradition – the hymnographic text embodies both dogma and prayer – the acoustics must ensure a balance between the beauty of sound and the intelligibility of the text. If the timbre is enhanced by echo, but the words become confused, the liturgical function of singing is compromised. The musical line intended for the Romanian liturgical text should avoid excessive melismas, preserving the clarity and phonetic expressiveness of our language. This simplicity is rooted in the gentle spirituality of the Romanian people, reflected throughout history in church architecture and iconography, but also in the intense religious life marked by renowned saints, martyrs and theologians. Romanian Byzantine chant expresses this gentleness through sober, single-tone liturgical recitative, which emphasizes the transmission of the text's meaning rather than musical ornamentation. Thus, the priority of singing remains fidelity to the hymnographic message, while the greatest dangers are excessive melismatics and a lack of tonal coherence between the singer and the priest in the liturgical dialogue.

For this reason, psalmists and conductors constantly adapt the intonation, speed and dynamics of singing to the acoustic characteristics of the space in which they serve.

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<sup>28</sup> Vasile Gordon, *Omiletică, (Homiletics)*, Editura Basilica, București, 2015, pp. 496-505.

## 5. Architectural aspects of religious buildings and their relationship with acoustics

The acoustics of an Orthodox church building are not the result of chance, but the direct consequence of architectural, construction and material choices. Every structural detail influences the way sound propagates, is reflected or absorbed, ultimately determining the quality of the sound experience of the service.

The first defining element is the central dome, specific to Byzantine and post-Byzantine architecture. The dome creates an effect of concentration and redirection of sound waves, amplifying resonance and generating a specific timbre, often perceived by believers as an “elevation” of sound towards the sky. The literature refers to diffusion, whereby sound spreads evenly around the center of the liturgical space. This phenomenon contributes not only to the beauty of the singing, but also to the liturgical symbolism, suggesting a union between the community’s prayer and the transcendent space. A dome has a special acoustic force and must be correctly proportioned to function well.<sup>29</sup>

Historically, Orthodox domes were generally narrow in diameter (much smaller than the total width of the building) and very high, always placed above a cylindrical drum.<sup>30</sup> The acoustic effect of such a dome is mainly that of a reverberation chamber – a space in which sound can resonate for a long time without the risk of encountering absorbent surfaces, until it reaches the top of the drum, at which point the dome reflects it back down. As a result, the sound can persist in the dome even after it has faded in the spaces below. Thus, after the choir ends a chord, it is first heard reverberating everywhere, and in the final moment, it is perceived only from the dome. This creates the mystical impression for the listener of a sound descending from the sky, an effect of particular beauty.<sup>31</sup>

The vaults and arches also play an essential role in sound diffusion. Unlike spaces with flat ceilings, which can produce harsh reflections and unwanted echoes, the vaulting creates a natural dispersion of sound, reducing the risk of acoustic concentration in a single point. The side arches, frequently found in Romanian masonry churches, function as multiple reflection surfaces, enriching the sound texture and supporting choral singing. At the same time,

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. Penguin, ed. 1981; Cyril Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*. Electa/Rizzoli, 1985; Bissera V. Pentcheva, (ed.). *Aural Architecture in Byzantium: Music, Acoustics, and Ritual*. Routledge, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Ene Braniște, *Liturgica generală cu noțiuni de artă bisericească (General Liturgics with Notions of Church Art)*, p. 580.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Gould, “Acoustical Considerations in Orthodox Church Design” in: *Orthodox Arts Journal*, nr 6, (2020).

an excessively high vault or the lack of diffusing elements may excessively prolong reverberation, diminishing the clarity of the liturgical text.<sup>32</sup>

Another element with a major acoustic impact is the iconostasis, together with interior furnishings. The iconostasis, although it has a central theological and aesthetic function, also acts as a partial acoustic barrier, separating the altar space from the nave. Its rich carving can contribute to sound diffusion, but the material (usually wood) absorbs some of the frequencies. Furniture such as choir stalls, chairs, and lecterns have a similar effect: they can disperse or absorb sound, influencing the uniformity of the acoustic field. Iconostasis has a significant effect on the acoustics of a church. It blocks the direct sound of the clergy in the altar, whose voices are mainly heard coming from above the iconostasis, where the semi-dome of the apse reflects them towards the nave.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, the iconostasis functions as a large soundboard, reflecting the voices of the choir and readers directly towards the congregation. For this reason, it is important that iconostasis be solidly constructed, with massive icons on sturdy supports.<sup>34</sup>

Last but not least, the construction materials are decisive for the duration of the reverberation. Stone and massive masonry favor a long reverberation, suitable for solemn and ample singing, but with the risk of diminishing clarity. Wood, due to its elastic nature, produces warmer and more intimate acoustics, reducing the duration of the reverberation. Plain plaster or mural painting can function as fine diffusion surfaces, while stone or marble floors amplify reflections. In a church, the balance between these materials determines whether the acoustics are perceived as “angelic” or, on the contrary, as “heavy” and tiring.

Thus, we can conclude that every architectural component, from the dome to the furniture, participates in the configuration of a “sonic icon” of the liturgical space, where aesthetic beauty and theological functionality meet.

## **6. Acoustics and the emotional-spiritual reception of singing**

The acoustics of the liturgical space have a direct impact on how believers perceive and internalize sacred chant. The prolonged sound, with its ample reverberation, creates a sensation of temporal dilation and a

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<sup>32</sup> Ene Braniște, *Liturgica generală cu noțiuni de artă bisericească (General Liturgics with Notions of Church Art)*, p. 581.

<sup>33</sup> Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996; Leonid Uspensky, *Teologia icoanei în biserică ortodoxă*, (The Theology of the Icon in the Orthodox Church), studiu introductiv și traducere Teodor Baconsky, Editura Anastasia, București, 1994.

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Gould, “Acoustical Considerations in Orthodox Church Design” in: *Orthodox Arts Journal*, nr 6, (2020).

transcendence of everyday reality. This auditory experience, often described as “heavenly,” promotes a state of deep prayer and inner transfiguration. It is no coincidence that many believers associate the lingering echo of psaltic and choral singing with the image of an angelic liturgy.

Orthodox believers experience the service not only visually (through icons and liturgical gestures) or olfactorily (through the scent of incense), but also acoustically, in a very special way. The reverberations of sound in a high church, the choral echo that floats under the vault after the completion of an ektenia, create an effect of “echo of eternity” as if the sound of prayer does not fade immediately, but continues to vibrate towards the sky. Many believers testify that the voices of the choir in a cathedral with rich acoustics can arouse intense emotion, a state of humility and spiritual elevation that is difficult to describe in words. The space itself seems to come alive, singing along with the people: the walls reflect and prolong the singing, giving it a magnitude that exceeds individual human powers. This perception of “supernatural” sound can be interpreted theologically as the presence of grace – the “voice” of the stone church unites with the voice of the Church as a gathering of believers, praising God.

On the other hand, a lack of acoustics or, conversely, inadequate acoustics can cause auditory fatigue. Weak sound, lacking resonance, transforms singing into a simple recitation devoid of emotional depth. Under these conditions, the intensity of religious experience is reduced, and singing loses its power to lead the soul to contemplation.

Thus, acoustics become a pastoral tool: it can elevate or, on the contrary, hinder spiritual experience. Therefore, priests, psalmists and architects must be aware that the sound environment of the church directly influences the effectiveness of collective prayer.

The musical experience of the liturgy is not limited to the intellectual dimension of receiving the text. Believers also perceive singing on a physical level, through the sound vibrations that propagate throughout the church. These vibrations create a sense of unity and communion, in which the entire community is integrated into a common sound flow.

From a psychological perspective, religious music acts as a factor of social cohesion.<sup>35</sup> The ample reverberation “melts” individual voices into a single

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<sup>35</sup> Bradshaw, Matt, Christopher G. Ellison, Qijuan Fang, și Collin Mueller. “Listening to Religious Music and Mental Health in Later Life.” *The Gerontologist* 55, nr. 6 (2015): 961–971; Gao, Junling, Stavros Skouras, Hang Kin Leung, et al. “Repetitive Religious Chanting Invokes Positive Emotional Schema to Counterbalance Fear: A Multi-Modal Functional and Structural MRI Study.” *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience* 14 (2020); Kreutz, Gunter, Stephan Bongard, Sonja Rohrmann, Volker Hodapp, și Dorothee Grebe. “Effects of Choir Singing or Listening on Secretory Immunoglobulin A, Cortisol, and Emotional State.” *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 27, nr. 6 (2004): 623–635. Oprea Severina-Maria. *Muzica liturgică în practica meloterapeutică, (Liturgical Music in Melotherapeutic Practice)* Editura Vatra Veche, 2020.

communal one, symbolizing the unity of the Church. In this way, participation is not limited to listening but becomes a corporeal and relational experience.

On the other hand, if the sound environment is unbalanced – either too reverberant or lacking in resonance – the community risks feeling either overwhelmed or disconnected from the singing. Acoustics, therefore, is not neutral, but has an important pastoral dimension: it determines the extent to which the community feels involved and participates in communal prayer.

A delicate but essential aspect is the balance between aesthetic pleasure and theological understanding of the singing. For many believers, the musical beauty of the service is a gateway to the religious experience. Balanced acoustics transform singing into a sound event that touches the soul, evoking emotion and compassion. From a pastoral perspective, this balance between music and theology is vital. Clergy and singers must realize that church music is more than art: it is sung prayer, and its spiritual effectiveness depends directly on how it is perceived in the liturgical space.

## **7. The role of technology in determining the right acoustics for sacred spaces**

In a context where the Romanian Orthodox Church continues to build numerous churches and restore heritage monuments, these implications take on major importance both from a liturgical perspective and from that of heritage protection.

In the modern era, with the introduction of electronic amplification systems, it has been found that traditional acoustics (designed for natural voice and rich echo) can become a technical impediment, as loudspeakers require a space with less echo, otherwise the amplified sound becomes chaotic. Therefore, a balance is required: preserving the acoustics that uplift the soul but also managing them so that the word can be heard and understood by all.

Current solutions sometimes include the discreet use of sound-absorbing materials (wooden panels, curtains, thick carpets) in certain areas to reduce excessive reverberation, or the use of sound engineers to fine-tune the level of the speakers. Regardless of the means, the goal remains to maximize the spiritual experience: the believer should feel immersed in a sacred sound environment that speaks to their soul, without the message becoming incomprehensible.

One of the greatest contemporary challenges is to design new churches that simultaneously meet architectural, liturgical and acoustic requirements. In this regard, it is essential that architects, acousticians and musicologists collaborate from the design stage of the project.

Traditionally, many churches have been designed solely from an architectural and artistic point of view, without paying particular attention to acoustics. The result was that some buildings, although impressive in appearance, proved unsuitable for liturgical singing, having either excessive reverberation or a lack of resonance. To avoid these problems, digital simulation studies are becoming indispensable.

Both in the design of new churches and in the restoration of old ones, acoustics should not be viewed as a secondary technical detail, but as an essential element of the liturgical experience. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and the use of modern technology, it is possible to preserve and enhance what tradition has instinctively intuited: that sacred sound is an integral part of sacred space.

Technological progress in recent decades has opened up new perspectives on the study and optimization of the acoustics of Orthodox churches. Whereas in the past sound quality was assessed only through subjective impressions, today researchers, architects and musicologists can use high-precision instruments to understand how sound propagates in sacred space and to propose concrete solutions for improvement.

The first step in acoustic analysis is to take objective measurements in the church. Using specialized instruments (sound level meters, omnidirectional measurement microphones, calibrated sound sources), essential parameters can be determined: Reverberation time (RT60) – the time required for the sound to decrease by 60 dB after the source has stopped. In the wooden churches of Maramureș, the values are relatively low (below 1.5 seconds), while in monumental cathedrals they can exceed 5 seconds. Clarity (C50, C80) – indicators that show the extent to which the sung text can be understood by the faithful. Signal-to-noise ratio and sound distribution uniformity – which influence how each worshipper, regardless of where they are, perceives the chant.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Lubman D., Wetherill E. *Acoustics of worship spaces*, American Institute of Physics, New York, 1985. This work constitutes the first modern synthesis to assemble case studies on the acoustics of sacred spaces—churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. It includes architectural plans and photographic documentation alongside tabulated metrics (RT/EDT, clarity, intelligibility), articulates the inherent trade-offs between musical richness and speech intelligibility within liturgical practice, and advances design principles—spanning geometry, materiality, acoustic treatments, and electroacoustic reinforcement—to realize either a music-forward acoustic, a speech-optimized environment, or a calibrated balance of the two. The volume is widely recognized as a foundational cornerstone for subsequent scholarship on worship-space acoustics. Małecki P., Wiciak J. (2011), *Acoustic parameters of chosen orthodox churches overview and preliminary psychoacoustic tests using choral music*, Proceedings of 130th AES Convention, London, UK; Rossing T., *Handbook of Acoustics*, Springer, Stanford, 2007.

Current technology offers the possibility of performing computer simulations of a church's acoustics. Using programmes such as *Odeon*, *CATT-Acoustic* or *EASE*, architects and acousticians can build three-dimensional models of space and introduce variables related to materials, volume and architectural forms.

In many cases, technology also allows for acoustic optimisation interventions without altering the sacred and aesthetic character of the church. Solutions must be discreet and aesthetically integrated so as not to contrast with the liturgical and symbolic function of the building. These include: acoustic absorption panels concealed in decorative elements, for example, integrated into wooden pews or ceilings; sound-absorbing textiles, carpets, liturgical drapes, and coverings that can reduce excessive reflections; furniture with a diffuser role (benches, pews, carved iconostases) that 'break' sound waves and reduce disturbing echoes; adaptive digital sound systems, which, without replacing the natural voice, can correct certain sound imbalances in very large spaces.

Such solutions must be applied with discernment, so as not to transform the church into a mere concert hall, but to preserve the unity between architecture, acoustics and liturgy.

## Conclusions

In the Orthodox tradition, the sound space is integral to liturgical logic itself: the way in which the church "responds" to the chant determines both the intelligibility of the sacred word and its affective-mystagogical power. The dome, vault and reflective materials (stone, marble, dense plaster) generate an acoustic field that has nourished, over the centuries, the monodic aesthetics of psaltic music (ison, slow tempo, legato phrasing). In large, highly reverberant spaces, singing acquires the "extension" and fluidity that support its ethos. Psaltic singing flourishes in ample reverberations (where the prolonged sound of the ison and melismas can breathe), while harmonized choral singing requires balance: sufficient resonance for timbre, but clarity for text and polyphony. This results in interpretative adaptations (tempo, articulation, consonant placement) required by each space. Hagia Sophia remains the paradigm of space-sound synergy. Its example shows that architecture can become a "liturgical instrument": the long reverberation and diffusion of the dome transform singing into a theological experience of space. This paradigm explains why certain Byzantine musical pieces reveal their full meaning only in spacious acoustics. The iconostasis, the furniture, the presence of faithful and the distribution of volumes decisively influence the clarity and homogeneity of the sound field. A visually "beautiful" but acoustically unsuitable space can

weaken the catechetical and prayerful function of music. From wooden churches (short reverberations, intimacy) to urban cathedrals (long reverberations, monumentality), the sound identity varies and shapes local practices. This diversity requires nuanced solutions, not uniform “recipes.” Technology is a means, not an end. Parameter measurement, auralisation, and 3D simulation can guide design/restoration, but interventions must be discreet and compatible with symbolism and liturgical function. The goal remains mystagogical: clarity of speech accompanied by timbral fullness.

In essence, the acoustics of the Orthodox church is a “sound icon” in which the theology of space, musical practice and community experience come together. When conceived together, architecture and singing produce not only a beautiful sound, but an experience that catechises, unites and leads to prayer.

*Translated from Romanian by Angelica Marcu*

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## COMPARISON OF THE EVOLUTION AND RECONCEPTION OF THE ROMANTIC BAGATELLE GENRE IN THE PIANO WORKS OF B. SMETANA AND C. SAINT-SAËNS

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**SUMMARY.** The genre of piano bagatelle, which is part of miniatures, continues to maintain its relevance in modern musical art and has its own history of evolution and development, which dates more than three centuries. In our opinion, the bagatelle in the works of romantic composers is especially interesting, which in many cases become the foundation for modern composers working in this genre. In some cases, in the 21st century, there is a phenomenon of the disappearance of the boundary between genre and style in the bagatelle, for example, in the work of the Ukrainian composer V. Silvestrov. In our study, special attention is paid to the search for the main features of the evolution and rethinking of the baguette genre in the piano work of B. Smetana and C. Saint-Saens. Through a comprehensive music-theoretical analysis, the genre-stylistic features of the selected works were revealed. Meter, rhythm, tempo, sound dynamics and articulation was highlighted at the syntactic level. At the compositional and dramaturgical level, the following features was shown: texture, key-tonal plan, form, dramaturgy, and programmaticity. The proposed approach makes it possible to identify the general genre and style characteristics of the romantic piano bagatelle.

**Keywords:** bagatelle, piano bagatelle, romanticism, genre, style piano miniature, B. Smetana, C. Saint-Saëns.

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## Introduction

Starting from the 19th century, piano miniature, in particular bagatelle, begins to be perceived as an integral part of the concert and pedagogical repertoire<sup>3</sup>. “Bagatelles clearly distinguished themselves in terms of functions and affective qualities from sonatas and other concert items like concertos, variations and rondos which prevailed at the turn of the century. Bagatelles found a place in music published for amateurs and keyboard tutors”<sup>4</sup> The basis for the formation of this genre, of course, we can find in the works of French harpsichordists of the Baroque era: J.F. Rameau, C. Daquin, etc. In translation from French bagatelle – (French bagatelle – a trifle, a small elegant thing) – a toilet item; the name of the game. Most often, this definition is used for jewelry, ladies’ jewelry, snuff boxes, medallions, caskets, sometimes with an image of a frivolous character. In a broad sense, bagatelle means light, chamber art. In music, a bagatelle is a small instrumental piece, mainly for piano, relatively easy to perform, of a lyrical-melancholic and contemplative nature<sup>5</sup>. However, despite its obvious chamber affiliation, the bagatelle does not avoid artistic rethinking and evolution in the context of the general creative paradigm of the Romantic era<sup>6</sup>. The tonal plan and form of the works become more complicated, the texture is saturated, and the figurative sphere is deepened and filled with a realistic plot. Due to the peculiarities of the construction of the bagatelle genre, in the work of romantic composers, not only the depiction of everyday scenes is traced, but also complex social and philosophical issues. It is known that the main figure in the transformation of the piano bagatelle genre from classicism to the paradigm of romantic music is L. Beethoven (Op. 33, Op. 119, Op. 126.)<sup>7</sup>. After him, this genre was addressed by: S. Moniuszko (1843), B. Smetana (1844), F. Schubert (1856-1862), D. Rossini (1855-1868), Z. Fiebig (1872), F. Liszt (1885), C. Saint-Saens (1885-1886), A. Foote (1893)<sup>8</sup>. In the context of our

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<sup>3</sup> Hepburn, Allan. *Piano miniatures: An essay on brevity*, in: The Gettysburg Review, No. 1, Gettysburg, 2006 (p. 89–105).

<sup>4</sup> Yip Ching Lee, Jenny. *Beethoven, Bagatelle and Genre*. The Chinese University, Hong Kong, 2003, p 35.

<sup>5</sup> Basmacioglu, Kandemir. *Bagatelle form throughout music history and analysis of Beethoven’s op. 119 bagatelles*. International Journal of New Trends in Arts, Sports & Science Education, No. 3(9), Ismiri, 2020 (p. 99–111).

<sup>6</sup> Furdui, Yuliia. Historical and theoretical prerequisites for the study of the bagatelle genre in music, in: Current problems of history, theory and practice of artistic culture, No. 40, Kyiv, 2018 (p. 434–440).

<sup>7</sup> Furdui, Yuliia. *The genre paradigm of piano bagatelle in the works of L. Beethoven*, in: International Bulletin: Culturology. Philology. Musicology, No. 1, Kyiv, 2018 (p. 238–242).

<sup>8</sup> Gajdošíková, Jana. *European and Czech Salon Piano Music in the Second Half of the 19th Century*, in: Musicologica Olomucensia, No. 2, Olomouc, 2010 (p. 95–108).

study, the most interesting are the rich in the creative heritage of B. Smetana and C. Saint-Saëns, since they demonstrate the characteristic features of different European schools (Western and Eastern European), individual styles, and cover the creative process of the first and second half of the 19th century<sup>9</sup>. In addition, many aspects of the issues discussed, as before, remain unexplored to this day. In particular, in the 21st century, the process of rethinking and transforming the bagatelle genre into an individual style continues in the work of the Ukrainian composer V. Silvestrov, who combines the characteristic features of classical, romantic and postmodern bagatelle<sup>10</sup>.

**The purpose** of the study was to compare the specific features of the evolution and rethinking of the romantic baguette genre in the piano works of B. Smetana and C. Saint-Saëns.

**Tasks of the research:**

- define the concept of the genre of piano baguette;
- identify the characteristic features of romantic baguette;
- analyze the piano cycles of miniatures by B. Smetana and C. Saint-Saëns, which include baguettes.
- compare the main musical and stylistic features of the above works.

Autores of the article uses the following **research methods**:

- Systematic-comparative method of music-theoretical analysis – to assess the evolution of the piano bagatelle genre.
- Genre-stylistic analysis – highlighting the inherent features of the bagatelle genre in the context of the individual composer's style.
- Compositional-dramatic analysis – to reveal the harmony, modal-tonal plan, program concept and form of the analyzed works.
- Musical-syntactic analysis – demonstrates the features of musical language, namely rhythm, meter, tempo, sound dynamics, articulation.

**Results and Discussions**

In the period from 1840 to 1847, **B. Smetana** wrote mainly for the piano. During this time, "Bagatelles and Impromptus" (1844), Eight Preludes (1845), "Six Characteristic Pieces" (1847 - 1848) were published. It is in the works written during these years that the features of Smetana's bright composer's individuality are manifested<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Kayali, Francis. *The eclecticism of Camille Saint-Saëns: defining a "French sound" in music 1866–1896*, in: Francis Kayali Papers, No. 1, 2008 (p. 1–22).

<sup>10</sup> Furdui, Yuliia. *Bagatelle im Schaffen von W. Silvestrov*, in: Europäische Fachhochschule. European Applied Sciences, No. 5, Stuttgart, 2017 (p. 48–51).

<sup>11</sup> Murphy, Sarah. *Czech piano music from Smetana to Janacek: style, development, significance*. Cardiff University, Cardiff, 2009.

The cycle of Eight Bagatelles and Impromptus (1844) demonstrates the bright and direct influence of R. Schumann in the figurative and emotional palette, as well as F. Chopin<sup>12</sup>.

Considering that the author himself does not divide piano miniatures into bagatelles and impromptu pieces in the title of the work, on the basis of the conducted music-theoretical analysis, four pieces of the cycle were attributed to bagatelles by us, namely Nos. 1, 2, 4, 7.

The musical and psychological sketch – bagatelle No. 1 “**Innocence**” – is written at a restrained pace, on the dynamics of the piano, and the mood of the piece is colored in light tones, one feels the “breath” of youth, lightness, freshness, the smell of green leaves and it seems to be contemplating different shades of spring sky blue. The choice of the “light”, “pure” tonality of *C major* is not accidental in this case. Two-part in form, small in volume, “Innocence” is simple in its textural presentation, in which two rhythmic patterns prevail: “rocking pattern” - quarter note and eighth note and triplets<sup>13</sup>.

Bagatelle No. 2 “**Depression**” is generally characterized by restraint of emotional expression. Throughout the entire piece, as we have already observed in other works of this cycle, one rhythmic pattern is repeated, a rhythmic ostinato. The key of the work is A-minor, the theme uses a descending “mournful” movement along the sounds of the scale, the texture is chordal. The Bagatelle is written in two-part form, at a fast pace, but the dynamics are sustained on the *p*.

The first section of “Depression” recreates a mood of anxiety and sadness, depression refers to the experiences, presumably, of a child and with which he has difficulty coping, while the second section is perceived as a comforting, calming answer of a father to a small child’s question. The second section (*con dolore*) is lyrical, broad in sound, thematic material is built on the same rhythmic figure, with the same intonations as the first section, but in a completely different, calmer key.

Throughout the entire musical development in “**Desire**” (No. 4), a rhythmic “rocking pattern” (quarter note and eighth note) is repeated all half-measure. The piece is lyrical. This is already “mature” lyrics, with its sad-melancholic range. The tonality of the piece, E-minor, determines the general mood. In this case, perhaps, the image of tender, languid love is reproduced. The initial descending intonations of the minor second, emphasized alternately by either a *Forschlag* or syncope, enhance the mood of longing. The Bagatelle is written in two-part form, at a calm pace, the dynamics are sustained on the *p*.

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<sup>12</sup> Ahn, Florence. *A Survey of Czech Piano Cycles: From Romanticism to Modernism (1877-1930)*. University of Maryland, Maryland, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Furdui, Yuliia. *Problems of the typology of musical rhythm*, in: Scientific collections. Musicological studies, No. 36, Lviv, 2015 (p. 297–309).

“**Love**” (No. 7) is light and lyrical in nature, carefree, full of vital energy, awe and a dream of happiness. The key of the piece is A major. The melody is wide-ranging, and the specific accompaniment with an emphasis on the first part increases the importance of the waltz element in the overall sound. A one-bar rhythmic pattern is also repeated throughout the piece: half note and quarter note. The Bagatelle is written in two-part form, at a moderate tempo, at the dynamics of *p*. It is worth noting that almost all the bagatelles of Smetana’s cycle are characterized by a three-bar meter, all of them are lyrical, from the lightest “dreamy” options to deep melancholy. The dynamic environment is represented by various gradations of *r*. All bagatelle pieces are characterized by a fast, mobile tempo, a two-part form, and the persistence of rhythmic repeating figures (one-bar, half-bar), throughout the entire piece. They are much smaller in size than improvisations, non-technical (not virtuoso), simple in texture presentation. And all of them can be considered musically psychological in terms of plot and content to a certain extent.

B. Smetana had the gift of creating vivid characteristic images, knew how to be diverse in his lyrical expressions. The composer’s Bagatelles demonstrate the diverse palette of lyrical experiences and expressions inherent in the composer’s poetics.

B. Smetana showed in “Bagatelles and Impromptus” a “subtle” harmonic sense, free command of piano texture, which is interesting, diverse and invariably expressive in each piece. Much says here about the proximity to the images of the piano music of the romantics (especially Schumann). However, already in the early period of his creative life, Smetana strove for national identity. So, in the bagatelle “Love” we can recognize intonations of Czech lyrical songs.

The comparative description of all Bagatelles is given in Table 1.

The creative legacy of **C. Saint-Saëns** is diverse in terms of genre, including opera and a fairly wide and diverse genre of symphonic and chamber music. The composer turned to piano music throughout his life, and his creative legacy includes such works as piano concertos, variations on a theme by Beethoven (1874), a collection of etudes, and the picture-piece “Evening Bells” (1889). However, the composer showed interest in the genre of bagatelles only once, when he was only 20 years old (It is interesting that B. Smetana was also 20 years old when he wrote his bagatelles and impromptu pieces), in 1855, he created a collection of **Six Bagatelles, Op. 3**. These pieces can be attributed to the composer’s early works. All of Saint-

Saëns's bagatelles are much larger in volume than B. Smetana's bagatelles<sup>14</sup>. The cycle of six bagatelles by C. Saint-Saëns is divided into two parts - two suites of three pieces each.

Table 1

№	Meter	Tonality	Dynamics, Articulation	Tempo	Image Content Title
1	3/8	C	<i>p</i>	Allegretto	Innocence
2	3/4	a	<i>p sf</i>	Allegro	Depression
4	6/8	e	<i>mf</i>	Appassionato	Desire
7	3/4	A	<i>p</i>	Tranquillo, Tempo di valse	Love

**Comparative characteristics of the tonality plan, means of expression and programmaticity in B. Smetana's bagatelles**

The first suite opens with the First bagatelle, representing a dramatic and profound image. This bagatelle is dedicated to Albert Libon, the composer's friend. The piece is written in a complex three-part form (table 2).

Table 2

A	B	A <sub>1</sub>	k
<i>aba</i> <sub>1</sub>	<i>cc</i> <sub>1</sub>	<i>a</i> <sub>2</sub>	

**Musical form of the bagatelle № 1 from first suite of Six Bagatelles, Op. 3 by C. Saint-Saëns**

The first section **A** contains two themes. The first, main theme **a** (1–8 bars) is written in the key of *g-minor*, in the form of questions and answers. Theme **a** begins in subdominant harmony (II6 with a hold), on *pp*, which gives the sound some surprise and excitement. The diminished harmony emphasizes tension, sharpness, and tragedy. The main intonation of the theme is a descending minor second, which alternates with a uniform movement in eighths (answer) in staccato, ending in a dominant harmony, which “softens” the emotional surge that has arisen.

The imitative second theme **b** (9–21 bars) is distinguished by restraint and concentration. The voices move from bottom to top, from bass to soprano (D – t – D), in equal eighths. The texture gains momentum due to the alternating introduction of voices, which leads to the climax of the first section and further development.

<sup>14</sup> Burlinson, Geoffrey. *Proto-Impressionism in Piano Works of Camille Saint-Saëns*, in: 9th European Music Analysis Conference – Euromac 2017, Strasbourg, 2017 (p. 1–12).

The reprise of the exposition **a**<sub>1</sub> (22–30 bars) combines both themes; theme **a** remains the main musical idea, which continues its development against the background of the uniform accompaniment of theme **b**.

The middle section **B** is saturated with musical events. The music of the middle section is calm, measured, concentrated, but at the same time with emotional impulses, sounds at a restrained pace and consists of two movements **c** and **c**<sub>1</sub> (31–38, 39–48 bars).

The first movement **c** (31–38 bars) is filled with melodic jumps in the right-hand part (on the fifth, sixth, octave), which are emphasized by the dynamics of *f*. The cadences sound in equal eighths, which creates concentration and tension. The climax of the development is quiet on *pp*: it is a descending melody, to which a diminished harmony is connected.

The recapitulation is shortened, with a coda (**k**), sounds on *pp*, restrained and muffled.

The **second bagatelle** contrasts with the first. Dance-like in nature, at a fast pace (*Allegro animato quasi presto*), it is much larger in size than the first baguette. The piece is written in a complex three-part form (table 3).

**Table 3**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b> <sub>1</sub>	<b>k</b>
<i>ab</i> ( <i>a</i> <sub>1</sub> )	<i>b b</i> <sub>1</sub> <i>b</i> <sub>2</sub> <i>c c</i> <sub>1</sub> <i>d</i>	<i>a</i> <sub>2</sub> <i>a</i> <sub>3</sub>	

**Musical form of the bagatelle № 2 from first suite of Six Bagatelles,  
Op. 3 by C. Saint-Saëns**

Exposition includes two versions of the same theme. The melody of theme **a** is bright, rapid, “technical”, major (*E flat major*), written in a homophonic-harmonic texture. It consists of two movements (1–19 bars; 20–35 bars.). The melodic line of theme **a** is built on an ascending chromatic movement within the fifth, followed by a descending response, already in the opposite movement and with chromaticism within the fifth. The second movement is filled with sequential development.

Theme **b** (**a**<sub>1</sub>) (36–75 bars) is built on the material of the first theme (**a**), while the theme changes rhythmically (it was equal to fourths, and now it sounds in a dotted rhythm), gradually accelerating towards the end of the section and reaching the tempo of *Presto*. Theme **b** (**a**<sub>1</sub>) has an extended cadence and a clear completion of the form.

The middle section is represented by two themes. Here the mood of restrained lyrics is maintained. The music is singsong, refined. The new material **b** (76–91 bars), completely contrasting to the exposition, changes: the tonality – from *E flat major* to *B flat major*, the rhythmic organization from

the movement in eighth durations – to the movement in fourths with the interspersing of legatized sounds, the texture – from homophonic-harmonic to chordal, with the remark *legatissimo*. The long, plastic, singing melodic line is a movement along the sounds of the descending scale in the left-hand part. In the second movement, the theme in the updated version – **b**<sub>1</sub> (92–107 bars.) passes into the right-hand part, and the sound of the scale-like construction is enhanced due to octave doubling and its chordal-harmonic fullness. The third movement **b**<sub>2</sub> (bars 108–123) forms an alternation of elements of the “scale” in the right- and left-hand parts with sighing intonations.

Theme **c** is built on a sequential development (bars 124–139): descending seconds in the middle register, sounding in equal quarter durations, are then transferred in the variant **c**<sub>1</sub>, at the dynamic's *pp* to the high register (bars 140–147).

Theme **d** (bars 148–170) most likely plays the role of a connection, gradually strengthening its sound, with the remark *leggiero*, a triplet appears in the accompaniment, which will later become the rhythmometric basis of the reprise. The climax sounds on *f* (bar 149), where the tonic harmony is emphasized by accents. The middle section ends with a rehearsal of the note *h* in triplets, and then its replacement with *b*, which continues to sound in triplets and will be the beginning of the reprise.

The reprise is marked by the tempo of *Presto*, conveying the mood of joy, triumph, and unbridled fun. In bars 171–173, one note of *B-flat* sounds in triplets, on *ff*, from bars 174–205, and the next is the main theme (**a**<sub>2</sub>), the sound of which is emphasized by *pp*, polyrhythmic (3:2), against the background of staccato accompaniment in equal eighths in the size of 2/4, the theme sounds polyrhythmically. The theme that sounds then **a**<sub>3</sub> (206–257) retains its dotted rhythm from the exposition. The bagatelle ends with a coda (**k**), where the mood of joy and fun is emphasized, on the dynamics of *ff*.

The first suite ends with the **Third Bagatelle**, which is presented in two images. The first, thoughtfully focused and restrained in nature, paints pictures of nature and light, realized through various means of musical expressiveness: *B flat major*, *poco adagio*, *pp*, etc. The second is very exciting, expressive, dramatic (*molto espressivo*, tenuto, *rf*). The form of the piece is two-part (Table 4).

The introduction to the piece (only one bar) obviously imitates birdsong. Against its background, theme **A** (2–11 bars) sounds, the melody of which is built on descending fifths, *legato*, in the middle register, sounds at *pp* dynamics, with a *cantabile* remark and modulates from B-flat major to D-flat minor.

Table 4

Introduction	A	B	k
	<i>ab</i>	<i>a1b1</i>	

**Musical form of the bagatelle № 3 from first suite of Six Bagatelles,  
Op. 3 by C. Saint-Saëns**

Theme **B** (12–19 bars) contrasts with the first, it is a completely different figurative sphere – dramatic, even tragic, as evidenced by the minor tonality and the constant repetition of the tonic sound in the middle register, against which dissonant chords sound on *rf* (*rinforzando*), followed by a descending tetrachord with a *non legato* stroke, with the remarks *molto espressivo, tenuto*.

After this deeply emotional statement “from the first person”, theme **A<sub>1</sub>** (20–28 bars) in D major returns. The sharp change in mood that has occurred here demonstrates the transition from the inner, personal-subjective, conflicting world to the objective-removed, calm-balanced world of nature. The melody of the theme sounds on *pp*, gently, colorfully and expressively.

The appearance on *f* of theme **B<sub>1</sub>** (29–37 bars) again turns out to be sudden. Unlike the first development, in this case the theme is decorated with undertones, which sound alternately in the left- and right-hand parts; the chords are highlighted by arpeggios (on *f*).

The coda (**k**) (38–42 bars.) is built on two themes. On *pp*, in a high register, it ends on the tonic of *B flat major*, with a hold emphasized by *sf*.

The **second suite** opens with the noble-majestic **Fourth Bagatelle**, combining lyrical and dance modes. The Bagatelle is sustained in a calm, restrained tempo (*moderato assai*), the structure is simple, three-part: **A B(A1) A2 k**. The first theme **A** (1–18 bars) is written in the form of a period with an extended cadence. The melody of the theme is song-noble, written in the key of *F major*, at the dynamics of *p*, with a *sotto voce* remark (the first passage in the middle register, in the second passage – even more elevated – in the high register).

Both cadences of each proposal are dance-like, simultaneously referring to both the waltz and the minuet; here the three-part meter (3/4) and “rounded” intonations dominate.

Theme **B** (19–38 bars) is written in the key of the dominant (*C major*). It sounds in the left-hand part against the background of chordal accompaniment of equal eighth durations in the middle register, gradually strengthening the sound. The melody of the theme **B** sounds in different registers, creating an echo of the tonic and dominant harmonies (question-answer). From the 27th bar, the theme sounds in *A flat major* on *pp*. The roll calls are placed in register

positions far from each other (major and second octaves). Due to this gap, the theme acquires more and more massiveness, which gradually, with increasing dynamics, leads to a climax on *f* (37–38 bars).

In the final section (39–56 bars), the theme **A** sounds in the main key of *F major*, against the background of the triplet accompaniment. Gradually, the melody moves from the lower register to the higher one. The onset of catharsis is emphasized by the transition to the dynamics of *pp* and the performance of the dance motif in a quiet cadence and a virtuoso passage, which leads to the coda, where the melody dissolves completely in *pp*.

Then there are transformations in the figurative content. The images, as it were, move in the opposite direction: the **Fifth bagatelle** is similar to the second. Both bagatelles are similar in their fast tempo, this is, of course, no longer joy, as in the second bagatelle, but some extreme of this excessive joy - drama, which is transformed in the fifth bagatelle. The **Sixth bagatelle** is a complete transformation of the first bagatelle, the intonation of the introduction makes them related, but at the same time shows an absolute rethinking of the first image. In the first bagatelle it is dramatic and static. In the sixth - it is already an image of balanced harmony, maturity, wisdom.

The **Fifth bagatelle** is performed at a fast tempo. It is extremely emotional, dramatic, virtuoso, distinguished by a large number of descending passages. In form - a complex three-part. The first section is dramatic (*D minor*), the second section is conciliatory-lyrical, the theme is lyrical-dramatic in nature, agitated, mobile, written in *G minor*, with development it reaches even greater drama and gradually passes into the third section - an inaccurate reprise (*D minor*).

The **Sixth Bagatelle** is a modified repetition of the First Bagatelle. The first section acquires a very agitated, dramatic character. The second section is lyrical but restrained. Intonationally close to the Second Bagatelle, this can be evidenced by the ascending movement along the scale (within the fifth).

All the composer's Bagatelles (Table 5) are generally lyrical. The lyrics acquire different shades. But at the same time, they are all quite restrained: the lyrics are restrained, noble, if the drama is static and restrained. In terms of intonation, they are clear, concise and contrasting. The first three (1 – 3/4, 2 – 2/4, 3 – 4/4) are richly written in the same time signature as 4-5-6 (4=1 – 3/4, 5=2 – 2/4, 6=3 – 4/4).

In general, Saint-Saëns's Bagatelles fit into the mainstream of his work, which is characterized by lyrical images and high romantic pathos. The analyzed cycle also presents such significant features in the composer's musical language as "mobile rhythms" and "sophisticated and diverse texture".

**Table 5**

<b>№</b>	<b>Meter</b>	<b>Tonality</b>	<b>Dynamics, Articulation</b>	<b>Tempo</b>	<b>Image Content</b>
1	3/4	g	<i>pp</i>	<i>Poco sostenuto</i>	Very tense, dramatic
2	2/4	Es H	<i>f</i>	<i>Allegro animato quasi presto</i>	Joyful, alive
3	4/4	B	<i>pp</i>	<i>Poco adagio</i>	Pastoral, melancholic
4	3/4	F		<i>Moderato assai</i>	Majestic, gallant
5	2/4	d	<i>fp</i>	<i>Allegro molto</i>	Impulsive, dramatic, rapid
6	4/4	g-G	<i>pp</i>	<i>Poco sostenuto</i>	Variant of the first bagatelle, restrained, majestic.

**Comparative characteristics of the tonality plan, means of expression and  
programmaticity of Six Bagatelles, Op. 3 by C. Saint-Saëns**

**Conclusions**

The analysis made it possible to identify the main differences in the processes of evolution and rethinking of the romantic baguette genre in the piano works of B. Smetana and C. Saint-Saëns. We demonstrated that the piano baguettes of C. Saint-Saens are larger in volume, are parts of cycles, which indicate their developed dramaturgy and a certain artistic and plot line. For his baguettes, the composer uses a complex three-part form, which conveys a wide palette of experiences of the lyrical hero. These baguettes are characterized by a deep lyrical and philosophical-contemplative character.

In the works of B. Smetana, the piano baguettes are mainly written in a simple two-part form, reflect characteristic plots and experiences and have a specific psychological program.

In our opinion, the romantic bagatelle became fundamental for the further development not only of the genre, but also of a kind of “bagatelle style”, which found its embodiment in the work of composers of the 21st century. In particular, the tendency to combine bagatelles into cycles persists, simple forms, lyrical-melancholic character, meditateness, triadic meter, triplet rhythmic patterns, moderate tempos and quiet dynamics prevail.

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## PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE QUARTET IN THE WORKS OF GIUSEPPE VERDI

RALUCA IRIMIA<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** In speech, the meaning of words dictates the intonation of a sentence, while the musical phrase within an opera is shaped according to this natural inflection. Thus, musical ideas and phrasing remain simple, yet expressive and natural. This gives vocal music a distinct advantage over instrumental music, as opera singers are better able to fulfil the composer's intentions. The score of Giuseppe Verdi's *String Quartet in E minor* (1873) contains precise performance indications that shape the ethos of the work. For instance, the marking *incalzando* refers not only to an acceleration of tempo but also to an agitated state of mind. Although Verdi's only purely instrumental composition, the quartet synthesizes the full orchestral and vocal apparatus of an entire opera within the medium of four string instruments. Moreover, through indications such as *incalzando*, *morendo*, *dolcissimo*, and *leggerissimo*, the work conveys the same emotional states that in opera are communicated by means of stage design, costumes, characters, their interactions, and the expressive power of words set to music. While Verdi's contribution to the chamber music repertoire is relatively limited, he is the composer of some of the most celebrated vocal quartets in opera, as well as the renowned *Messa da Requiem*. The present paper examines the vocal quartet from *Rigoletto* alongside the *String Quartet in E minor*, highlighting their distinctive features and exploring the similarities that reveal Verdi's operatic conception of the quartet.

**Keywords:** Giuseppe Verdi, opera, *Rigoletto*, quartet, string quartet

### Introduction

The artist who is able to represent his nation and the era he lives in naturally becomes a universal artist, for the present and future as well.<sup>2</sup> Giuseppe Verdi truly believed and followed this ideal, and as consequence his

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<sup>2</sup> Constantinescu, Grigore. *Giuseppe Verdi*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică R.A., 2009, p. 8.



music continues to stay alive, his characters and plots as valid and effective today, almost two centuries later.

The tragedy of social inequity represents one of the topics that preoccupied the composer throughout his creation, leading him to choose certain characters that could reflect issues related to injustice through their singing. Verdi's triad consisting of three of his most famous operas, *Rigoletto* (1851), *Il trovatore* (1853), and *La Traviata* (1853), composed at the height of his compositional maturity, paved the way for future compositions, in which the musical representation of inner turmoil is placed at the forefront (1850 – 1860).

Despite the fact that during Verdi's lifetime chamber music did not enjoy the same popularity in Italy as it did in other European countries, it is interesting to observe the manner in which opera composers employ part writing within ensembles. The present paper strives to draw a parallel between the famous quartet from the opera *Rigoletto* (1851) and Verdi's *String Quartet in E minor* (1873), tracing the similar manner in which the composer treats the voices and the string instruments.

### ***Rigoletto* (1851)**

*Rigoletto*, the first opera of the aforementioned triad, was inspired by Victor Hugo's play *Le roi s'amuse* (1832). Verdi had remarked this subject as early as 1849 and characterized the play as *wonderful, with shattering dramatic situations and two splendid characters*. Certainly, Hugo's play attracted Verdi not only because of its dramatic qualities, but also because of its topic, closely related to the plots he often resorted to in his operas. Hugo's characters are mocked and humiliated by society, and the author awakens in them the desire for justice, that eventually leads them to fight for a better life and the right for happiness.

One of the characters that fascinated Verdi was the hunchbacked court jester. A character cursed to be hideous, helpless, and who laughs at the misfortunes of others (which will eventually befall him as well), but at the same time a loving father, capable of strong feelings, and dominated by the fear of losing his daughter to the hideous world in which he lived. Hugo's characters are Francis I, King of France and the jester Triboulet, whom Verdi must transform into the Duke of Mantua (a less important region in Italy) and the jester Rigoletto, in order for the opera to be presented before an audience. The composer created this masterpiece in only 40 days, withdrawn to his home in Busetto.

An interesting feature of this opera is the composer's preoccupation regarding rather smaller ensembles and not arias. With the exception of several

scenes, such as Gilda's aria *Caro Nome*, or the Duke's *Ella mi fu rapita* and *La donna e mobile* (which could be considered the musical representations of a frivolous character), the relationship between the various characters of the opera is expressed in duets or ensembles: for example, Gilda – Rigoletto (acts I and III), Maddalena – Sparafucile (act III), the trio Maddalena – Sparafucile – the Duke (act III). Certainly, the musical and psychological synthesis of the relationships between the characters is accomplished in the final quartet.

The dramatism of all three jewels composed by Verdi, *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, *La Traviata*, is finally accomplished in concluding tableaux that feature a restrained number of characters. Despite the fact that it does not represent the conclusion of the entire opera, what distinguishes the final act of the opera *Rigoletto* is the vocal quartet that marks the death sentence of the purest character in Verdi's creation, Gilda.

### **The vocal quartet *Bella figlia dell'amore***

The premiere of the opera *Rigoletto* took place on 11 March 1851 in Venice. The distinction between operas of the Classical period – still evident in certain early Romantic works – is further accentuated in Verdi's opera, reflecting the composer's aspiration to move beyond the rigid constraints of Classicism.

The score also reveals an interesting aspect, regarding the arrangement of the voices: the inner voices (alto and tenor), placed next to each other, suggest characters with similar traits (debauchery and frivolity), while the outer voices mirror the depth and extremity of emotions, exhibited by the soprano and bass (hatred and revenge, expressed by the low male voice contrasts with the love and forgiveness expressed by the angelic high voice).

The vocal quartet opens in an optimistic tone, reflecting the buoyant spirit of the Duke of Mantua, always ready for a new adventure. The key of E Major is bright, suggesting the optimism of a character who lives in a constant state of love. The lively tempo is marked *Allegro*, emphasizing the fickle behavior and emotions of the character, regardless of the place or person they interact with. Verdi resorts to the perfection of the number three, offering the tenor each beginning of the motif (of the three): the note B acts as springboard towards the tonic of the key of E Major. The declaration of love with which the musical moment begins, is chosen by the composer to start off the beat, with an anacrusis (Auftakt) preceded by the staccato accompaniment, thus emphasizing the passion of the Duke as he tries to seduce his new lover – E.g. 1.

In bar 3 of E.g. 1, the sixteenth notes in the accompaniment (revolving around the note B, in its two hypostases B1 and B2), evoke a similar intervention

of the solo violin in Gilda's aria from act II, *Caro nome* (E.g. 2). This similarity could allude to a recurring motif of love. However, in Gilda's case this motif is constant (repeated on the same note), while in the Duke's exposition the motif includes the octave leap from B1 to B2, suggesting the fickleness of the character.

E.g. 1

Allegro. (♩ = 120) Duke.

Un di, se ben ram-men - to-mi, <sup>o</sup>  
One morn, if I re-mem - ber well, Oh

bel - la, fin - con - tra - i... Mi piac - que di te  
fair - est, 'twas I met thee, Thy name I sought in

Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto*  
Act III, Quartet (*Bella figlia dell'amore*) – Excerpt

The first intervention of the tenor. The recurring “motif of love” in bars 3 and 5 of the accompaniment.

E.g. 2

cor fe - sti pri - mo pal - pi - tar, le de - li - zie del - l'a -  
heart Is that name for ev - er - more, Neer a - gain fromthence to

Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto*  
Act II, Gilda's aria: *Caro nome* – Excerpt  
The recurring motif of love in bars 1 and 3 of the accompaniment

Following the three consecutive motifs of the tenor, which start on the note B1, the fourth intervention will be placed one tone higher on the note C#, thus generating the climactic point of the musical phrase, further emphasized by the tension carried by the word *giuro* (to swear, in Italian). The expression stands out due to its double meaning:

1. The oath is the solemn promise to tell the truth.
2. The fact that this oath becomes an untruthful expression uttered by the Duke. These words were spoken regardless of the circumstance, thus losing their value.

The orchestral accompaniment supports the declaration of the tenor in a similar manner. The orchestra assumes the role of a revolted character against the Duke's falsehoods, intoning the motif of love (the group of sixteenths, previously explained) in a higher register, reaching the notes F#1 and F#2. This feeling of revolt is transposed to Gilda's first intervention, on the interval of descending major third, complemented rhythmically by Maddalena's intervention (E.g. 3). From a melodic perspective, the descending arpeggio of the G# minor key takes shape, while regarding the text, Maddalena's laughter can be interpreted both as response to the untrue statements of the tenor, as well as irony aimed at the innocence of Gilda.

The quartet is truly introduced by the dialogue between the Duke and Maddalena, while the short interventions uttered by Gilda are descending intervals – descending third (E.g. 3) on the word "*Iniquo!*" (unjust, wicked), followed by the descending seventh (E.g. 4), a tense interval used to ask for the father's help ("*O padre mio*" – "Oh, my father"), and the descending octave (E.g. 5), the perfect interval that suggests the desolation and resignation of the character when realizing that the beloved man is untrue to her.

E.g. 3

The image shows a musical score excerpt for Act III, Quartet of Rigoletto. It features three staves: Gilda's vocal line (soprano), Maddalena's vocal line (contralto), and the piano accompaniment. Gilda's line begins with the word "In-i-quo!" (The traitor!) and Maddalena's line begins with "Ah, ah, e ven-t'altre ap-pres-so le" (Ha, ha, empty pro-tes-ta-tion, The). The piano accompaniment consists of a descending arpeggio in the right hand and a rhythmic pattern in the left hand.

Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto*  
 Act III, Quartet (*Bella figlia dell'amore*) – Excerpt  
 Bar 1: Gilda's first intervention complemented rhythmically by Maddalena's

E.g. 4

Gilda.  
Ah pa dre mi - o!  
Oh, dearest fa - ther!

ti - no...  
utter'd! La - scia - te - mi, stor - di - to.  
Duke (trying to embrace her). You're bold - er than po - lite, sir!

Sil.. un mostro son,.. Ih che fra -  
Yes, I'm all that's bad. Say, why this

Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto*  
Act III, Quartet (*Bella figlia dell'amore*) – Excerpt  
Bar 2: descending seventh, a tense interval used by Gilda  
to ask for the father's help

E.g. 5

Gilda.  
za - te voi, si - gno - re. Son brut - ta. I - ni - quo!  
let me be, you tease me. I'm frightful. The traitor!

No, no. Ab - brac - cia - mi.  
Nay, nay, my heart's delight.

Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto*  
Act III, Quartet (*Bella figlia dell'amore*) – Excerpt  
Bar 4: the descending octave that suggests desolation and resignation

The general rest (*homoiototon* in terms of musical rhetorics) connects the lively introduction (*Allegro*) and the second section of the quartet (*Andante*), creating a moment of suspense, and by no means a resolution of the accumulated tension through the merging of all four voices. The rest is framed by the keys of G# Major (in which the *Allegro* part concludes) and D $\flat$  Major (in which the novel section of the quartet begins). To better understand the relationship between the two keys of the quartet (G# Major and D $\flat$  Major), it is necessary to enharmonize D $\flat$  as C#. Thus, between C# and G# there is a tonic and subdominant relation (E.g. 6).

E.g. 6

The musical score shows four vocal parts (S., M., T., B.) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature changes from G# Major to D $\flat$  Major. The tempo changes from Allegro to Andante. The lyrics are: 'ro la! w tness? gliuo-la! Bel-la fi-glia del-la - mo - re, schia - vo fitness! Fair-est daughter of the Grac - es, I, thy cor? suade?'. The piano accompaniment includes markings for 'String p. az.' and 'pp'.

**Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto***  
**Act III, Quartet (*Bella figlia dell'amore*) – Excerpt**  
**Bars 1 – 2: Key shift and transition from the *Allegro* to the *Andante* section**

*Rigoletto* is an opera of contrasts: Gilda, a beautiful and pure young girl is the daughter of a deformed father, perceived by society as ugly – not only because of his appearance, but also because of his character. Rigoletto, an overly protective and loving father, in comparison to his work as court jester, will not remain indifferent when Gilda is kidnapped – in contrast to the Duke, who affirms that all women are alike. These characters, with their contrasting emotions and actions, appear together on stage, creating a musical moment that is unique in the entire music literature. At no point in the quartet do the four voices sing the same melodic line or the same words— not even two of them. Verdi sporadically brings together two voices, from a

rhythmic point of view, in order to emphasize the dramatic moment. This is illustrated in the following examples, where the composer creates a cross relationship between the soprano-tenor and mezzo-bas (E.g. 7), or divides the scene into two planes, according to the staging (E.g. 8): the interior of the inn (Maddalena and the Duke - pairing of neighboring voices) and the exterior, outside the inn (Gilda and Rigoletto – the pairing of the extreme voices, the highest and the lowest).

E.g. 7

The image shows a musical score for Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto*, focusing on the relationship between the voices of Gilda, Maddalena, The Duke, and Rigoletto. The score is annotated with circles and lines highlighting specific vocal entries and coincidences.

- Gilda:** non scop - piar, no, no, non scop - piar. (The words "no", "no", and "non" are circled in blue.)
- Maddalena:** - re, mio bel si - gnor! (The word "bel" is circled in green.)
- The Duke:** tu puo - i le mi - e pe - ne con - so - lar. (The words "le", "mi", and "e" are circled in red.)
- Rigoletto:** non val, no, no, non val; (The words "no", "no", and "non" are circled in blue.)

Annotations and relationships:

- The Duke and Gilda Singing in 3rds:** A red box highlights the interval between Gilda's "no" and The Duke's "le".
- Maddalena and Rigoletto singing the same note at the same time:** A green box highlights the coincidence of Maddalena's "bel" and Rigoletto's "no".
- Gilda and Rigoletto singing "No no non" at the same time:** A blue box highlights the coincidence of Gilda's "no", Rigoletto's "no", and The Duke's "mi".

**Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto*  
The relationship between the voices<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.operaphila.org/community/dress-rehearsal-program/rigoletto/rigoletto-s-famous-quartet/> - page accessed on 4.08.2025.

S.  
 piar, in - fe - li - ce cor tra - di - to, per ango - scia non scop -  
 strove, he is false, my heart is bro - ken, ah, in vain for bliss I

M.  
 zar, il vo - stro gio - co sò ap - prez -  
 move, to think how man - y you yet will

T.  
 ni sen - ti del co - re il pal - pi -  
 pangs, the pangs of un - re - quit - ed

B.  
 nar, ta - cie mia sa - rà la cu - ra la ven - det - ta d'af - fret -  
 bove, thou must shun him and for - get him, thy a - veng - er I will

**Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto***

**Act III, Quartet (*Bella figlia dell'amore*) – Excerpt**

**Bars 1 – 2: The division of the voices according to the staging – inside (tenor and mezzo) and outside (soprano and bass)**

These examples could be related to the words of Pius Servien, who affirmed that asymmetry is the condition for a phenomenon, while symmetry marks its cessation.<sup>4</sup>

Following the premiere of the opera *Rigoletto*, Verdi confessed that he was very pleased with his writing and that he was certain he would never compose anything more beautiful. It is a known fact that Victor Hugo attended the Parisian premiere of the opera (1857) and after having listened to the quartet affirmed that if he would have had the possibility to make four characters speak at the same time in his drama, in such a manner that the public could distinguish their different words and contrasting emotions, he could have achieved a similar grand effect as Verdi did.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Serviene, Pius. *Estetica* [Aesthetics]. Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1975, p. 234.

<sup>5</sup> Solovțova, Liubov. *Giuseppe Verdi, viața și opera* [Giuseppe Verdi. His Life and Works]. Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor din R.P.R., 1960, p.158.

### ***The String Quartet in E Minor (1873)***

Giuseppe Verdi stands out among the composers of his generation for both his operatic works and his contributions to chamber music – the latter including also a string quartet. His career as opera composer begins and ends with a comic opera. Despite the fact that his first opera, *Un Giorno di regno*, composed when he was 26, brought him not only failure, but also the loss of his wife and sons, Verdi's last opera, *Falstaff* fills the composer with great satisfaction and a different perspective on life, as mirrored in this opera – everything is as light as a joke.

In 1873, shortly after he completed the opera *Aida*, Verdi composes his only String Quartet, the one in E minor. The work represents an escape from the composition of operas, also suggested by the fact that the work is followed by the *Requiem*. Moreover, the String Quartet is the first work in which Verdi employs the *fugato* technique (which he will also use in the *Requiem* and in the opera *Falstaff*).

The first audition of the work, in a private circle of friends, was not deemed important by the composer, who was unsure whether the work was valuable or not. The only thing Verdi was certain about was the fact that it was a quartet. The official premiere of the work took place in 1876 in Milan, after the work had been edited by Ricordi. The conductor Arturo Toscanini would later often present the work in its transcription for string orchestra.

Italy wasn't truly famous for its chamber music tradition. The Italian examples of chamber works that Verdi could have been inspired by were several quartets of Rossini, which echoed the influence of Mozart, alongside those of Donizetti, suggesting the Classical *divertimento*. It is noteworthy to mention that this was the first instance when Verdi was influenced by German compositions, namely the quartet of the Romantic period, represented by the works of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

*Theme I* of the first movement is entrusted to the second violin, with the indication that it be played on the fourth string (G), in order to emphasize the profound character of the work and perhaps to evoke the character of Amneris from the opera *Aida* (the last work composed prior to the quartet) – attributed to the mezzo-soprano.

According to Verdi's plans, *Aida* was supposed to be his last opera, due to the fact that there were numerous moments when the composer desired to cease composing. In this instance, Verdi renounced only the composition of operas, instead turning towards instrumental works and other genres. For example, the *Requiem* was a work Verdi long desired to compose. Without completely relinquishing the human voices, in the *Requiem* the composer keeps only four solo voices, pointing to another string instrumental work dedicated to four instruments treated as voices: the string quartet.

*Theme II* (in G minor) is presented as a harmonic choral, a theme that evokes the last scene of the opera *Falstaff*.

Atypical aspects regarding the sonata form of the first movement of this quartet are also notable: the full exposition of the theme in the false recapitulation, as well as its rendering by the first violin – rather than the second violin, as it was initially presented.

The rhetorical device *sospiratio*, often encountered in operas, within the arias of female characters, recalls the listener that despite the fact that this is a string quartet, the composer is Giuseppe Verdi. The similarities between this work and the opera *Rigoletto* are more and more noticeable.

The second movement, *Andantino*, is structured as rondo (ABACA) with coda. Had Verdi ever escaped into the world of the ballet more than he suggested in the operas *La Traviata*, *Macbeth*, or *I vespri siciliani*, this slow movement could have become an enchanting dance scene within a work. The first bars of the second movement of the quartet (E.g. 10) evoke the image of Gilda (E.g. 9).

E.g. 9

The image displays a musical score for an excerpt from Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Rigoletto*. It features a vocal line with Italian and English lyrics, and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato (♩ = 76)'. The key signature is G minor. The lyrics are: 'ti scol-pi - sci nel co - - re in - na - mo - ra - to! / Ev - ry fond, ten - der thought. . . for thee I cher - ish!'. The piano part includes markings 'dolciss. stacc.' and 'Fl.'.

Giuseppe Verdi: *Rigoletto*  
Act II, Gilda's aria: *Caro nome* – Excerpt, bars 4 – 5

**Andantino** ♩ = 88

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Viola  
Violoncello

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Vla.  
Vc.

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Vla.  
Vc.

**Giuseppe Verdi: *String Quartet in E Minor*  
Second Movement, Excerpt  
Bars 1 – 2: Musical evocation of Gilda**

The third movement, *Prestissimo* could have also been named *Scherzo*, if compared to the classical form of the quartet. This is a ternary movement, written in three-four time, yet conceived and performed in one, which evokes the quarrelsome character of the merry wives of Windsor (the

Shakespearian theme that inspired Verdi in his last opera, *Falstaff*). Although the theme entrusted to the cello in the middle section recalls a tenor aria, it also evokes the image of the gentle baritone Falstaff when trying to win over a lady.

The *Scherzo-Fuga. Allegro assai mosso*, the fourth movement of the quartet, is directly related to the finale of the opera *Falstaff*, written in the same fugal form. Once again, changes appear in the structure of classical forms – this time at the harmonic level of the fugue. The divertissement does not unfold in the original key of E minor, but rather in C major. The recapitulation is presented in an atypical manner, through the appearance of a tonic pedal (an element typically associated with the coda). As the final section is both climactic and conclusive, the composer reverses the usual order of the coda and the stretto, opting for a triumphant ending in *stretto* and thus also changing the tempo marking from *Allegro assai mosso* to *Poco più presto*.

The operatic genre is not bound by a strict form that must be respected; the music rather adheres to the libretto, with the arias, duets, ensembles, choruses, and ballets subordinated to the narrative thread. In certain instances, not even the overture is present, as the classical unfolding of an opera would require. Given these circumstances, Verdi pursues the imaginary narrative thread of the work, freely manipulating the musical forms in each of the four movements of the quartet.

### Conclusions – Comparative Approach to Verdi’s Quartets

The vocal quartet within the opera *Rigoletto* is structured in two sections, delimited by a double bar line. Often performed in concerts as independent movement, the beginning section of the vocal quartet is frequently relinquished, the performance beginning with the D $\flat$  section, after the double bar line. Similar key changes can be found in each of the four movements of the *String Quartet in E Major*.

The String Quartet begins in the E Minor key, while the second theme and the concluding movement of the quartet (the IV movement) unfold in the homonymous key of E Major. The E Major key is common to both the vocal quartet in *Rigoletto*, as well as the first and fourth movements of the String Quartet.

E.g. 11

Vocal quartet from <i>Rigoletto</i>	<i>String Quartet in E Major</i> .
E Major/ D $\flat$ Major	I. E Minor/ E Major/ E Minor II. C Major/ G $\sharp$ Minor/ F $\sharp$ Minor/ C Major III. E Minor/ A $\flat$ Major/ E Minor/ A Major IV. E Minor/ E Major

Despite the fact that it is part of an opera, the vocal quartet shares many traits that are common to chamber music, thus will be treated accordingly. One of the characteristics of chamber music is the equal distribution of importance among the voices. One cannot speak about an association between the four instruments of the quartet and the four voices in the operatic quartet; however it may be noted that Verdi chooses to place in the foreground of the beginning sections the second violin in the string quartet and the tenor in the vocal quartet. The title of the opera assigns an increased importance to the baritone (*Rigoletto*), as far as the dramatic subject is concerned. However, before it was presented to the audience, the same opera was assigned the title *Le roi s'amuse* (the title of Hugo's play) – which would have placed the tenor (the Duke) in the foreground – as well as the title *The Curse*, referring to a factual situation and not any particular character. Thus, the characters of the opera are equally important for the unfolding of the dramatic action, regardless of the time spent on stage. The vocal quartet draws attention to the Duke of Mantua (the tenor) and his infidelity, being the first to utter the musical theme of the movement. In a similar manner, in the quartet, the second violin presents the theme of the first and fourth movements.

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## AN ANALYSIS OF THE GENRE, STYLE, AND INTERPRETATIVE ASPECTS OF FRANCIS POULENC'S *PIANO SONATA FOR FOUR HANDS*

VALENTIN MUREȘAN<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** Composed in the 20th century, Francis Poulenc's *Piano Sonata for Four Hands* is a significant piece for piano duets. Its musical characteristics are represented in a unique way, as if it were an archive of its own. A piece of music where the composer paid close attention to every detail, even choreographing the posture and movement of the performers, which distinguished this piece from other piano four-hands compositions. The objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the distinctive features of this sonata, along with the characteristics that are commonly found in piano duets prior to this composition.

**Keywords:** piano four-hand, Francis Poulenc, Claude Debussy, sonata.

### 1. Introduction

The *Sonata for Four Hands* (1918) by Francis Poulenc was the first work of its kind in the sonata genre for piano duo<sup>2</sup> in the development of French piano music from the age of the harpsichordists to the early twentieth century. The composer wrote it when he was nineteen years old and dedicated it to Miss Simone Tilliard<sup>3</sup>. Franck Ferraty points out that the previous year Poulenc had written a *Scherzo for two pianos* called 'Zebra', which was never

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<sup>2</sup> For the piano duo in French literature there is a wide range of well-known cycles and individual pieces by Bizet, Fauré, Schmitt, Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Ravel, Satie, Milhaud to Messiaen, Dutilleux, Boulez and others.

<sup>3</sup> Pianist, neighbor of the composer at the Nogent estate, friend since childhood. She performed his early works. She also dedicated the first song of the cycle for voice and piano Calligrammes (1948). Her letters to Poulenc are preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



published and there is no record of its fate.<sup>4</sup> Apparently 1918 was the year of the piano duos, as Poulenc composed another piece for two pianos, *Le Jongleur* (The Juggler), as well as *Quadrille* (Quadrille) for four hands (1919), but these were lost or most likely destroyed.

The Sonata has resonated strongly with contemporary artists and performers: the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet says: "I cannot but express my satisfaction with this music, which has struck me as the most genuine and alive music created in France in recent times. Poulenc is one of the most attractive personalities in new music"<sup>5</sup>. Appreciating Poulenc's compositional talent, Bartók wrote in 1921 that he was greatly impressed by the Sonata for Four Hands and the Sonata for Two Clarinet<sup>6</sup>. Stravinsky recommended the work to the London publisher Chester, who published it in 1919, and Poulenc reissued it in 1939. Only this last version of Sonata is known in concert practice. There is no indication in monographic studies to what extent it has been revised from the 1918 original. I assume that the 1939 reissue was a reprinting of the work without any significant 'revision' in the text.

The sonata lasts up to six minutes at the most, strictly following the composer's tempi. Poulenc insists on their observance: 'If pianists had more confidence in my metronome markings, many "misfortunes" would be avoided'<sup>7</sup>.

Due to the brevity and specific titling of the movements, the work could be defined more as a suite. The tonal unity also points towards this idea: the residence of all movements and their individual parts in one tonal level (C) with tonal variety (Part I - C minor, Part II - C major, Part III - C major in Part I and C minor in the middle part, synthesized in the final chord with major and minor thirds). To the major-minor chordal contrasts are added pentatonic intonation nuclei, as well as the appearance of a Phrygian chord in the finale. The brevity of the movements and their clearly delineated triadicity further distances the initial impression from the stated genre nomination - sonata. And it is here that the composer's originality and powerful synthetic thinking come to the fore, integrating sonority on various levels throughout the work:

- 1) in the construction of the apparently simple three-part form as a miniature sonata form (Part I)
- 2) in the structural modulation from triadicity to sonority (Part II)
- 3) in the astonishing thematic unity pervading the entire work

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<sup>4</sup> Ferraty, Franck (2011). Francis Poulenc a son piano: un clavier bien fantasma. Paris: L'Harmattan.

<sup>5</sup> Hell, Henri (1978). Francis Poulenc, musicien français. Paris: Fayard

<sup>6</sup> Poulenc, Francis (1991). "Echo and Source": Selected Correspondence 1915-1963. London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd.

<sup>7</sup> Poulenc, Francis (1991). "Echo and Source": Selected Correspondence 1915-1963. London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd.

4) in the synthetic role of the finale, where, in addition to the arch reminiscences of the preceding movements, complex processes take place, affirming the organic relationship of the thematic cores.

Poulenc's creative individuality is encoded in this early work as in crystal. The apparent simplicity is saturated with messages. There seems to be an artistic game going on here, consciously evoked by the composer and expressed in a stage-by-stage transformation of aesthetic perception: Stating an unambiguous genre definition ("Sonata"); distancing from the stated genre idea (through the movement titles and the outward signs of suite-ness); building the sonority through the immense inner energy of the thematic and dramaturgical conception realized in an unusually short time, which precisely determines the over-concentration of ideas and messages. Thus, this early work reveals how ambiguous (and therefore so appealing) is the compositional world of Francis Poulenc - an astonishing combination of outward simplicity, accessibility, openness and inner depth that is illuminated on different levels according to the ability of performers and listeners to peel back the layers of meaning.

## 2. First movement

The first movement is entitled Prelude. In it, Poulenc sets the "climax" of the musical-perceptual challenges. In the terms of a three-movement cycle, the idea of prelude can unlock for the educated listener and performer inexhaustible allusions embedded in the history of the genre. On the one hand, associations are made with the original meaning of preluding as improvisatory music-making with an introductory function. On the other, the prelude (thought of as a 'fantasia') recalls its various incarnations in the development of the sonata (from the introduction of the prelude as the first movement in Corelli's sonatas to the fantasia-like first movement of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata). But Poulenc's approach is clearly different. It casts the idea of a toccata pulsation (historically related to the idea of an introductory movement) but organized in the clear structural and functional outlines of a miniature sonata form.

The brief introduction (Example 1, measures 1-4) is built on a sharply dissonant, hauntingly repeated in ostinato rhythm minor seventh chord with an added second (C72), compacted in the high and low register by the second piano part. Thus, at the outset the composer covers almost the entire range of the instrument with an interesting textural distribution between the two parts. From a performance point of view, the very first bars of the work pose specific technical and interpretative challenges. The composer's remark *très rythmé* (very rhythmically) requires the second pianist to articulate the

rhythm as clearly as possible. This 'compressed' dynamic and rhythmic 'code' with which the Sonata begins, and ends is reminiscent of Bartok's 'barbaro' style. The pulsating chord should be played in *ff*, distinctly, but without weight. It is necessary to achieve absolute simultaneity in the attack of the two hands with as short a stroke and "prickle" as possible. The theme in the first pianist's part should be articulated with 'sparkling' staccatos and accents, which correspond in sound emission and character to the author's recitative decisively and projected.

E.g. 1

**Francis Poulenc. Sonata for four hands. First movement, m. 1 - 11**

The beginning of the Sonata (introduction and first theme) is played with the pianists' arms "crossed". This compositional conceit contains at least two aspects related to the work's stage life and its interpretation.

The first aspect concerns the artistic effect, which in this case, however, is not an end, but is directly related to musical perception. The first pianist's outstretched arms visualize the idea of encompassing a large musical space. We can say with a high degree of certainty that Poulenc (as a composer with a strong spatial and color sense and an urge to communicate musical art) consciously relied on this visual effect. In fact, according to twentieth century works on music psychology, moments concerning the placement of performing ensembles (in this case, the pianists' hands) were highly influential in forming spatial representations in the audience<sup>8</sup>. However, this is over-explored by some performers, and one may even encounter attractive approaches, such as the first pianist playing the beginning of the Sonata not seated but standing, to enhance the spatial effect and to draw the audience's attention to the crossing of the hands as a 'show' element.

<sup>8</sup> Nazaikinsky, Eugene. On the psychology of musical perception. 1972, Moscow, Muzyka.

The second perspective to the excerpt analyzed refers to the sound extraction related to the more awkward positioning of the hands. For example, the left hand of the first pianist is in a low tessitura and the wrist is in an unusually high position. At the same time, it is necessary for the second pianist to play with the hands tucked in towards the body, with a low attack and minimal movement - a 'crouch' - to provide full space for the theme led in octaves by the first pianist. Beyond the purely technical difficulty, which any experienced instrumentalist will overcome without much problem, one other point is more significant here: in practice, the 'awkward' (atypical) position of the hands actually aids the desired sonority, because it prevents the performers from over-exposing power and depth, i.e. it is this position that to some extent 'guarantees' the touch and Poulenc's specially requested performance without weight. The interpretive concept of the Shchereva-Simeonova duo therefore excludes all external effects at the beginning of the Sonata, and the music is mastered through a special attention to tone, touch and balance, with the position of the hands being exploited to the utmost in this very direction.

The penalization to bar 26 is symbolic. I use a very short pedal 3 on the notes with tenutos to stabilize the ostinato rhythm but keep the atmosphere of tension and secco.

In measures 17-22, with the indication *très doux* (very soft, gentle), Poulenc exposes the second theme. It is sounded again on the accompanying ostinato rhythm (example 2), but with a new tone in the vertical: as. The thematic core is derived from the first theme (sub motive G-F-D), but the rhythmic organization shifts the melodic support tone from f (theme I) to g (theme II). Thus, with impressive economy, the composer achieves a striking effect of intonational renewal while preserving tonal flatness.

### E.g. 2



### Francis Poulenc. Sonata for four hands. First movement, m. 17-22

With the indication *très sonores* (very sonorous), are one of the composer's favourite devices, by means of which a rich palette of chiming sounds is reproduced, and which gives the music a particular pictorial charm. This sonic device is not, of course, the 'trademark' of Poulenc alone.

The middle section combines in an original way the qualities of a "b" section in the tripartite form and of a sonata development. The poetic excerpt in the solo first part (example 3) is thematically a vertical synthesis achieved by counterpointing the second theme and the descending chromatic movement from the end of the first. It is performed in legato, with a subtle sonority: *très doux* (very gentle) and *sider un peu* (slower, 'more stretched'). Perhaps this episode is one of the few occasions with a rubato idea. The filigree harp moments (measures 29, 33) momentarily sound like a Debussy-style veil. They should be played lightly and nimbly. Poulenc says that despite the anti-Debussian sentiment during his infatuation with Satie, Debussy remains the musician he prefers after Mozart. "I can't do without his music. It's like oxygen to me. In fact, the reaction to The Six was directed not against Debussy, but against "Debussyism"<sup>9</sup>.

## E.g. 3

## Francis Poulenc. Sonata for four hands. First movement, m. 26-36.

Two approaches to penalization are possible in this partition. One is the use of a solid pedal with two changes in the bar - a classical type of penalization. The other (in my opinion more masterful) requires the second pianist to cover the whole measure in half-pedal, possibly with some thinning towards the end of measure<sup>10</sup>. This will sonically nuance the first pianist's solo, and the pedal will blend the interesting "run-on" dissonances.

In the next stage of the development of the middle section, the composer placed the designation "*avec charme*" (with charm). The second pianist's part creates an allusion to a lullaby. This idyllic musical picture is suddenly interrupted as the abrupt change in texture is "cut in" with a dynamic *ff*. Poulenc notes *feroce* (fierce, angry) and *strident* (sharp, shrill). This is the third phase in the unfolding of the middle section (Example 4). The first pianist's part should be pianistically brilliant: with bright appoggiaturas and

<sup>9</sup> Bernac, Pierre. Francis Poulenc et ses melodies. 2014, Paris, Buchet Chastel, pg 40.

<sup>10</sup> On similar issues - a lecture by prof. K. Ganev on some "unconventional" ideas of penalization, delivered to students and teachers at the P. Vladigerov National Academy of Music.

virtuosic sextolets. Stability in the 4th and 5th fingers of the right hand is required, as well as played "up" by hand and wrist heavy fretting of the quarters in staccato in the left hand. *Beaucoup de pedale* (much pedaling) is the composer's logical recapitulation, requiring tight pedals to shape the dynamic and sonic volume of the climax.

E.g. 4

Francis Poulenc. Sonata for four hands. First movement, m. 41-45.

### 3. Second movement

The second movement - *Rustique - Naif et lent* (naive, innocent and slow) is short and built in a simple three-part form. Poulenc's designation 'rustic' (*rustique*) is a product of his view of folklore. Although the composer never resorted to the use of folk quotations and sources, his music magnificently reflects the French spirit in art. It is no coincidence that Ravel says of him: "The nice thing about Poulenc is that he creates his own folklore"<sup>11</sup>. Ravel was probably referring to Poulenc's ability to create simple melodies, intonationally like some popular songs of the era. They are never quotations but are 'à la' or in the 'spirit of' the songs of his childhood in Nogent-sur-Marne or of the Parisian chansons. In a broader sense, the word *rustique* means "naturalness" and "unadulterated," which I think is the truer interpretation of the piece.

The first section is constructed as a complex period based on the principle of variant repetition. The theme is led by the left hand in legato and *mf* in the tessitura of a small octave. To sound balanced, a discreet accompaniment in the right hand is necessary (example 5a). Poulenc said that if he was sometimes dissatisfied with someone's performance, it was

<sup>11</sup> Daniel, Keith. Francis Poulenc. His Artistic Development and Musical Style. 1982, London: UMI Research Press, pg. 57

because "there was a lack of balance and proportion"<sup>12</sup>. The second variation on the theme (*trés chanté and rubato* – very sung and free) is in the first part, soloing an octave higher, doubled by the left hand of the second pianist (in the lower octave). Here, the composer preserves the idea of thematically framing the sound space, but unlike in the Prelude, he now entrusts it to the two pianists. This is made possible by the slow tempo and the uniform accompanying layer, and probably also by the search for a subtle "stereo effect" that enhances the sense of space. The theme sounds pastoral and peaceful. The special flavor of the beginning of the second movement also comes from the quasi-pentatonic sound.

The middle section (bars 9–14) in a wide register (range g3 and g2 for the first part and a large octave for the second part) has more pronounced rhythmic punctuation (example 5b). There is an intonational connection with the theme of the first section (unfolding within a descending fourth – see the enclosed motifs in example 5). Thus, the middle section takes on a developing character, but at the same time possesses its own thematic independence with the effect of complementary contrast.

### E.g. 5

The image displays two musical examples, labeled 'a)' and 'b)', from Francis Poulenc's Sonata for Four Hands, Second movement. Each example consists of two staves: a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef).  
 Example 'a)' shows measures 3-5. The vocal line is marked 'trés chanté mf' and features a melodic line with a descending fourth interval. The piano accompaniment has a steady eighth-note pattern. A box highlights a specific motif in the piano part.  
 Example 'b)' shows measures 9-11. The vocal line is marked 'p mais le trémolo très ardent' and features a more rhythmic, tremolo-like pattern. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar eighth-note pattern. A box highlights a motif in the piano part, which is connected to the motif in example 'a)' by a line.

### Francis Poulenc. Sonata for Four Hands, Second movement a) m. 3 – 5; b) m. 9 – 11

During the exposition (measures 13–14), the two performers must simultaneously combine the different strokes deliberately sought by the composer—staccato in the prima part and legato in the secondo part. The short transition (measure 15) introduces dynamically contrasting sixteenth-

<sup>12</sup> Poulenc, Francis. Conversations with Claude Rostand, 1954, Paris: R. Julliard, pg 32-33

note passages (f – subito p), distributed between the two parts, which must sound as if played by a single performer – decisively, without delay. The ensemble problem, which I conditionally call "transmission" or, more precisely, "dialogue" between the two pianists, is sometimes overlooked as "well-known" and "implicit." In concert practice, however, this is a very provocative and interesting musical process. Dialogic mastery is expressed not only when a reply is correctly answered or delivered, but also when it is necessary to react flexibly – to "improvise" on stage, in the best sense of the word.

The reprise is synthetic – it integrates the themes from the first and second movements. It is here that structural modulation occurs, revealing features of sonata form.

The third part, Finale, is performed at a tempo of *Très Vite* (Very fast, =160) and (with very few deviations) with an articulate and staccato stroke. It again forms a tripartite structure: bars 1–16, tempo *très vite* = 160; bars 17–54, tempo Subito Presto = 176; bars 55–70, Tempo primo; Coda – bars 71–72, subito Presto.

The theme is a diatonic melody with an original structure (example 6). On the one hand, it gives the impression of a period of three half-phrases, the third of which is a reprise of the first. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as a chain period, in which the idea of mirror symmetry is embedded (supported at the textural level by the mirror movement in measure 3). The specific construction of the theme highlights the opening phrase as a self-representative thematic unit – vivid, recognizable, close to the folk type of music-making.

E.g. 6

**Francis Poulenc. Sonata for Four Hands. Third movement, m. 1-6**

Although structurally simple and limited to a range of a fifth (evoking subjective associations with a "five-finger piano exercise"), the theme carries an enormous life-affirming and optimistic charge. It should be played clearly, evenly, with all the nuances observed (alternating staccato and legato, as well as grouped in 2 or 4 sixteenth notes), in F, but lightly and nimbly – a "pearl" type of piano technique. The staccatos, played dry (*très sec*) and clearly in the first pianist's part (bars 7-8), contrast with the legato line in the second part.

#### 4. Third movement

The finale of the Sonata is based on the active development of the motifs of the theme and reminiscences of thematic material from the previous two movements. This creates an arched compositional structure and a unique theatrical effect. The arched connections are most active in the original middle section. It begins with a sharp change of tempo (*Presto*) and dynamics (*subito pp*) with the ostinato rhythm from the beginning of the first movement (Prelude), but on a pedal bass G. Figuratively speaking, section b introduces an atmosphere of mystery, reinforced by the Phrygian mode in which the theme is heard. The rhythm must remain "relentless" while the right hand phrases correctly and in *pp*. To achieve a soft sound and due to the specific sound of the low register of the piano, the use of *una corda* is appropriate.

E.g. 7



#### Francis Poulenc. Sonata for Four Hands. Third movement, m. 17–20

Within bars 17–35, there is a rapid dynamic and dramatic build-up—the climax of the movement—based on the Baroque principle of terraced dynamics from *pp* to *ff* and *fff*. The reaching of *ff* (example 8) coincides with the moment when the composer contrapoints the theme of the Finale in C minor with the second theme of the Prelude.

E.g. 8



#### Francis Poulenc. Sonata for Four Hands. Third movement, m. 27–29

AN ANALYSIS OF THE GENRE, STYLE, AND INTERPRETATIVE ASPECTS OF FRANCIS  
POULENC'S PIANO SONATA FOR FOUR HANDS

The next wave of the middle section of the Finale (bars 35–45) is another example of terraced dynamic gradation. The theme in staccato passes sequentially (from C, from E, from G) through the scale of *p*, *mf*, *f*, and *ff*, followed by a calming and pacifying passage to dynamics *p* and *pp*, which leads to an augmented version of the introduction of the second movement. Within the bars, it is necessary to maintain the clarity and distinctness of the rhythm in *pp*, with the idea of sounding insistent and "distant."

E.g. 9



Francis Poulenc. Sonata for Four Hands. Third movement, m. 51–54

The end of the Sonata is in Phrygian mode and is filled with elegant humor. The last bars are played on a single pedal, which holds the last chord (*laissez vibrer plus que la mesure*).

E.g. 10

Francis Poulenc. Sonata for Four Hands. Third movement, m. 71–72

## 5. Conclusion

The findings of the investigation disclosed that the distinctive attribute of the composition is the evolution and refinement of techniques for piano four hands, which were initially conceived to attain a more profound musical intricacy and concord, a feat unattainable through a piano solo alone. Poulenc's exquisite composition is more than just musical notation; it's a delicate piece of choreography where two performers connect to each other to express this fine composition.

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## ASTOR PIAZZOLLA'S "TANGO SUITE" FOR TWO GUITARS: GENRE AND STYLE ASPECTS

TETIANA FILATOVA<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** Astor Piazzolla's "Tango Suite" for two guitars is studied in terms of their embodiment of Argentine genre traditions. The aim of the article is to reveal the authentic features of the tango genre in their historical dynamics and style reconstruction using the linguistic resources of academic and jazz traditions. The rhythmic idioms of tango, asymmetrical accent figures, the genesis and specificity of polymeters are identified. The sonotypes of timbral everyday presentations of tango are correlated with solo and ensemble concert performances. Sound-imaging and percussive techniques of imitating the timbres of orchestral instruments with guitar sound are traced. The linguistic elements of tango are systematized according to the semantics of the musical images of the dance. The style features of the tango nuevo vocabulary are identified, and the nature of innovative components is indicated based on the analysis of each of the guitar pieces.

**Keywords:** Argentine music, Astor Piazzolla's guitar works, tango, guitar ensemble, performance techniques, genre and style aspects.

### 1. Introduction

In the music world, the name Astor Piazzolla (Ástor Piazzolla, 1921–1992) – a composer, virtuoso bandoneon player, conductor, and arranger is firmly associated with the history of Argentine tango. It is immortalized in the pages of more than three hundred compositions written by the musician for various instruments, ensembles, and orchestras. Piazzolla's ensemble guitar tangos are few in number, but they have become key virtuoso cycles in the contemporary repertoire and require a high level of academic skill from performers.

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In contemporary musicology, a number of general and local vectors of research have been formed in the study of this area of creativity. The first group includes monographic works<sup>2</sup>. In the second group, it is worth highlighting the publications devoted to specific topics. These are descriptions of the specifics of the language of tango<sup>3</sup>, systematization of special playing techniques that imitate other orchestral timbres with guitar sounds<sup>4</sup>. Separately, it is worth mentioning articles devoted to performance aspects, in particular, interviews with famous guitarists<sup>5</sup>, the creation of arrangements of guitar compositions for folk orchestras, and the practice of artistic interpretation<sup>6</sup> or highlighting well-known biographical information about guitar performer<sup>7</sup>.

The aim of this article is to identify authentic features of the genre in Astor Piazzolla's ensemble guitar tangos in their historical dynamics and style reconstruction through the renewal of the musical language of the academic and jazz traditions, using the example of the cycle "Tango Suite" for two guitars.

## 2. "Tango suite" for two guitars by Astor Piazzolla

The sound world of "Tango Suite" (1984) – one of the Argentine master's most famous guitar compositions – represents an organic fusion of various traditions: the authentic genre, widespread in folk music and embodied in popular national idioms; the academic thinking and compositional techniques of Alberto Ginastera, Bela Bartók, and Igor Stravinsky, whose compositions Astor Piazzolla studied in particular depth, as well as jazz culture, which was close to him since his time living in the United States, especially cool jazz and its representatives – Stan Getz, Chet Baker, Bill Evans, and Gerry Mulligan.

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<sup>2</sup> Azzi, Maria S. *Le Grand Tango: The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla*. Encuentros. No. 36. IDB Cultural Center, 2000

<sup>3</sup> Nishimaye, Alvarez, Nahuel, Franco. *La obra para guitarra de Astor Piazzolla y las guardias del tango*. Universidad Católica de Salta, 2019. 208 p. Link: <https://core.ac.uk/download/390096248.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Drago, Alejandro M. *Instrumental Tango Idioms in the Symphonic Works and Orchestral Arrangements of Astor Piazzolla. Performance and Notational Problems: A Conductor's Perspective*. (DMA Dissertation). The University of Southern Mississippi, 2008. 189 p.

<sup>5</sup> Jackson, Blair, Teicholz, Marc. *Sérgio Assad on Piazzolla, the Beatles, Ginastera, Transcriptions, and more*. Classical guitar. 2018. Spring. Link: <https://classicalguitar magazine.com/sergio-assad-on-piazzolla-the-beatles-ginastera-transcriptions-and-more/>

<sup>6</sup> Cherepanyn, Myron, Dutchak, Violetta, Paliichuk, Iryna, Bulda, Maryna, Zhovnir, Stanislav, Spodarenko, Viktor. *Creativity of Astor Piazzolla in the context of the development of folk instrumental performance*. AD ALTA. 2023. Vol. 13 (1). pp. 84–90.

<sup>7</sup> Zhovnir, Stanislav. *Representation of Astor Piazzolla's work in guitar art of the second half of the 20th to the beginning of the 21st century*. Bulletin of the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts. 2018. Series: Musical art, 2, pp.125–135.

The external reason for creating the "Tango Suite" was a keen desire to dedicate it to the unique duo of Brazilian guitarists Sergio and Odir Assad, in whose performance he heard arrangements of his own music and was extraordinarily impressed by them. The dialogue between these brilliant performers from the academic school opened up new perspectives for concert presentations of tango – highly virtuosic compositions capable of reflecting the archetypes of the genre in its full ensemble and orchestral sound with the resources of a guitar duo, while at the same time introducing a new musical vocabulary. In an interview with Sergio Assad about Astor Piazzolla's music, the guitarist recalls: "We first met him in person in Paris, where Piazzolla had lived for many years, and played some arrangements of his music that I had made for a guitar duo. I used diminished chords that created a descending arpeggio-like movement, and he went crazy for it. I think he heard something in it that surprised him, and he liked it. Then, when we got the "Tango Suite", that musical figure was there! The end of the first part is exactly what I did. But really, nothing needed to be changed in his music – it was all wonderful, perfectly written for two guitars"<sup>8</sup>.

The music of the "Tango Suite" became a spectacular creative product of synthesis, a wide range of interactions between academic, popular, and jazz music intertwined with the genre roots of tango. The cycle laid one of the key foundations of the chamber repertoire of contemporary guitarists. It clearly displays the rhythmic idioms of tango, derived from the syncopated patterns of the Afro-Cuban version of the habanera, as well as the 3+3+2 polymeters that originate from the genre's genesis of tango and Argentine milonga. The textural layers perform a variety of functions, usually distributed among the voices and timbres of quintets or octets. In terms of performance, this requires musicians to imitate them, including by means of new percussive and figurative techniques and specific effects. Each of the three parts of the suite demonstrates this to the fullest. A multifaceted analysis of the suite from the perspective of genre and style interactions, timbral allusions, and imitations of the sounds of other *tango-nuevo* instruments by guitars represents a broader discourse of research.

The three parts of the "Tango Suite", with all their sharp contrasts of imagery, flamboyant emotions, and tempo differences (*Allegro libero* – *Andante rubato*, *melancolico* – *Allegro*), form a cyclical integrity, without excluding the

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<sup>8</sup> Jackson, Blair, Teicholz, Marc. Sérgio Assad on Piazzolla, the Beatles, Ginastera, Transcriptions, and more. *Classical guitar*. 2018. Spring. Link: <https://classicalguitarmagazine.com/sergio-assad-on-piazzolla-the-beatles-ginastera-transcriptions-and-more/>

possibility of performing the pieces separately. Each tango is a narrative with a dramatically affected plot, a love story across the entire emotional and sensual spectrum.

The high degree of contrast between thematic elements serves as an idiom for all parts of the cycle. It manifests itself in the richness and theatricality of rapidly flashing “frames,” collage-like and colorful alternations in the carnival customs of South American countries. It is characteristic that within each of the three pieces, new thematic formations are included in the process of developing the form at all its stages – at the moment of exposing the theme and its subsequent improvisations (doubles of variations, coming from the practice of playing jazz standards), which develop, at first glance, spontaneously, but are precisely written in the author’s text. Spectacular figurative and thematic contrasts are laid between the main sections of the form, but they also often arise in the areas of connecting transitions between them (*bridges*). This greatly enhances the effect of surprise, density, and high concentration of new thematic formations in the form, giving it a feature of assemblage and kaleidoscopicity – qualities that are not characteristic of authentic tango models but have become the trademark of Astor Piazzolla’s *tango nuevo*. Sometimes the variety of contrasts is a consequence of anticipating the new vocabulary of the next section, the next piece, or, conversely, it serves as a reminiscence, an unconscious reminder of the melodies and phrases of tango created by the composer earlier.

The idiomatic repertoire of artistic means of the musical language of tango has clear distinctions. Each of the spheres of imagery is accompanied by its own system of linguistic elements. Some of them are aimed at creating a sound atmosphere of an impulsive-decisive, spontaneous-improvisational character and serve as the embodiment of masculine muscularity of movements, attacking passionate impulses in dance. Others are characteristic of the revival of archaic-tribal, ritual-magical ostinato figures, leading back to the African American roots of the energy of rhythm and the plasticity of dance movements. Others are organic to the lyrical, confessional nature of languid, sensual lyrics with a touch of sadness and melancholy – the embodiment of eternal femininity. Therefore, when opening the pages of Piazzolla’s tango scores, one should be prepared for high levels of thematic saturation, sharp contrasts, sudden bursts, slowdowns and motivic fragmentation, agogic pauses, polyphonic textures, and changes in types of expression.

**Tango n. 1** from the Suite<sup>9</sup> demonstrates a kaleidoscope of contrasts to the fullest extent. Next to the *Allegro* tempo indication, there is an agogic clarification *libero*. This key characteristic of the “free movement” of tango paradoxically works in conditions of slowdowns and accelerations, while maintaining a clear rhythm pattern in the first guitar part and the characteristic *polymeter* of tango in the second part. The special effects of tango playing with the percussion imitation – bongos and drums – are emphasized by the extraction of sounds of a conventionally fixed pitch (high and low tones) by means of sharp alternating blows with the fingers of both hands on the base, deck, and neck of the instrument. Similarly, the percussion effect *Strappata* (double bass), common for the double bass in the absence of percussion instruments in the ensemble, is created. Among the percussion imitations, palm strikes on the six strings on *f* in the cadence (bars 9–10) are used. Among the characteristic guitar techniques, the composer uses natural harmonics: their quiet echoes can be heard in the modulation transition to the variation of the main theme (bars 11–16) from the main key of *A minor* to *D minor*, and then the melody of the first section of the ABCA form moves through the bridge into areas of bright thematic contrasts.

In the duo, the functions of the solo and accompanying voices are distributed equally – they are delegated alternately to each performer, demonstrating the equal partnership of the virtuosos. First, the main theme is presented in the second guitar part and contains characteristic features of Piazzolla’s tango, known not only as a composer but also as a virtuoso bandoneon player. From the first bars, one can hear his special pre-beat tango effect, *arrastre*, borrowed from the practice of playing the bandoneon. It is achieved by stretching the bellows before the attack of the strong beat of the bar, with the resulting increase in density and volume of the chromatic progression (usually ascending), with an energetic opening of the sound and an instantaneous sharp stop. The main melody of the tango is permeated with an idiom of asymmetrical accent rhythms with syncopated figures regulated by the articulation of the first, fourth, and seventh durations in  $\frac{4}{4}$  time. This well-known 3+3+2 tango *polymeter* comes from the milonga genre and is clearly dominant here.

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<sup>9</sup> Footnote to the audio recording of Astor Piazzolla’s Tango Suite performed by the guitar duo of brothers Sergio and Odair Assad (Sergio Assad & Odair Assad, 2022). Link: <https://youtu.be/QuJTltA7Tfl?si=3GNt9uQeWFyYnJ6->

## E.g. 1

Allegro (♩ = 120) *libero*      Producir diferentes sonidos de percusion - Bongo - Tambor etc. (a)

*f* D S DSDS DSD DSD D S

*f* *energico* 5

S S DSD DSDSD DSD D S S D S S DSD S

CV ④ ⑤ CV CVII 1 CV

(♩ = ♩) Golpe sobre las 6 Cuerdas (b)

D S DSDS D S S D S S DSD

CVII CII ⑤

## Astor Piazzolla. "Tango Suite" for two guitars, Tango n. 1.

The harmonic transition is driven by an ostinato pedal bass, against which a wave of descending chromatic sequences accelerates. These sequences are made up of major triads and ninth chords. New variations on the theme alter its character – becoming more decisive ( $A_1$  – *deciso*) or more lyrical ( $A_2$  – *A-minor*), but each variation is separated by a bridge section that, in the new context, becomes increasingly contrasting. Transitions between variations heighten tension, infusing the piece with the emotional energy of thematic conflict. On one side is the motoric, rapid, virtuosic movement, culminating in gliding passages and elastic chords marked *ff* along chromatic lines. On the other are lyrical, delicate phrases that emerge unexpectedly – foreshadowing later themes of a similar character, which will form the basis of a separate formal section. In this regard, the contrast between the two types of material before the end of the exposition and the beginning of the *Meno mosso* section is particularly telling (see Example 2). Here, the juxtaposition of two phrases – gentle, languid, and melancholic, with a distinctly

feminine quality – seems to arise not from what has already occurred, but from what is yet to come: the lyrical "core" of the entire composition. This is set against the elastic, ostinato-driven pulsation of the bridge, built on a dissonant harmonic foundation. The composer intensifies the effect through sharply defined polytonal chord combinations, which are related to each other by tritones (A flat<sub>7</sub>–D).

E.g. 2

The image shows a musical score for two guitars, labeled 'E.g. 2'. The score is for Astor Piazzolla's 'Tango n. 1', bars 44-47. It consists of two staves. The top staff is marked 'Meno mosso' and 'p'. It features a melodic line with various ornaments and fingerings, including a circled '2' and a box containing '4 5'. The bottom staff is marked 'rall.' and 'p'. It features a bass line with chords and fingerings, including 'CV', 'CIII', and '1/2 CX'. The score is written in a key with one flat and a 2/4 time signature.

Astor Piazzolla. Tango n. 1, bars 44–47

Section B – *Più calmo, con grazia* – unfolds with a melodic line composed of a series of dance motifs. It proceeds calmly, with playful grace, punctuated by pauses on artificial harmonics in the upper register. Within a 3+3+2 polymetric framework, two new techniques are introduced and developed. The first is a jazz “riff” typical of 1930s big band style, featuring dense textural layers built on minor triad accompaniment. Its rhythmic impulses recall the patterns of milonga, themselves derived from Afro-Cuban bolero. The second technique establishes a systemic link between harmonic processes, revealing shared structural elements.

The relationships among the minor triads – primarily minor third intervals – are based on modernist, constructivist principles, distinctly removed from traditional tango harmonic patterns (B–C#–B–G–B–C#–D–B–G#–B–E flat–B–G#–E). These kinds of coloristic effects consistently captivated Piazzolla and served as a wellspring of expressive novelty and timbral richness in his tango language.

Section C – *Lento, molto cantabile* – is the most poetic and refined. These lyrics expresses tender, intimate emotions tinged with nostalgia, desire, and quiet pleading resembling a lyrical confession or the imagined plasticity of dance gestures in visual form (Example 3). The melody is gently wrapped in polyphonic accompanying voices, marked by expressive leaps and extended fermatas. Around it flows arpeggiated textures and ornamental figures, enhancing its lyrical and contemplative nature.

Lento, molto cantabile

**Astor Piazzolla. Tango n. 1, bars 80–86**

The intrusion of another bridge, based on the previous one and in which David Gómez Lucas sees a connection with bebop of the 1940s and 1950s, interrupts the melodious, delicate poetics, suspending it with a rhythm of characteristic syncopations on weak beats (the influence of Afro-Cuban habanera, bars 87–89). The caesura “within” the lyrical theme is overcome by carrying its melody to the end, closing again with energetic bebop motifs. This time, the bridge over the organ point breaks up into streams of descending chordal arpeggios, shifted upward by semitones – leading into the reprise: G flat<sub>7</sub>, G<sub>7</sub>, A flat<sub>7</sub>, A<sub>7</sub>, B flat<sub>7</sub>, with a tritone leap to *на* E<sub>9</sub>.

The reprise presents the expository material with minor alterations, but not in full. Instead of concluding with the main theme in *A-minor*, the piece surges into a final coda marked *ff* – brilliant and virtuosic, like a fireworks display of rapid scalar and arpeggiated passages. These unfold against a backdrop of descending chord silhouettes: F, E, E flat, D, D flat, C, B, B flat, A, As. This final coda is the true culmination of the piece: the apex of virtuosic concert writing, showcasing perfect synchrony between the guitarists. Every note is precisely aligned, executed with filigree precision, as cascades of major and minor triads and ninth chords collide and

intertwine – followed by descending and ascending diminished seventh chords, racing toward the climactic *sff* glissando: a dazzling strike across the open strings. It is this brilliant coda that Sergio Assad remembered fondly in his interview about Piazzolla's music in the duo's repertoire.

**Tango n. 2** opens a new, full-fledged page of lyricism, encompassing the entire composition. Despite the five-part rondo form (ABASA), which usually encourages the pairing of contrasting episodes with refrains, the composer reveals different facets of a single sphere – the quiet beauty of the sensual sound of the strings of the soul, the aestheticization of contemplation and tranquility.

E.g. 4

Andante (♩ = 80) *rubato, melancolico*

The musical score shows the first seven bars of the piece. The top staff contains the main melody, starting with a half rest followed by a quarter note G4, then a series of eighth notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff provides harmonic support with chords and bass lines. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a quarter note equal to 80 beats per minute. The mood is 'rubato, melancolico'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano).

Astor Piazzolla. Tango n. 2, bars 1–7

The main melody of the refrain, in *E minor*, sets the emotional tone for the entire tango. The melancholic character of the music is prescribed by the composer in the score: *Andante rubato, melancolico*. A state of serenity and dreaminess, without exaltation, is created by the smoothness of the melodic line, which rises in each phrase; by short motifs that freeze in leaps on high notes; and by fermatas that seem to hold their breath. Descending, lament-like second intervals give the melody shades of nostalgia. Ornamental embellishments – appoggiaturas, suspensions, triplet notes, glissandos, and *Vorschläge* – are the source of melodic refinement. The nature of the coloratura is partly drawn from academic European Baroque instrumental practice, enriched by jazz improvisational techniques and reinforced by the traditions of Moorish melismatic singing.

The downward movement of the bass in semitones, idiomatic in many author's tango compositions, reveals the expressiveness of the Baroque musical-rhetorical figure *passus duriusculus* – a symbol of sadness, memory, regret, or suffering. In this case, its semantics are far removed from the basso ostinato figures in early *passacaglias*, *sarabandes*, or *ricercars*, but nonetheless impart a melancholic tone to the music.

Following the refrain, an episode (B) appears: in a parallel key, featuring a melodically active second guitar part. The two-bar phrases are constructed on a "call–response" principle and are logically connected through a chain of shifts  $a_{13} + D_{13} \rightarrow G$ -major;  $G$  minor<sub>13</sub> +  $C_{13} \rightarrow F$ -major;  $B$  minor<sub>13</sub> +  $E_{13} \rightarrow A$ -minor;  $A$  minor +  $D_9 \rightarrow G$ -minor and further into  $B$  flat minor,  $A$  minor progressing stepwise through modulating jazz sequences leading to the bridge. This link does not return directly to the refrain, but leads instead to an insertion: a paraphrase based on textural variants of episode (B), which prepares the return of the refrain (A).

The reprise of the refrain in the main key contains no significant changes. The new section of the rondo form (C) – a large and internally heterogeneous episode (b. 45–66) – is conventionally divided into fragments that differ syntactically and in tempo. The first fragment continues and develops the previous thematic ideas (B), placing them in a new tonal space:  $C$ -major,  $E$  flat major,  $G$  major,  $B$  minor,  $A$  minor,  $G$  minor. The second (*Lento*) – a concise, and this time slow, "motion" from the distant key of  $E$  flat major into other, no less distant tonalities:  $F\#$  major,  $E$  major,  $B$  major. The third one creates waves of sequential jazz colors, surrounding the cantilena of melodic phrases with an atmosphere of suspended time, quiet, dreamy, and ghostlike, evoked through the distant echoes of harmonics.

## E.g. 5

Astor Piazzolla. Tango n. 2, bars 58–60

The final refrain gives the music a sense of completion, and at the same time, the final frozen fermata of harmonics, as part of an extended tonic chord  $e_{13}$  opens the path to the final section of the cycle.

**Tango n. 3** may be considered the culmination of the entire cyclical concept. This piece surpasses many other examples of Piazzolla's tangos in terms of performance demands, partly because it was originally conceived for the Brazilian duo of the Assad brothers, possessing a unique virtuoso technique of ensemble playing, well known throughout the guitar world. Within the scale of the cycle, this piece finalizes the composer's instrumental explorations in the guitar sphere and, to a certain extent, sums up the composer's experiments at this stage of his creative work.

In the three-part structure of the piece, the main theme is presented in a fast *Allegro* tempo: with springing leaps articulated through the fifth tone *B* in the key of *E minor* (Example 6). It is written in a complex *double polymeter* typical of tango 3+3+3+3+2+2. The melodic contour features a modal Dorian shade (cis) within diatonic figures of *tirata*.

**E.g. 6**

Allegro (♩ = 132)

**Astor Piazzolla. Tango n. 3, bars 1–4**

An ostinato pedal on the tonic seventh chord – an organ point – is accompanying it in the second guitar part. It is intensified by polychordal layering, formed through semitone displacement of all sounds except the bass pedal, either downward or upward. At first glance, such phenomena might be interpreted as traditional double dominants ( $F\#$ ) and Phrygian ( $F$ ) “Neapolitan” functional chord connections.

However, their systemic role in the organization of the modal-harmonic process is revealed further on: they result from the interweaving of pitch collections and modes of different origins (seven-step diatonic, artificial octatonic, hemiolic).

The outcome is the formation of the polychord  $E_{13}$  – a vertical projection of a flow of horizontal lines “E–G–B–(D)–F#–A#–C#”, serving as a dissonant support.

This occurs repeatedly throughout the piece, primarily in those sections of the form that appeal to aggressive, sharp, motoric gestures, (b. 1–15, 33–40, 71–74, 146–160, 155–160, 177–193), However, the process is finalized by the polychord and closes in the final bars.

## E.g. 7

## Astor Piazzolla. Tango n. 3, bars 215–219

The predominance of dissonant tritones and seconds in the sonority of the polychord is reflected throughout the entire fabric of the composition, giving it a sound reminiscent of the jazz innovations of Chick Corea. In the bridge, the second-based “clashes” between the triads of *B minor* and *C major*, are separated by pauses and sharp palm strikes *sff* across all open strings (*golpe*). In the insistent, bell-like (*like a tocsin*) ostinato beating of chords devoid of any melodic contour (*Pesante*), one can trace the structure of a symmetrical minor-third pitch collection with a 2:1 formula (measured in semitones): the acoustic anchors of the sonorities move within this space – E, F#, A, B flat, G – and through glissando of the dense chordal mass, connect to a new section (B). Here, a completely different element dominates — a lyrical *cantilena* (*Cantabile*, from bar 40) in the high tessitura of a feminine solo. Intonationally, it is close to the beginning of the tango, but by the nature of the arpeggiated accompaniment figures, with inner voices descending chromatically in *B minor* and immediately picked up by a bass motion, it belongs to the realm of deeply expressive lyricism.

E.g. 8

Musical score for Astor Piazzolla's Tango n. 3, bars 37–45. The score is written for two guitars. The upper staff features a melodic line starting at bar 40, marked "cantabile" and "mf". The lower staff provides harmonic accompaniment with various fingerings and techniques like glissando. The key signature changes from B minor to B-flat minor and then to G# minor.

Astor Piazzolla. Tango n. 3, bars 37–45

Enharmonic modulation, along with the upbeat arrastre motion, shifts the tonal platform down by a semitone to B flat minor, simultaneously with a swap of the guitar parts. Immediately afterward, it shifts down another whole tone – to G# minor – and through the bridge, the development arrives at yet another new lyrical theme of the middle section (Example 9). The gentle melody is sustained over a F# minor pedal, consisting of soft, upbeat descending motifs with third-doubling in the upper voices. Its development is enriched with glissando techniques – slides across large upward leaps, chromatic enclosures, appoggiaturas, and other types of ornamentation.

E.g. 9

Musical score for Astor Piazzolla's Tango n. 3, bars 81–84. The score is written for two guitars. The upper staff features a melodic line marked "dolce". The lower staff provides harmonic accompaniment marked "p dolce" and includes fingerings and techniques like glissando. The key signature changes from G# minor to F# minor.

Astor Piazzolla. Tango n. 3, bars 81–84

Finally, toward the end of the lyrical section, the tension intensifies, a broad field of improvisations emerges, based on previously heard themes, now set within a more saturated modulatory flow that drives them far from the main tonality of the piece, which is achieved through the prolonged sustain of cascading arpeggios within the Spanish Andalusian hemiolic mode (f). The force of percussive guitar techniques propels the overall dynamic forward. The release in the recapitulation (b. 146) briefly slows the boiling passion of the tango, as the already familiar melodies create an associative link – a compositional arch. However, the desire to increase the emotional intensity toward the end of the piece and of the cycle as a whole leads the composer into yet another spiral of play with motives, phrase segments, chords, pitch collections, polyphonic lines, and a spectrum of noises, ultimately finalizing them in a complex organic fusion with the virtuosity of guitar performance.

### 3. Conclusions

As Astor Piazzolla's most frequently performed composition for guitar duet, *Tango Suite* demonstrates the rhythmic idioms of tango and the polymetric rhythms of Argentine milonga, percussive imitations of African percussion instruments, and specific guitar performance techniques. The high degree of figurative contrasts is idiomatic for each piece, creating a collage-like, carnival effect and allowing any part of the cycle to be performed autonomously in concert practice.

The music linguistic means are a mixture of elements of Baroque ornamentation and modern vocabulary. In the *Tango Suite*, the individual stylistic modes of tango nuevo transformed the linguistic paradigm of the Argentine genre, renewed its timbral palette, enriched its intonational and rhythmic foundation, and changed its soundscape thanks to the resources of contemporary academic music and jazz.

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## THE IMAGE OF JOAN OF ARC IN THE ORATORIO BY A. HONEGGER «JOAN OF ARC AT THE STAKE»

XU XINGZHOU<sup>1</sup> , BAIXUE MA<sup>2</sup> , JINGTAO ZHAO<sup>3</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** The article examines the oratorio genre in the work of the Forantz composers of the group of six. The focus is on the oratorio "Joan of Arc at the Stake" ("Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher") by Arthur Honegger. The aim of the article is to reveal the image of the main character. The oratorio «Joan of Arc at the Stake» by A. Honegger is one of the most striking examples of 20th-century Western European composers turning to the oratorio genre. What makes it particularly interesting is that the composer, drawing upon national traditions of blending various genres, achieves a new level of genre synthesis and introduces new elements into the oratorio format. The complex fusion of genre components presented here prompts the author to abandon traditional genre classifications and call his work a «mystery». Honegger harmoniously balances the components of the musical whole, dramatizing the content and achieving an organic synthesis of music, text, and stage dramaturgy. The blending of these diverse elements impacts the unfolding of the plot, the dynamics of character development, and the musical portrayal of the image of Joan of Arc.

**Keywords:** the musical culture of France, Arthur Honegger, oratorio, Joan of Arc, mystery.

### Introduction

The musical culture of France in the early decades of the 20th century is characterized by exceptional richness. During this time, new styles and trends in French music emerged, creative associations of young composers

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were formed, and outstanding works – true masterpieces of world musical art – were created, opening new horizons for its further development in the mid and late 20th century.

The 1920s became the time of the affirmation of new directions in French music and the creation of new creative unions. It was during this period that «Les Six» (The French Six) was formed, uniting six young composers: Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, Louis Durey, Georges Auric, and Germaine Tailleferre. Their union was based on shared ideological and aesthetic principles. Above all, they expressed a sense of saturation with Romantic music, which shocked them with its verbosity and excessive emotional frankness. They believed it was time to dispel the spell of Impressionist refinement.

«Les Six» brought together composers of different creative calibers. One of the most remarkable members of the group was Arthur Honegger – an outstanding French composer who played a major role in European music from the 1920s to the 1960s and was highly esteemed both in France and internationally. Honegger created numerous works across a wide range of genres and for various performing ensembles.

The oratorio genre holds an important place in Honegger's work. His early oratorios («King David» and «Judith») as well as the musical tragedy «Antigone», which was also described as an «oratorio», were composed in the early stages of his career, during the 1920s. These works are based on biblical and classical themes. The pinnacle of this genre in Honegger's musical legacy is the dramatic oratorio «Joan of Arc at the Stake», inspired by a well-known episode from French history. The aim of the article is to reveal the image of Joan of Arc – the main character of oratorio.

## Literature Review

A. Honegger's oratorios, as well as his work as a whole, have been studied mainly by French and American researchers by G. Casaglia<sup>4</sup>, H. Halbreich<sup>5</sup>, B. Kelly<sup>6</sup>, J. Roy<sup>7</sup>, etc. The authors focus on global issues of the creativity of the composers of the group of six, the development of the oratorio genre in French music of the first half of the twentieth century, the

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<sup>4</sup> Casaglia, Gherardo. "Performances of Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher". L'Almanacco di Gherardo Casaglia, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Halbreich, Harry. Arthur Honegger. Translated by Roger Nichols. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Kelly, Barbara L. Music and Ultra-modernism in France. A Fragile Consensus, 1913–1939. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Roy, Jean. Le Groupe des Six. Paris: Le Seuil, 1994.

composer's heritage of A. Honegger, etc. There is no analysis of the image of Joan of Arc in the indicated studies. The appeal to the analysis of the image of Joan of Arc in this article is due to the need to highlight the musical embodiment of one of the key episodes in the life path of the legendary heroine of the French people, whose image became a symbol of the unification of the nation and the struggle for freedom.

## Discussion

Honegger's turn to the oratorio was not accidental. Alongside the cantata, this genre had long played an important role in French music of previous centuries – serving as a leading mass genre during the French Revolution of 1789 and attracting the attention of 19th-century French composers such as Hector Berlioz, Charles Gounod, Camille Saint-Saëns, César Franck, and others. Honegger both continued this tradition and sought his own interpretation of the genre. In particular, his oratorios display a strong emphasis on genre blending – a feature characteristic of 20th-century music – resulting in original and innovative treatments of the oratorio form.

The oratorio belongs to the category of monumental, large-scale musical genres. It is a major composition for choir, vocal soloists, and symphony orchestra, written on a dramatic subject and intended for concert performance. It typically includes an extensive number of grand choral movements alternating with solo sections – recitatives, arias and duets.

The oratorio developed from the dramatized *lauda* – a polyphonic sacred hymn created based on a popular melody. In the 16th century, such hymns were performed in Rome in so-called *oratories* – special rooms attached to churches, where believers gathered for Bible readings, religious discussions, and interpretations. The first known oratorio-like work, *The Representation of Soul and Body* by Emilio de' Cavalieri, was staged as a performance (1600, Rome). However, stage acting soon disappeared from oratorios and was replaced by a recitative part performed by a narrator. A prominent master of the oratorio in the 17th century was Giacomo Carissimi, composer of oratorios such as *The Judgment of Solomon*, *Jephthe*, and others, based on Latin biblical texts.

A special type of oratorio is the *Passion* – vocal-dramatic works based on the religious story of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. This genre was embraced by German composers, most notably Heinrich Schütz and Johann Sebastian Bach. In Bach's work in particular, the Passion genre reached its highest level of artistic refinement.

The classical form of the oratorio as a monumental work with a predominant choral component was established in England during the

1730s–1740s by George Frideric Handel. In his oratorios based on biblical themes (*Messiah*, *Samson*, *Judas Maccabaeus*), the main character is the people, which led to a significant enhancement of the role of the chorus in the overall dramaturgy of the compositions.

Genre-descriptive oratorios were composed by Joseph Haydn at the end of the 18th century, including *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.

Among the many oratorios of the 19th century, notable works include those by Felix Mendelssohn, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, and Antonín Dvořák. However, the general trend of the era leaned toward a more intimate and lyrical treatment of the oratorio form.

In the 20th century, Western European composers saw a revival and a new stage in the development of the oratorio genre. At a time when oratorio seemed to have exhausted its possibilities and inner resources – long past its golden age (16th–18th centuries) and marked by uncharacteristic lyricism during the Romantic period – it experienced a resurgence in its classical, monumental forms and was once again infused with heroic content. This revival was largely driven by historical events – powerful popular movements, large-scale and bloody wars – which provided fertile ground for exploring themes of national and universal significance, as well as historical and heroic-patriotic narratives in the oratorio.

In the works of several Western European composers of the 20th century, the oratorio genre occupies a key place and, during certain creative periods, becomes central in importance: at the end of the 1920s for Paul Hindemith, in the 1920s–1930s for Arthur Honegger and Darius Milhaud, and in the late 1940s–1950s for André Jolivet, François Lesure, and Olivier Messiaen.

The composers' interest in the oratorio genre had a direct impact on its development in the 20th century. Researchers note a significant evolution of the oratorio and identify the following contributing factors:

- 1) national traditions of the genre, which helped shape various «national types» of oratorio (French, German, Italian, etc.);
- 2) the influence of various stylistic trends in 20th-century music on the musical language of the oratorio;
- 3) the interaction of the oratorio with other musical genres (opera, symphony) and with related art forms (theater, cinema, literature, visual arts), which is determined in each specific case by both national traditions and stylistic trends.

In the latter case, a significant expansion of the genre's boundaries occurs, leading to the emergence of new genre variants. This process is characteristic not only of the oratorio but also of the entire genre system of contemporary music and is described by scholars as «genre synthesis», «genre diffusion», «genre mixing», and «genre transformation». Within the

oratorio genre, researchers identify several forms of genre interaction, each of which relies on the so-called «historical memory of the genre».

The first of these forms is the convergence of oratorio and opera – a new trend characteristic of 20th-century music. This leads to the creation of a new genre: the opera-oratorio. From oratorio, it inherits themes of national-heroic scope, broad epic forms, moments of elevated generalization, and an impersonal narrative tone. From opera, it borrows stage action, theatricalization, and dynamic, rapid plot development. In works belonging to the opera-oratorio genre, depending on the concept, either oratorical or operatic features may be emphasized.

In some works, the visual, theatrical aspect prevails so strongly over musical development that the opera-oratorio stands on the threshold of becoming a theatrical performance with music. This is especially true for the French opera-oratorio. Analyzing the reasons for the active inclusion of theatrical elements in the French oratorio, one should note that this is linked to long-standing traditions in French music. One such tradition is the blending of genre features of opera, ballet, and oratorio in the French court theater of the time of Lully and Rameau, which continued into the 20th century and influenced the theatricalization of the oratorio. Another national characteristic in the interpretation of this genre goes back to the era of the French Revolution of 1789, when theatrical popular performances in the open air became widespread – grandiose mass spectacles deeply democratic in spirit and purpose. In the 1930s, French composers revived the tradition of such festivities, not by restoring the revolutionary performance in all its details, but by drawing on its core ideas and individual features. Works such as «*Prometheus*» by Georges Fauré, «*Christopher Columbus*» by Darius Milhaud, and «*The Truth about Joan*» by André Jolivet can be included among such compositions.

French oratorios also absorb features of other theatrical forms that were attracting the attention of composers at the time – ancient tragedy, medieval mystery plays, and folk theater. The complex interweaving of these influences gave rise to the uniqueness and distinctiveness of each production.

The second form of genre synthesis is the convergence of oratorio and dramatic theater. In this case, on one hand, there is an influence of the dramatic play on the oratorio: the word comes to the foreground, which increases the role of spoken parts for soloists and leads to the use of a «speaking» chorus in oratorios. On the other hand, the reverse process can also be observed – the influence of the oratorio on dramatic theater. According to researchers, features of oratorical form are inherent in one branch of 20th-century European theater – Bertolt Brecht's «epic theater», whose key characteristics (mass format, social orientation, thematic significance, a slow, narrative tempo of unfolding events, and sometimes even static nature)

are also typical of the oratorio genre. Oratorical qualities appear in attempts to "musicalize" Brecht's plays, for example, in *Lehrstück* ("Didactic Play") by Hanns Eisler and Paul Hindemith.

The result of the processes of active genre interaction and genre convergence that took place in Western European music of the 20th century were the following genre varieties of oratorio:

- 1) oratorio in its «pure» form, which has various national types of the genre;
- 2) oratorio-cantata, which arises as a result of the monumentalization of the traditional cantata;
- 3) opera-oratorio, with a predominance of either narrative (as a feature of oratorio) or theatrical action (as a factor approaching opera);
- 4) the fusion of oratorio with ancient tragedy – the revival of the forms of Greek tragedy in combination with the principle of oratorio; here there can also be different accents (action or philosophical generalization);
- 5) «epic theatre» with music – a philosophical and didactic play with oratorio-like features, in which words dominate, action is almost absent, and the music contributes to philosophical generalization;
- 6) oratorio-mystery – a harmonious combination of oratorio and various elements of folk performance-mystery.

In the 20th century, the oratorio genre took on an original form in the works of many Western European composers, including Arthur Honegger, who in his oratorios strove for convergence and synthesis of various genre elements. For example, in the oratorios «*Joan of Arc at the Stake*», «*King David*», and «*Nicholas of Flüe*», he revived the idea and specific elements of French theatrical performances with music, medieval mystery plays, and folk theater. In «*King David*», «*Judith*», and «*Antigone*», one can observe the blending of oratorio and opera (with the former emphasizing oratorical features and the latter two highlighting operatic ones), while in «*Dance of the Dead*», there is a fusion of oratorio and cantata characteristics.

**The oratorio «*Joan of Arc at the Stake*»** (1938) is one of the most striking examples of 20th-century Western European composers turning to the oratorio genre. What makes it particularly interesting is that the composer, drawing upon national traditions of blending various genres, achieves a new level of genre synthesis and introduces new elements into the oratorio format. The complex fusion of genre components presented here prompts the author to abandon traditional genre classifications and call his work a «*mystery*». Honegger harmoniously balances the components of the musical whole, dramatizing the content and achieving an organic synthesis of music, text, and stage dramaturgy.

The combination of epic imagery and dramatic narrative development, the cinematic «storyboarding» (scene transitions), the use of retrospective

storytelling, the introduction of dramatic roles, the multifaceted treatment of mass scenes, and the interweaving and independent development of several dramatic lines all point to the birth of a new genre form – the *oratorio-mystery* – and confirm the work as a significant artistic and aesthetic phenomenon.

According to Honegger himself and the librettist, renowned French playwright Paul Claudel, «*Joan of Arc*» is a theatrical performance that is not an opera: it is a synthesis of all elements of a play with the inclusion of text.

The interpenetration and synthesis of elements from different genres (oratorio, opera, dramatic theater) not only led to the creation of a new genre form but also defined the dramatic structure of the work. At its core lies the principle of intertwining traits characteristic of different genres.

At the center of the narrative are the images of Joan of Arc and the people. In the oratorio, they are revealed in contrasting ways. The image of the people (mixed chorus), which represents one of the most important lines of the work, is shown in a process of formation and dynamic development. The transformation of the people is depicted primarily through their attitude toward Joan. At the beginning of the oratorio (Scene 3), the masses appear as a faceless, fanatical crowd possessed by religious psychosis; however, by the finale, they are no longer a crowd but a people who have come to understand the heroine's sacrifice. The turning point in the development of the people's image and the beginning of their rapprochement with Joan occurs in the central scenes of the oratorio, where everyday genre elements are introduced for the first time. This genre sphere is tied to depictions of peasant life – rural scenes (Scene 7 «Catherine and Margaret»), and a national celebration marking the arrival of peace (Scene 8 «The King's Procession in Reims»).

In portraying the people, the composer emphasizes features of the oratorio genre – grandeur, epic scale, fresco-like breadth, the technique of «broad brushstrokes», etc. The epic element is deepened by the tragic problem: the living Joan is hated by the crowd, and only her death transforms the mob into a true people. Only in the flames can the heroine fully unite with her nation. The process of the crowd's spiritual growth and its convergence with Joan is revealed musically through symphonic development.

All the major events in the oratorio's narrative unfold around Joan of Arc<sup>8</sup>. The primary focus is on Joan's image at the moment of her execution. In contrast to the dynamically portrayed people, Joan's image is characterized by unity, integrity, and the absence of internal dramatic conflict; the epic aspect is enriched with lyrical and psychological depth. Throughout the oratorio, the heroine is viewed from different angles:

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<sup>8</sup> Joan of Arc (the Maid of Orleans) is a real historical figure, a heroine of the French people, under her leadership the French troops won a battle with the army of the English queen. She was tried by the Inquisition, declared a heretic and burned at the stake.

- 1) her image is exalted, with emphasis on its epic nature;
- 2) her image is shown in close-up, with intensified psychological and lyrical treatment;
- 3) indirect characterization is employed (in scenes seen through Joan's eyes).

The role of Joan of Arc is assigned to a dramatic actress; however, her character is revealed not only through the poetic text she recites but also through extended musical characteristics. The most significant moment of Joan's direct musical expression is the song «*Trimazo*», performed before she is burned at the stake (Scene 10).

The oratorio is based on the principle of narration, unfolding like pages of Joan's «book of life». A cinematic technique of retrospective storytelling is used, with events presented in reverse or «mirror» order. In the prologue and finale (Scene 11), Joan stands on the scaffold surrounded by a massive crowd, awaiting execution. In the middle scenes (Scenes 1–10), Joan mentally travels into her past, with her consciousness «extracting» key moments of her life: first the more recent events (the frenzied crowd's cries demanding the burning of the «witch», the Inquisition trial), then earlier ones (the betrayal by the French king, his triumphant entry into Reims, the people celebrating victory), and finally the most distant memories (her childhood, life in the village). This method of retrospection is widely used not only in cinema but also in contemporary theater drama.

The essence of the unfolding events is revealed through the conversational dialogues between Joan and the priest Dominique. These dialogues emphasize the dual-layered nature of the action on stage, as all the scenes being enacted and commented on by Joan and Dominique actually exist only in the imagination of Jeanne, who is exhausted, chained to a stake, and awaiting execution. Yet it is precisely these imagined scenes that provide a realistic, vivid, and full-blooded picture of the life of the people. Thus, in the interpretation of Jeanne's character and the inclusion of dialogues that comment on the action within the oratorio, elements of theatricalization and features of dramatic performance are evident.

The epic, lyrical, and genre-based domestic lines of the oratorio are complemented by a satirical-accusatory line, which is very important to the ideological direction of the work. In the satirical scenes, the inquisitor priests who sentence Joan to death are portrayed. These priests appear in the guises of foolish animals (donkeys and rams), and the chief judge of the inquisition, Bishop Cauchon, is represented as a pig. Elements of folk farce and carnival, characteristic of medieval mystery plays, are used here.

Such a fusion of various styles, genres, and types of dramaturgies required the composer to adopt an innovative approach to realizing the plot,

searching for new principles of musical development that differ from the traditional ones typical of the oratorio genre. In this work, the unifying factor is the principle of symphonization, which overcomes the inertia of the traditional number-based structure, establishes a connection between formal elements, and introduces dynamic, continuous development. The symphonism of the oratorio is also expressed in the deeply generalized nature of its expression. The character of the thematic material and the principles of its development, as well as the predominance of musical statics and contrast over dramatic conflict, point to the epic nature of the musical dramaturgy, and its kinship with epic symphonism. At the same time, the presence of lyrical thematism and two lyrical spheres – a more generalized, elevated one and a more domestic, folkloric one — justify speaking of the great importance of lyric-epic imagery in the oratorio.

In line with the specifics of musical expression, a technique borrowed from cinematic dramaturgy is used – the method of «scene overlapping». The oratorio features an original dramaturgy of strette and overlapping of major sections, where the beginning of one scene overlaps with the end of the previous one. This accelerates the pace of development, enhances dynamism, and intensifies the dramatic tension of the conflict.

The monumentality, epic scale, and philosophical reflection characteristic of the oratorio genre are most fully revealed in the oratorio's finale, which combines the last two scenes: Scene X («Trimazo») and Scene XI («Joan of Arc in the Flames»). Here, the culmination and resolution of the action occur: Joan of Arc, unrepentant, is burned at the stake, and the people recognize her heroic deed and praise her as their heroine.

The final scene «Joan of Arc in the Flames» is integrated into the overall narrative sequence of the preceding scenes. It includes parts for the Holy Virgin (Mother of God), Saints Catherine and Margaret, Jeanne's continued declamation, the entry of the inquisitor priest, and mention of Brother Dominique. The main protagonist of the final scene becomes the people, so the choir is personified as a real crowd gathered around the stake, which during the development of the finale transforms into «Jeanne's people».

In the epic final scene, the images of Joan and the people merge in an outburst of glorification of heroism, courage, purity of soul, and strength. The composer creates a specific type of melody, devoid of concrete genre features, distinguished by asymmetrical phrasing, tonal instability, and a generalized lyrical character. This melody is connected to speech intonations, its rises and falls governed by the logic of declamation.

The thematic material of the finale also includes song-like features, pure diatonicism, themes with a small pitch range, and a clear, simple rhythmic pattern. These traits belong to the figurative-intonational sphere

associated with the images of Jeanne, the people, and the homeland. Their dominance in the final scene, as well as the convergence of the intonational characteristics of Joan and the people, emphasize the main idea of the work – the inseparable connection between the heroine and her people. Final unity is achieved at the moment when Joan sings a folk song – a spring song familiar from her childhood<sup>9</sup>. This unity is also realized by the previously enraged crowd surrounding the scaffold, which only after Jeanne's song gradually calms, transforms, and becomes the people who understand and accept Jeanne.

Despite the grand scale of the finale and the introduction of parts for several characters, it is characterized by thematic homogeneity, a lack of vivid intonational contrasts, and the absence of clear genre-specific traits. The thematic material of the finale is based on a free connection of varying motifs, with a predominant polyphonic texture. This influences the compositional structure of the finale, which is marked by blurred, indistinct formal sections. This is due to the increased fluidity and continuity of development, along with the weakening of genre-based individualization of the themes.

The dramatic action unfolds in three stages, each corresponding to a section of the musical form. Each section is built upon a specific theme, which undergoes polyphonic development.

In the first section of the final scene (up to rehearsal number 92), we see Joan returning from nonexistence to reality («She awakened as if from a dream», the crowd exclaims), once again becoming aware that she is standing on the scaffold, surrounded by a frenzied crowd fanatically repeating the accusations of the Inquisition: «It is said: Joan is a witch, a heretic, an enemy of the French people; it is decided: she harmed people with the help of unclean forces». At the same time, a division occurs within the crowd, and part of the people begin to shout words glorifying Jeanne: «Jeanne, the saint! Glory to the pure virgin maiden!» Both texts are proclaimed simultaneously, as the composer assigns them to different parts of the mixed choir.

The thematic characteristics of the first section directly reflect the crude and terrifying reality of the crowd's state as a furious and blind mass, and its extremely cruel attitude towards Jeanne. This is expressed in the almost complete absence of lyrical melody, the predominance of recitative-like melodic lines, the use of short, fragmented phrases, and the gradual dynamic build-up of the choir from a quiet murmur to an exalted scream.

The way thematic material is introduced also contributes to creating the desired atmosphere. For example, the main theme is not initially presented in a single part but is distributed between the alto and bass parts in the form

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<sup>9</sup> Joan sings in the oratorio only once, in the tenth scene of «Trimazo».

of a dialogue. As a result, instead of a complete theme, we hear fragmented phrases. Upon its repetition (now fully presented in one part), a rhythmized choral recitative without definite pitch is used as a counter-theme.

Amid the intensifying atmosphere of tense expectation, the more melodic and complete phrases praising Joan sound in contrast. These also accompany the theme and serve as new counter-themes (rehearsal number 88). The material is distributed as follows: the theme is presented in the bass part; the first counter-theme, based on rhythmized choral recitation, is given to the altos; the second counter-theme with the text glorifying Joan is sung in unison by the soprano and tenor parts.

Great importance is given to short imitations, where key words and phrases of the text («it is decided», «it is known», «with the help of unclean forces», etc.) are repeatedly passed from voice to voice. This technique significantly energizes the musical presentation and creates the effect of mass chanting or incantation.

The second, central section of the final scene (up to rehearsal number 101) depicts the transformation and evolution of the people's image, who ultimately change their attitude toward Joan and recognize her as a heroic figure. In this section, the crowd stops shouting accusatory phrases and begins to sympathize with Joan standing in the flames («She is a poor child! Just a girl! She is terribly frightened»). This shift in the crowd's image is reflected in a new musical characterization. The section is built around the development of a new theme – the «purifying fire» theme (which, in the third section, gradually transforms into a hymn of praise for Jeanne).

Besides the crowd, represented by the choir, individual characters also become active in the plot during the second section. They can be divided into two groups:

1) real characters – Joan herself and the inquisitor priest, observed by the crowd (their parts are performed by dramatic actors);

2) imaginary characters – seen and heard only by Jeanne, such as the Holy Virgin (joined in the third section by Saints Catherine and Margaret, and angels).

At the center of the second section's composition is a dialogue between Joan and the inquisitor, who demands her confession and repentance. It is in this scene that Joan achieves spiritual liberation. Gripped by the terror of impending execution and the fear of burning alive, Joan hears the voice of the Holy Virgin from above, whose words calm and support her. Thus, the dialogue with the inquisitor is spoken by a spiritually strengthened Joan who no longer fears torture and refuses to sign the false confession<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Although the priest promised to remove Jeanne's chains if the guilty verdict was signed,

The characters' dialogues unfold against a backdrop of the developing «fire theme» in the choral parts. This symbolizes the gradually intensifying flames meant to consume Jeanne. The theme is characterized by an initial ascending perfect fifth leap (replaced by a perfect fourth in tonal responses). The theme is introduced through stretto entries, which result in constant entrances and exits of vocal lines, creating an extremely dynamic and ever-changing musical texture. In the course of its development, various intonational variants appear in different iterations of the theme, particularly at the end, altering the general outline of the theme.

Above the polyphonic texture of the second section «floats» the voice of the Holy Virgin throughout. Her part serves as a kind of cantus firmus, unifying the section and giving it intonational cohesion.

The third and final section of the oratorio «Joan of Arc at the Stake» (from rehearsal number 101) serves as an epilogue. Here, equilibrium is achieved in the relationship between «Joan and the people», the semantic culmination is reached, and the development is brought to a conclusion. According to the plot, Joan breaks free from her chains and burns in the flames of the stake, while the people praise Joan as their heroine.

This section features polyphonic development of themes from earlier scenes in the oratorio, affirming the intonational sphere associated with Jeanne. It also provides a logical conclusion to the development of the thematic material of the final scene. The concluding section opens with a culminating statement of the «fire theme», which dominated the preceding second section. However, it now transforms into a hymn of praise for Jeanne: «Praise to our sister Jeanne, who blazed like fire for all eternity over dear France!» (rehearsal number 101). The hymn-like nature is emphasized by the unison presentation of the theme in the choral parts, accompanied by a solemn rhythmic stride in the orchestral voices.

A new concluding theme – enlightened and quiet – appears at the very end of the oratorio (rehearsal number 105, Lento). It is based on generalized intonations of a declamatory nature, with a wave-like melodic contour. This theme is performed by the «assembly of saints» (the Holy Virgin, Saints Catherine and Margaret, and the angelic voices), then taken up by the choir. The conclusion of the monumental dramatic oratorio-mystery with a lyrical theme allows us to speak of lyrical-epic features in the dramaturgy of the finale.

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hinting at her possible release, admitting guilt would not have saved her life anyway – such were the laws of the Inquisition.

## Conclusions

Thus, «Joan of Arc at the Stake» serves as a vivid example of the fusion and synthesis of elements from various genres (oratorio, opera, dramatic theater), which not only influenced the creation of a new genre – dramatic oratorio-mystery – but also determined the dramaturgical structure of the work. This structure is based on the interweaving of features characteristic of different genres. Oratorio traits include the monumental composition, large «fresco-like» style, and choral masses in the prologue and finale. The multifaceted nature of the action, the presence of multiple plot lines, and the introduction of contrasting characterizations are typical features of operatic dramaturgy. The fusion of oratorio and operatic elements is complemented by cinematic methods – sharp «scene changes», shifts in time and place, breaks in chronological sequence, and intertwining of plot lines. Strongly pronounced, too, are the traits of a dramatic play – most notably the assignment of the part of Joan of Arc to a dramatic actress. The blending of these diverse elements impacts the unfolding of the plot, the dynamics of character development, and the musical portrayal of the main figures.

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## VALENTYN SILVESTROV'S STRING QUARTETS WITHIN THE DYNAMICS OF GENRE TRADITION: FROM MODERNISM TO METAMUSIC

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**SUMMARY.** The article is devoted to studying the manifestation of the genre tradition of the string quartet in the music of Valentyn Silvestrov, tracing its diachronic dynamics from modernism to “metamusic”. Genre tradition is defined as a system that combines invariants (monotimbral ensemble, the one-player–one-part principle, quartettistic symphonism, dialogic chamber rhetoric) with variable peripheries (textural and timbral techniques, intertextual codes, articulation–metric profiles), through which the “memory of the genre” is preserved and renewed. The article examines *Quartetto piccolo* (1961), String Quartet No. 1 (1974), No. 2 (1988), and No. 3 (2011). On the basis of comparative analysis, it is demonstrating that: in the early period serial/sonoristic procedures are counterbalanced by lyric cantabile; the post-avant-garde phase articulates a dialogue between the romantic code and contemporary sound masses/cluster textures; the postludial poetics of silence and resonance acquires a form-bearing function; intercultural topoi (notably Irish modal–pastoral formulae in No. 3) are integrated within the quartet matrix without eroding identity. It is argued that Silvestrov’s quartets operate as meta-texts of the European chamber tradition. The study proposes a typology of indicators (form, texture, intonation, dynamic relief, timbral technique, articulation/metric patterns, reception), offering a replicable protocol for further analyses and refining the understanding of how the quartet functions today as an actual model of musical memory.

**Keywords:** string quartet; genre tradition; style; metamusic; postludial poetics; intertextuality; Ukrainian music; Valentyn Silvestrov; modernism–postmodernism; quartettistic symphonism; modern music.

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## Introduction

In the theory and history of music, the string quartet is reasonably considered a kind of “experimental laboratory” in which the leading dramaturgical and aesthetic tendencies of 20th-century European art are reflected with exceptional concentration. It is precisely in this chamber, seemingly “condensed” genre that composers have always felt greater freedom to test the boundaries of tonal organization, rhythmic structure, textural dramaturgy, and form-making – later translating these ideas into the more complex and large-scale symphonic space. In this context, Ukrainian music – which began its active development at the end of the 19th century – has been in constant interaction with European modernist, postmodernist, and now metamodernist movements. This makes it a subject of particular scholarly interest, as it not only assimilated universal models but also endowed them with its own intonational and, most importantly, cultural code. The figure of Valentyn Sylvestrov emerges here as a key one: his quartets are not merely lyrical or experimental statements, but rather specific “meta-texts” of the European chamber tradition, where the legacy of Classicism and Romanticism is intertwined with modernist shifts and the postmodern poetics of memory. The study of these works provides an opportunity to understand both the broader European discourse of the string quartet genre and the unique place of Ukrainian music within it.

Valentyn Sylvestrov’s artistic work occupies a prominent position not only in Ukrainian music of the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries but is also recognized as part of the global musical heritage. His compositions are actively performed both in Ukraine and abroad, attracting considerable interest from both listeners and researchers. A significant number of publications are devoted to studying his artistic legacy. However, his string quartets remain relatively insufficiently studied in both domestic and international musicology.

**The aim** of this study is to identify and theoretically substantiate the category of genre tradition of the string quartet as a key construct of the genre, ensuring the preservation and transmission of encoded information (intonational, textural, structural) in Valentyn Sylvestrov’s works on the basis of European modernist, postmodern, and metamodern contexts.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives are to be accomplished:

- to compare the understanding of the concept of the string quartet in Western European and Ukrainian musicological traditions and to outline the difference between “genre”, “ensemble type”, and “quartet style”;
- to define the concept of the “genre tradition of the string quartet” as a coherent analytical category;
- to specify the European traditions of the string quartet and their innovative models in correlation with the Ukrainian chamber music context;

- to outline the historical trajectory of the Ukrainian string quartet;
- to identify indicators of genre tradition in Sylvestrov's quartets;
- to carry out analytical case studies of four works: *Quartetto piccolo* (1961), String Quartet No. 1 (1974), String Quartet No. 2 (1988), String Quartet No. 3 (2011) in order to uncover the methods of genre adaptation and mechanisms for transmitting the "memory of the genre".

### Review of literature on the topic

The study of the string quartet as a genre tradition and as a specific quartet style has been established in contemporary musicology, while still requiring certain clarifications. The genre-stylistic features, historical profile, and performative characteristics of the chamber string quartet are presented in the monographic volume *The Cambridge Companion to the String Quartet* (2003), edited by Robin Stowell, within which the articles by Christina Bashford<sup>4</sup>, David Jones<sup>5</sup>, Stephen Hefling<sup>6</sup>, and Robin Stowell<sup>7</sup> are of particular interest. In the Ukrainian discourse, the quartet domain is likewise broadly represented, as evidenced by the works of Daria Chystiakova (2019)<sup>8</sup>, Nataliia Feshchak (2021)<sup>9</sup>, Iryna Polska (2015)<sup>10</sup>, and Anna Antropova (2015)<sup>11</sup>. The corpus of scholarship on Valentyn Silvestrov's chamber-instrumental output is fairly

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<sup>4</sup> Bashford, Christina. "The string quartet and society". In *The Cambridge Companion to The String Quartet*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 3-18.

<sup>5</sup> Jones, David. "The origins of the quartet". In *The Cambridge Companion to the String Quartet*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 175-184.

<sup>6</sup> Hefling, Stephen. "The Austro-Germanic quartet tradition in the nineteenth century". In *The Cambridge Companion to The String Quartet*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 228-249.

<sup>7</sup> Stowell, Robin. "Traditional and progressive nineteenth-century trends: France, Italy, Great Britain and America". In *The Cambridge Companion to The String Quartet*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 250-265.

<sup>8</sup> Chystiakova, Daria. "Strunno-smychkovy kvartetnyi styl (muzykolohichniy dyskurs)" [The Bowed String Quartet Style (A Musicological Discourse)]. In *Tradytsii i novatsii u vyshchii arkhitekturno-khudozhnii osviti*, Vol. 3, 2019, pp. 117-123.

<sup>9</sup> Feshchak, Nataliia. "Vykonavski zasady funktsionuvannia ukrainskoho kvartetu: istorychnyi aspekt" [Performing Principles of the Functioning of the Ukrainian Quartet: A Historical Aspect.]. In *Chasopys Natsionalnoi muzychnoi akademii im. P. I. Tchaikovskoho*. No.2 (51). 221, pp. 26-41.

<sup>10</sup> Polska, Iryna I. "Kamerno-ansambleve mystetstvo Ukrainy: suchasni shliakhy muzykoznavchyykh rozvidok" [Chamber Ensemble Art of Ukraine: Contemporary Directions of Musicological Studies]. In *Naukovi zbirky Lvivskoi natsionalnoi muzychnoi akademii im. M. V. Lysenka*, Lviv, Vol. 34 2015, pp. 29-47.

<sup>11</sup> Antropova, Anna. "Zhanr strunnoho kvarteta i odeskaya strunnaya shkola" [The Genre of the String Quartet and the Odesa String School]. In *Muzychne mystetstvo i kultura*, Vol. 21, 2015, pp. 415-427.

extensive (see studies by Oleksandr Opanasiuk & Valeriia Kurbatova (2024)<sup>12</sup>, Yuliia Chemerys (2017)<sup>13</sup>), yet the composer's quartets remain insufficiently examined from the vantage point of genre tradition - accordingly, the present study addresses this gap by combining a historical-stylistic perspective with performance-oriented analysis.

### **Materials and methods**

The article applies the following research approaches:

- systemic and complex approaches - to describe the structure of genre tradition and its functions within the cultural continuum;
- historical-genetic and contextual approaches - to trace the evolution of the quartet from Classicism to contemporary practices, and to localize the Ukrainian trajectory within the European discourse;
- comparative approach - to juxtapose Western European and Ukrainian concepts of the genre and principles of innovation;
- score-analytical and stylistic methods - to verify indicators of genre tradition in Sylvestrov's quartets;
- intertextual-hermeneutic approach - to interpret "postludial poetics", citation/allusiveness, and the role of silence and resonance in the works under study.

### **Source base of the study**

The research draws on the scores and available audio/video recordings of Sylvestrov's *Quartetto piccolo* (1961) and String Quartets No. 1 (1974), No. 2 (1988), and No. 3 (2011).

### **Results and Discussions**

The string quartet is one of the most representative genres of chamber music, where the principle of equality among voices carries special artistic significance. It can be understood in two ways: as a specific ensemble of

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<sup>12</sup> Opanasiuk, Oleksandr & Kurbatova, Valeriia. "«Quartetto piccolo» u konteksti stylovykh pryntsyviv muzyky Valentyna Sylvestrova" [Quartetto piccolo in the Context of the Stylistic Principles of Valentyn Sylvestrov's Music]. In *Aktualni pytannia humanitarnykh nauk*, Vol. 82, Tom 20, 2024, pp. 114-121).

<sup>13</sup> Chemerys, Yuliia. "Vykonavska stratehiia strunnoho kvartetu No. 1 Valentyna Sylvestrova u versii kvartetu imeni M. V. Lysenka" [The Performance Strategy of Valentyn Sylvestrov's String Quartet No. 1 in the Version of the M. V. Lysenko Quartet]. In *Ukrainske muzykoznavstvo*, Vol. 43, 2017, pp. 121-129.

performers and as a genre with a distinct structural-aesthetic model. On one hand, it is a timbrally homogeneous group of string instruments (two violins, viola, and cello), following the axiom *one performer – one part*, which ensures a unique balance between individual and collective expression. On the other hand, the quartet represents a genre tradition that incorporates traits of symphonic thinking on a chamber scale.

The intimate nature of the ensemble suited performance in small spaces, creating a heightened emotional communication between performer and listener. Originally, the string quartet inherited the four-movement cycle of the symphony. This structural similarity highlighted both its affinity with and distinction from the symphony: the chamber setting adds clarity, intellectual focus, and the potential for experimentation.

According to Christina Bashford<sup>14</sup>, the history of the string quartet began in the mid-18th century with compositions for two violins, viola, and cello, initially called “serenade”, “divertimento”, or “quartetto”. These works were created “for oneself” and for the beauty of sound and intended for intimate, private music-making. Thanks to its timbral unity, the quartet quickly surpassed the trio sonata and became the main form of domestic music, eventually moving onto public stages. The genre crystallized in the works of the Viennese classics – Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven – who established the canonical quartet style.

In the 19th century, the string quartet evolved structurally and stylistically, gaining traits of Romantic expression and individual voice. The Austro-German tradition, represented by Schubert, Louis Spohr, Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, and Brahms, as Stephen Hefling<sup>15</sup> underlines, led this development, combining classical heritage with innovative approaches to thematic development, dramaturgy, and texture. In France, Italy, and Great Britain, the quartet evolved more slowly, tending toward quatuor brillant or concertante models, while the genre’s full symphonic potential remained largely in the German-speaking world<sup>16</sup>. American composers, studying in Germany and following European examples, only in the late 19th century began developing their own quartet repertoire, influenced by Dvořák and the Brahmsian tradition. Thus, the 19th century made the string quartet a laboratory

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<sup>14</sup> Bashford, Christina. “The string quartet and society”. In *The Cambridge Companion to The String Quartet*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 3-18.

<sup>15</sup> Hefling, Stephen. “The Austro-Germanic quartet tradition in the nineteenth century”. In *The Cambridge Companion to The String Quartet*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 228-249.

<sup>16</sup> Stowell, Robin. “Traditional and progressive nineteenth-century trends: France, Italy, Great Britain and America”. In *The Cambridge Companion to The String Quartet*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 250-265.

of Romantic thinking, with the Austro-German tradition as the leading center of stylistic evolution, shaping the genre beyond Central Europe.

Today, the study of chamber music, including quartets as a distinct genre, remains a key area of musicological research. Chamber music captures the subtlest processes of stylistic evolution and formal experimentation, as evidenced by a substantial body of scholarly work.

In contemporary musicology, Daria Chistyakova's approach, presented in *Stringed-Bowed Quartet Style (Musicological Discourse)*<sup>17</sup> is especially notable. She considers the quartet through the concept of style, defining quartet style as part of the system of sub-generic styles. It has a distinct genre character, follows sonata-cyclic principles, and embodies one of the core principles of chamber music – equality of parts. Chistyakova emphasizes the historical roots of the quartet in amateur music-making, noting its evolution reflects broader European stylistic transformations from the Baroque to the present. She also highlights a symbolic aspect: the number “four” corresponds to sacred ideas (the four cardinal points, temperaments, geometric archetypes, timbral variations), almost sacralizing the quartet's foundation. The concept introduced by Chistyakova “quartet symphonism” shows the specific nature of chamber thinking: symphonic qualities are preserved but adapted to a chamber context, emphasizing lyrical playfulness, dialogue, and a refined balance between parts.

According to the author, each part in a string quartet is a self-sufficient voice, yet it always remains part of the whole ensemble. This duality requires balance – both in the composer's design and in performance. From its beginnings as entertainment in the 18th century, the quartet has grown into an academic genre. It reflects social and cultural changes as well as the artistic ideals of different eras, while still keeping popularity among performers and listeners.

Chistiakova suggests defining the string quartet style as “a type of instrumental-genre style characterized by monotimbrality, genre stability, universalism, and a certain communicative orientation”<sup>18</sup>. Its essence lies in stable genre content, established cyclical models (sometimes condensed into short quartet-poems), and a specific performative balance that comes from the equal distribution of material among voices.

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<sup>17</sup> Chystiakova, Daria. “Strunno-smychkovyi kvartetnyi styl (muzykolohichniy diskurs)” [The Bowed String Quartet Style (A Musicological Discourse)]. In *Tradytsii i novatsii u vyshchii arkhitekturno-khudozhnii osviti*, Vol. 3, 2019, pp. 117-123.

<sup>18</sup> Chystiakova, Daria. “Strunno-smychkovyi kvartetnyi styl (muzykolohichniy diskurs)” [The Bowed String Quartet Style (A Musicological Discourse)]. In *Tradytsii i novatsii u vyshchii arkhitekturno-khudozhnii osviti*, Vol. 3, 2019, p. 121.

In today's musicological discourse, the quartet is seen as a complex phenomenon. It unites performance practice, genre form, and stylistic identity. Ukrainian scholars have shown that the quartet is not just four instruments or a fixed cycle. Rather, it is a special *form of chamber thinking*. It combines musical practice with a type of intellectual reflection on sound and structure.

It's important to mention that the quartet is also a "text of culture". It brings together intonational archetypes of different times and carries sociocultural meanings. Its path from salon music-making to high academism shows its ability to absorb new stylistic tendencies while keeping structural stability. In this way, the quartet mirrors the European musical process - from Baroque to Postmodernism - each era finding its own chamber voice.

At the same time, if we consider the string quartet as a genre tradition, certain interesting observations and additions arise, especially when it comes to analyzing contemporary compositional practice. To clarify briefly, a genre tradition is not an archive of ready-made norms, but a dynamic coherent system of invariants and expectations, within which works preserve the identity of the genre while constantly renewing themselves. The genre exists as a network of connections between structure (form, texture, dramaturgy), performative practice (standard bowing practice, ensemble balance, acoustic environment), and reception (listener's horizon of expectations, canon of interpretations). Invariant components are at its core (semantic markers, form models, types of thematic development, roles of voices, etc.) crystallized historically and preserved in every work; variable layers are surrounding the core (new techniques, stylistic features, intertextual codes), which activate mechanisms of renewal.

In the string quartet, genre tradition manifests with the greatest optical clarity, since the monotimbrality of the ensemble (two violins, viola, cello) and the principle *one performer - one part* make any innovation instantly noticeable in relation to genre invariants. Here tradition functions both as the memory of form (historically codified schemes from Haydn to Beethoven) and as a living matrix that absorbs new sonic, often experimental modes, preventing the genre from losing its identity.

Thus, ontological multidimensionality makes the quartet an exceptionally productive object for studying contemporary compositional strategies and the "life" of genre tradition.

The second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first are marked by the greatest freedom of self-expression, not only in music but in the arts more generally. Works appear that employ sound effects achieved not only by means of instrumental techniques but also through the use of sound technology and everyday objects. In Western European practice of this period, the string quartet is increasingly conceived as a laboratory of

acoustic experience - a space where sound (with its microtimbral shifts, textural granularity, and noise articulations) becomes the primary construct, while form emerges as “secondary crystallization” (through processes of layering, rarefaction, and condensation). In this field of exploring sound and texture, European avant-garde composers proposed several models of radical rethinking of instrumentation. In György Ligeti - from the early, still Bartókian in temperament, String Quartet No. 1 *Métamorphoses nocturnes* (1953–1954) to the Second Quartet (1968), where micropolyphony forms dense moving sound fields in which local events merge into a continuous sonotype of thick sound. In Iannis Xenakis, stochastic logic (*ST/4*, 1956–1962) and sonoristic technique (*Tetras*, 1983) transform the ensemble into an acoustic “continuum”, where the dotted metric pulse dissolves into the statistics of events. Helmut Lachenmann introduces “instrumental musique concrète”: in *Gran Torso* (1972), *Reigen seliger Geister* (1989), and *Grido* (2001), the instrument’s body, frictional noises, muted attacks, and audible «defects» of sound become carriers of meaning; an aesthetics of air arises, where silence is not a pause but an active resonator of meanings.

The American scene demonstrates two poles: intellectual complexity and minimalist contemplative quality. In Elliott Carter, the String Quartet No. 2 (1959) personifies each instrument as an autonomous character, while the String Quartet No. 3 (1971) divides the ensemble into two duos with different temporal “wave-lengths”, a model of polymetric multilingualism. George Crumb, in *Black Angels* (1970), electrifies timbre by combining arco and pizzicato, percussive effects, and vocalizations within a tragic allegory of war; the quartet becomes a ritualized theatre of sound. The minimalist trajectory is exemplified by Steve Reich (*Different Trains*, 1988; *Triple Quartet*, 1998), in which speech samples, train sounds, and recurring motifs combine to form a documentary-musical palimpsest. Similarly, Philip Glass (*Company*, 1983; *Mishima*, 1985; No. 5, 1991) employs repetitive transparency and modal stability, exerting an “acculturating influence” on European chamber music - not undermining its tradition, but redirecting it toward an awareness of temporal perception.

In the 21st century we observe not a rejection of radicalism, but its intellectual reinterpretation. Jörg Widmann (the cycle of five quartets, 1997–2005) constructs a polylogue with tradition - from chorale polyphony (*Choralquartett*, 2003) to the “experience of the fugue” with soprano voice (*Versuch über die Fuge*, 2005) - demonstrating how genre tradition becomes material for contemporary rhetoric. Georg Friedrich Haas shifts the focus to the perceptual situation: *In iij. Noct.* (2001) is performed in complete darkness, radicalizing auditory attention and exposing the micro-intervallic shadows

between voices. Caroline Shaw (*Entr'acte*, 2011; *The Evergreen*, 2020) combines post-minimalist clarity with historical allusions, so that the genre tradition of the quartet emerges gently in new acoustic projections.

The history of the Ukrainian string quartet unfolds as a continuous line beginning in the second half of the 19th century. The first example of the Ukrainian quartet genre was Mykola Lysenko's String Quartet in D minor (1868), written during his studies in Leipzig (within the German genre tradition!). Despite the cycle's incompleteness (the absence of a finale), the work attested to an organic synthesis of European form with Ukrainian song intonations. In the 1920s – 1930s, Lev Revutsky and Borys Lyatoshynsky made significant contributions, combining the European classical model with Ukrainian melodic idioms; at the same time, Viktor Kosenko created chamber works that constituted the core of the repertoire. The postwar period (1940s–1950s) was marked by the activities of Dmytro Klebanov and Heorhiy Taranov, who expanded the stylistic horizons of the quartet within the Kharkiv and Kyiv schools. The second half of the twentieth century represents the flourishing of the genre in the interpretations of Yevhen Stankovych, Myroslav Skoryk, and especially Valentyn Sylvestrov (1960s – 1990s), whose works transform the quartet into a space of experiment and philosophical reflection.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Ukrainian string quartet established itself as a phenomenon of pan-European significance, absorbing local folkloric intonations while simultaneously integrating into global tendencies of chamber music-making. The history of the Ukrainian string quartet is examined in greater detail in the article by Anna Antropova<sup>19</sup>, where the scholar attempts to systematize the corpus of works within this genre written by Ukrainian composers. Summarizing her research, one may conclude that almost every professional composer has had experience with the quartet genre, most likely under the influence of traditions within academic musical education. At the same time, there are also composers who devoted more sustained attention to the quartet. Among them are Bory Lyatoshynsky (4 quartets), Volodymyr Kostenko (8), Petro Haidamaka (9), Dmytro Klebanov (6), Andrii Filipenko (5), Ihor Shamo (5), Yurii Ishchenko (15), Valentyn Huba (6), Volodymyr Bibik (5), Bohdana Froliak (4), and Valentyn Sylvestrov (4). Most of these works were composed in the second half of the twentieth century, a fact directly connected to particular historical events and the general situation in the country. The experimental zone that emerged in Ukrainian quartet music in

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<sup>19</sup> Antropova, Anna. "Zhanr strunnoho kvarteta i odeskaya strunnaya shkola" [The Genre of the String Quartet and the Odesa String School]. In *Muzychnе mystetstvo i kultura*, Vol. 21, 2015, pp. 415-427.

the 1960s encompassed theatricalization and happening (performance art). Yet despite these experiments with instrumental resources, the Ukrainian string quartet preserved its traditional instrumentation. Innovations were primarily directed toward formal solutions (single-movement structures with non-conflict dramaturgy), texture (a predominance of linear polyphony), stylistic aspects, and sound production techniques (*sul tasto*, *sul ponticello*, *col legno*, *al tallone*, various types of harmonics).

In the 21st century, the number of composers turning to the genre has diminished considerably. Among the significant contributions are: Two String Quartets (2000) by Yurii Laniuk; Quartets No. 4 and 5 (2002) by Volodymyr Bibik; Quartet No. 3 (2003) by Hanna Havrylets; String Quartet (2009) by Alla Zagaykevych; Quartet No. 4 *Lux aeterna* (2011) by Bohdana Froliak; Quartet No. 3 (2011) by Valentyn Sylvestrov; Quartet No. 15 (2011) by Yurii Ishchenko; String Quartet in C Major (2011) by Oleksii Retynsky; *Walking on the Waters* (2013) by Viktoriya Poleva; Quartets No. 2 (2008/2021), No. 4 *Poltava* (2018), and *Maria's City Mariupol* (2022) by Zoltan Almashi; and *Drop after Drop* (2022) by Maksym Shalyhin.

Valentyn Sylvestrov (b. 1937, Kyiv) is one of the most renowned Ukrainian composers, a representative of the Kyiv school (Borys Liatoshynsky's student), who was shaped by the Kyiv avant-garde of the 1960s and evolved from serial and sonoristic techniques toward a postmodern poetics he himself defines as "metamusic". His style conceives music as a "text of memory": fragile cantilena lines; modal-triadic fields with suspended tonality; extremely soft dynamics with long fading resonances; silence and resonance as form-building principles; and allusions and quotations reinterpreted within a "postlude aesthetics". Sylvestrov's vast oeuvre lies at the intersection of Ukrainian tradition and the broader European lineage, embodying Ukraine's contribution to the contemporary European musical discourse, in which form is perceived as echo and time is experienced as memory.

Sylvestrov's chamber music is characterized by the use of atypical ensemble structures and forms, polyphonic techniques, and sharp tonal juxtapositions between instruments. In his early period, inspired by new stylistic currents in Western music and mastering contemporary compositional devices, he opened a new page in the history of Ukrainian music. He introduced dodecaphony and sonoristics into his works. In the 1970s, the composer gradually abandoned the traditional devices of the avant-garde in favor of postmodernism. Equally characteristic – perhaps central – to his style is quotation, or, as has been observed, "...the various types of work with borrowed material in V. Sylvestrov's music range from quotation, stylization, and

anagramming to stylistic allusion and self-quotation”<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, the composer often drew more on his own earlier material than on that of others. His First String Quartet exemplifies this tendency: the desire to juxtapose “the past” and “the future” in striking contrast. Sylvestrov himself calls his style “metamusic” or “metaphorical music”. The works of this period are marked by a contemplative and meditative atmosphere. The engagement with styles of past epochs – characteristic of postmodernism more broadly – occupies an especially important place in his creative output.

The chronology of Valentyn Sylvestrov's string quartets is as follows: *Quartetto piccolo* (1961), String Quartet No. 1(1974), No. 2 (1988), and No. 3 (2011). This sequence makes it possible to trace the development of the genre within the context of Sylvestrov's creative evolution. These works reflect the shift of artistic orientations and the profound semantic transformations of his compositional thought and style.

*Quartetto piccolo* deserves particular attention, as it already reveals the foundations of the composer's individual style. It was in the early 1960s that Sylvestrov began his intensive creative activity, and in the works of this period one can discern features that later became fundamental stylistic landmarks of his music. Scholars define *Quartetto piccolo* as his first dodecaphonic work, comprising three miniature movements united into a single form (*attacca*), each of thirty seconds to one minute in duration (*Allegro, Andante, Allegretto*)<sup>21</sup>. The quartet demonstrates Sylvestrov's recourse to the stylistic premises of the musical avant-garde. At the same time, it already contains elements that would later become characteristic of his entire output: a cantabile musical texture, subdued emotionality, and a restrained, intimate quality of expression. This meditative, contemplative orientation was to become central in the composer's subsequent works. Such artistic intentions may be seen as the result of a conscious turn toward the “peripheral” zones of musical language, including unconventional manifestations of avant-garde expressivity. Even in the 1970s, when Sylvestrov moved away from radical avant-gardism and shaped his own original style – one he himself referred to as “weak” or “irrelevant” – the fundamental avant-garde principles remained embedded in the deep structure of his music.

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<sup>20</sup> Hribnienko, Yurii. *Teoretychni ta katehorialni zasady muzychnoi tekstolohii yak aktualnoi muzykoznavchoi dystsypliny* (Theoretical and Categorical Foundations of Musical Textology as a Relevant Musicological Discipline). Odesa. 2023, p. 190.

<sup>21</sup> Opanasiuk, Oleksandr & Kurbatova, Valeriia. “«Quartetto piccolo» u konteksti stylovykh pryntsyviv muzyky Valentyna Sylvestrova” [Quartetto piccolo in the Context of the Stylistic Principles of Valentyn Sylvestrov's Music]. In *Aktualni pytannia humanitarnykh nauk*, Vol. 82, Tom 20, 2024, p. 116.

This style resonates with the notion of a “metastyle”, a term used at the end of the twentieth century to characterize the general situation in European compositional practice<sup>22</sup>.

In *Quartetto piccolo* one may observe the influence of Anton Webern’s music, although Sylvestrov did not confine himself to direct imitation. Through his specific melodic thinking, the use of vocalized intonations, and a carefully balanced application of minimalist techniques, his music acquires a deeper dimension, moving into the sphere of phenomenological contemplation of existence and musical imagery. Numerous studies emphasize lyricism as one of Sylvestrov’s defining stylistic traits. Importantly, lyricism emerges not only in works marked by gentle emotionality or contemplative content, but also in compositions where dramatic tension plays a central role. This is due to the profound conceptualization of melody, which becomes the leading principle of musical expression, shaping both form and the overall idea of the work. Thus, the artistic intentions and emphases laid down in *Quartetto piccolo* became the foundation of the stylistic model for Sylvestrov’s subsequent music.

String Quartet No. 1 (1974) belongs to the so-called post-avant-garde period of Sylvestrov’s work. “The features of monologic expression, ultimate lyricism of utterance, and reliance on vocal intonations as the embodiment of the human element can be observed in this Quartet (despite the absence of vocal parts)”<sup>23</sup>. At that time, Sylvestrov not only abandoned avant-garde techniques but also sought to create a new quality of sound, built on the contrast between the poetics of the past and the aggressive expressivity of the present, typical of avant-garde stylistics. The composition unfolds as a dialogue between romantic and modern musical traditions. This concept is manifested in signs of the romantic style: clear Schubertian harmonies, the square symmetry of certain themes, tonal definition, and intonational allusions. These, however, are opposed by the structural elements of contemporary sound: sonoristic textures, cluster sequences, improvisatory facture, and atonality<sup>24</sup>.

In Quartet No. 1 the inner drama and compositional tension become evident, realized through figurative and structural contrasts. For instance,

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<sup>22</sup> Idem, p. 118.

<sup>23</sup> Chemerys, Yuliia. “Vykonavska stratehiia strunnoho kvartetu No. 1 Valentyna Sylvestrova u versii kvartetu imeni M. V. Lysenka” (The Performance Strategy of Valentyn Sylvestrov’s String Quartet No. 1 in the Version of the M. V. Lysenko Quartet). In *Ukrainske muzykoznavstvo*, Vol. 43, 2017, p. 123.

<sup>24</sup> Hribnienko, Yurii. *Teoretychni ta katehorialni zasady muzychnoi tekstolohii yak aktualnoi muzykoznavchoi dystsyplyny* (Theoretical and Categorical Foundations of Musical Textology as a Relevant Musicological Discipline). Odesa. 2023, p. 198.

the introductory section, written in the manner of a calm, almost classical chorale-like episode, is sharply contrasted by clusters built on seconds, which intermittently break through the musical texture of the piece. The structure of the quartet grows out of the principle of contrastive development, taking on the shape that can be described as a variant of sonata form with features of rondo, manifested through the recurrence of the opening theme in its original form.

The contrast between past and present defined in String Quartet no. 1 later grew into one of the key ideas and worldviews of the composer's mature oeuvre – the concept of postludiality, vividly embodied in String Quartet No. 2 (1988). Postludiality is expressed through multiple phases of decline and fading, appearing at different levels of musical structure: cluster stratifications after which the music «dissolves into a whisper», delicate upper-register lines, and soft low pedals of cello and viola. One of the unique features is the use of a sonic pedal that creates an atmosphere of allusions and hints. Another important postmodern paradigm of the composer is also evident in this quartet – indeterminacy. It manifests itself in the absence of a clear compositional scheme, a certain spontaneity of thought, rhythmic organization, intonational material, and the overall level of sound, which often borders on silence. The work is single movement, with a conditional division into sections. These consist of alternating static «islands» and outbursts: the almost motionless exposition of soft consonances and dotted upper-register motifs; the subsequent thickening of the texture into quiet clusters (trills/tremolo); the climax with dense cluster tones at extreme forte, followed by a collapse into silence; the return of fragments of the opening material in allusive sonority; and the postludial coda – fading into an almost inaudible whisper.

Silvestrov's String Quartet No. 3 (2011) can be considered one of the most striking examples of 21st-century academic music. This work holds an important place in the composer's chamber-instrumental oeuvre and in contemporary Ukrainian music in general. In the score the composer indicates the use of "Irish intonations". According to his own testimony, the decisive impulse for completing the quartet came from his journey to Ireland and interaction with the Louth Contemporary Music Society, which activated drone-modal formulas, an extended cantilena, and pastoral topoi, integrated into the postludial poetics of the piece. The premiere took place at London's Barbican Centre, performed by the renowned Kronos Quartet, for whom the work was written.

The quartet is written in a contrasting composite form and consists of seven parts (Prelude – Pastorale – Intermezzo – Intermezzo – Serenade – Intermezzo – Postlude), which exhibit cyclic-type contrast with alternating

tonal and atonal sections. A notable feature of this quartet is its dynamics, which are built primarily around *p* (or *pp*), at times suddenly contrasting and reaching *ff*.

The Prelude (*Andante*) emerges as the initial gesture of narrative – a continuous “breath” of the cycle, where short ascending intonational seeds (second, third) grow into a pulsating texture with controlled spontaneity of meter and articulation; the dynamics expand from muffled whispers to sudden “bursts” (*pp* ↔ *ff*), while the deep resonance of the cello pedal forms an acoustic foundation and a special aura of the texture, upon which the upper voices “reveal” themselves as reflections of memory.

Pastorale does not aspire to classical idyll: it is a slowed-down modal cantilena with Irish expansiveness and drone supports, unfolding almost seamlessly; ostinato “swayings” in the middle voices interact with sustained viola/cello pedals, while the leading violin traces a theme as a chiaroscuro line of serenity, where tonal definiteness and balanced microdynamics (*p–pp–ppp*) are perceptible.

The first Intermezzo opens with an agitated, almost anxious impulse; its framed form (*Animato–Andantino–Animato*) is subordinated to the dramaturgy of contrast, with the middle section (*Andantino*) serving as a lyrical center with clear harmonic support and allusions to Schubert-Brahmsian melody, balancing the outer segments, where dissonant complexes with large intervallic leaps “call across” between the parts, creating the effect of polyphonic relief.

The second Intermezzo reduces expression to short, almost aphoristic phrases – intonational fragments passed from voice to voice; structural pauses acquire the status of semantic events (not “absence”, but a condensation of meaning), producing a ghostly, “non-figurative” concentration.

Serenade – the cycle’s center of gravity – appears as a nocturnal chiaroscuro song: a simple, almost archaic cantilena (cantabile of the first violin) with trichordal formulas pulsing amid soft secondal suspensions; the illusion of waltz-like motion arises and instantly dissolves into silence. This is not a “genre-in-itself” but its postludial reflection – music as echo, as allusion to recognizable cultural codes gathered into a timbral-intonational knot before dispersing in the final sections.

The third Intermezzo returns to the motivic formulas of the earlier intermezzi (secondal intonations, drone supports) but densifies the texture: ostinato “slabs” in the lower voices appear, alongside triplet exchanges and dissonant clusters; harmonics and pizzicato function as “distant clocks of time” – dotted markers of memory in the acoustic field.

The Postlude concludes the cycle not as a rhetorical summation, but as a letting-go of sound: thematic shadows reappear in a modified form, as

if through a resonant filter; the texture becomes more polyphonic, with sound pedals and triplet cells migrating among the parts to form mobile architectonics. Long bass notes bring pacification, while isolated pizzicato strokes act as fading echoes; the final bars (*ppp*) model silence not as emptiness, but as an active resonator of meaning – an emblem of Silvestrov's metamusic.

## Conclusions

The string quartet as a “laboratory of form” confirms its heuristic nature, especially in the 20th – 21st centuries, within the context of music from different regions of the world. In Ukrainian musical creativity, the role of Valentyn Silvestrov is highly significant, as his quartets function as “metatexts” of European chamber music, where romantic memory and modernist ruptures merge into postludial poetics (silence and resonance as formative features, allusions/quotations as modes of memory, etc.). Indicators of tradition in his opuses are fixed at the levels of form, texture, and intonational formulas. Quartet No. 3 emerges as particularly illustrative, which demonstrates how extrageneric codes (Irish modality) are integrated into the quartet matrix through drone supports, pastoral rhetoric, and postludial frames, becoming an example of intercultural adaptation without diluting identity. This confirms the understanding of the quartet genre not as a “set of norms”, but as a dynamic network of relations between structure, performance, and reception. Thus, the genre tradition of the string quartet in the Ukrainian European context emerges as a self-renewing system in which the invariant of chamber thinking is preserved, while Silvestrov's oeuvre becomes one of its semantic centers, within which the quartet turns into a relevant model of musical memory.

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## “TO VICTORY” FOR VOCAL SEXTET AND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BY OLENA ILNYTSKA: MYTHOPOETICS OF THE WORK

OLENA YAKYMCHUK<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** The works of the Ukrainian composer Olena Ilnytska (born in 1977) are well known not only in Ukraine, but also abroad. Her works are performed by both domestic and foreign musicians. The piece “To Victory” for vocal sextet and symphony orchestra is an example of contemporary Ukrainian symphonism, combining Western European and national traditions with techniques of contemporary musical language. In it, as in other genres, the author's mythopoetic thinking is evident. She reflects on a complex, historically established genre that has a philosophical basis in the history of world musical culture. “To Victory” is indicative both for understanding of mythopoetics of symphony music and the author's symphonic thinking, which revealed itself in the skill of large-scale thinking, combining different musical-semantic intonation models, uniting them in an integrate structure. Mythologization takes place on genre, thematic, and timbre levels.

**Keywords:** Olena Ilnytska's work, theme of war, symphonic work, symphony, symphonic music

### Introduction

Symphony, as a higher instrumental genre, expresses eternal and complicated themes, which accompany humanity in every epoch. In the classicism era, symphony had formed as a sound model of the world, in which the authors implemented the category of world ratio. According to O. Huzhva's definition, the very diversity of the symphonic cycle parts' genre semantics,

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its unity, correspond to the worldview, which has formed on the base of dialectics as a science about development that spreads to all spheres of being<sup>2</sup>. The characteristic trait of the genre is philosophical generalization. By M. Kopytsia's definition, symphony collision lays in controversial interaction of the image-thought and its objection. As the researcher argues, such a dilemma is a philosophical and problematic rod of the symphonic piece's dramaturgy<sup>3</sup>.

As a sound model of the worldview, symphonic music is a spokesman of contemporary picture of being. Ukrainian composers' symphonic works appear in optics of life and death, spirituality and emptiness, historical events, etc. They gain new forms and sounds in the context of the time. Every Ukrainian composer has written music about the Russian-Ukrainian war. Such are O. Bezborodko's "Unbroken Symphony" (2024), D. Malyi's Symphony (2024), V. Polova's "Bucha. Lacrimosa" (2023), O. Skrypnyk's "Halyna" for violin and symphony orchestra (2023), Ye. Stankovych's "Ukraine. Music of War" for symphony orchestra and choir (2023), I. Shcherbakov's "Anxieties of our Nights" for piano and orchestra (2023), etc. O. Ilnytska's "To Victory" for vocal sextet and symphony orchestra complements the list.

O. Ilnytska's symphony works demonstrate genre diversity of contemporary Ukrainian symphonism, where national composer school's achievements, Western European traditions, and the means of contemporary musical language are organically combined. All of her works testify to the composer's perfect mastering of orchestral writing. Not only imagery but also scale and philosophical thinking have reflected in each of them. The author's passion for cosmology, her philosophical, theological and metaphysical studies at Thomas Aquinas Institute in Kyiv influenced her musical reception. In her thesis work "Symphonic picture" (2001) the composer created a cosmological conception by means of timbrally dense and mobile musical texture. In the Concerto for Cello and orchestra (2010) the Cello appears as a timbre bearer of a deep philosophical narrative. The piece "To Victory" for vocal sextet and symphony orchestra (2023) not only became a sound semiosphere of Russian-Ukrainian war, but a prospect of the Ukrainians' spiritual path.

O. Ilnytska's works draws contemporary musicologists' attention. After all, her music entered the European art space and it needs emotional and analytical understanding. Articles and interview with the composer, which are represented in the sites of musical online-editions<sup>4</sup>, testify the interest in her

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<sup>2</sup> Huzhva, Oleksandr. "Ukrainian symphony in time – space of culture". In *Bulletin of the Kharkiv State Academy of design and arts*, 4, 2007, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Kopytsia, Marianna. *Symphonies by B. Liatoszynskyi. Epoch, Collisions, Drama*. Muzychna Ukraina, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Safian, Dzvenyslava. "Olena Ilnytska: I don't like to repeat myself". In *The Claquers*, March 15, 2023 <https://theclaquers.com/posts/11066> (26.07.2025)

works. In her paper, Iryna Tukova<sup>5</sup> remembers "To Victory" as the composer's reflection over Russian-Ukrainian war events. The author of the article had studied the composer's piano nocturnes in mythopoetic dimension<sup>6</sup>, choirs for children in the context of combination of traditions and innovations<sup>7</sup>. Ukrainian musicologists actively investigate works, connected to the war theme. The considerable number of their publications are presented in international editions<sup>8</sup>.

In this article, the symphony piece "To Victory", which has become the composer's reflection over the Russian-Ukrainian war events, is considered; the peculiarities of the composer's mythopoetic thinking are analyzed; the features of her style are cleared.

*The objective of the paper* is to define the characteristics of O. Ilnytska's mythopoetics in the symphony work "To Victory", since the composer speaks her own word expressively in the borders of the paradigm of symphony music.

### **Model of national worldview through the prism of the symphonic piece of Olena Ilnytska**

The works of the contemporary Ukrainian composer Olena Ilnytska (1977) is known far beyond Ukraine. Except the domestic festivals "Kyiv Music Fest", "The Premiers of the Season", "The International Forum of Music of the Young", her works are presented at the concerts of electronic music studio at the Paris Conservatory (Paris, France, June 25, 2022), Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival: Tribute to Borys Liatoshynsky in Merkin Hall, Kaufman Music Center (New-York, USA, March 18, 2023), author's concert at the International Artists Villa Concordia (Bamberg, Germany, November 2, 2023), the 19th festival

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<sup>5</sup> Tukova, Iryna. "Vox Humana of War: Ukrainian Art Music as a Mode of Resistance (2022–24)". In *Musicology Today*, vol. 21, 2024, pp. 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.2478/muso-2024-0002>

<sup>6</sup> Yakymchuk, Olena. "Mythopoetics of Piano Nocturnes by Olena Ilnytska". In *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, vol. 25 (1), 2025, pp. 1–12  
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<sup>7</sup> Yakymchuk, Olena. "Olena Ilnytska's choir work for children: in the intersection of domestic traditions. In *Věda a perspektivy*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2023, pp. 273–283.  
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<sup>8</sup> Tukova, Iryna. "Art Music and War: Ukrainian Case 2022". In *Musicologica Brunensia*, vol. 58(2) 2023, pp. 193–204 <https://doi.org/10.5817/MB2023-2-12>

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“Tage der Neuen Musik” (Bamberg, Germany, November 12, 2023), Ukrainian literature evening at the International Artists Villa Concordia (Bamberg, Germany, November 27, 2024).

The piece “To Victory” for vocal sextet and symphony orchestra (2023) was written to order of the Polish art fund “Pro Musica Viva” in collaboration with “Most the Most” fund and the bank of regional economy. It was performed on the 10th of September, 2023 at the closing of the international festival “Days of Ukrainian Music in Warsaw” by the “proMODERN” vocal sextet (Warsaw) and Wrocław Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Polish-Ukrainian conductor Roman Rewakowicz<sup>9</sup>. The festival is one of the largest promotions in Polish art space with regard to concentration of Ukrainian music in it. Therefore, inviting a composer to take part in the festival is a responsible and honored mission.

In the process of O. Ilnytska’s works research, it becomes noticeable how the symbols of a concrete text in her music grow to a mythopoetic structure, present in the other opuses of the composer. Continuity of the symbols and archetypical interconnection create a higher level of narration, characteristic of her music. E. Cassirer explained this process by definition of a myth not only as a made-up story, but also by the form of thinking, where the symbol is not a sign but a reality in human mind<sup>10</sup>.

Reconstruction of mythopoetic worldview is a feature of O. Ilnytska’s artistic and aesthetic attitude. On studying a religious man’s worldview through symbols, rituals, and myths, M. Eliade concluded that symbols become myths as universal archetypes, gaining sacral measurement<sup>11</sup>. O. Ilnytska, being a deeply believing person, strives for integrity and harmoniousness of the world order and therefore proclaims such a world ratio in her own works.

The piece’s title “To Victory” has double semantics. Firstly, it means not a given, but a way to what all Ukrainians crave for. That is why such a victory needs tireless labor from each. Secondly, the word “Victory” begins with a capital character; it means not a general noun, but a concrete and stable victory in this war. In such a title the author lays the program on an optimistic final of the piece, which she brings to life in the last part.

Mythologization takes place on genre, thematic, timbre and dramaturgic levels.

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<sup>9</sup> The performing of the piece “To Victory” is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A964Ke7KO9A&list=PLsJZF0cNtXZoCKj5IRQbnCMx\\_cvWCOWNe&index=17](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A964Ke7KO9A&list=PLsJZF0cNtXZoCKj5IRQbnCMx_cvWCOWNe&index=17)

<sup>10</sup> Cassirer, Ernst. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 2: Mythical Thought*, Yale University Press, 1955. p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (W.R. Trask, Trans.). New York: Harvest/HBJ Publishers, 1957. p. 61.

O. Ilnytska poetizes *the genre of symphony music*. It is notable that the composer doesn't call her works symphonies, but a symphony picture, a symphony piece. Fifty-minute-piece "To Victory" could well have been called a symphony; however, the word is absent in the title. It gives the author enough space for mythopoetizing of a complicated, historically established genre and the possibility for saying her own word in it. At the same time, the scale of a big symphony orchestra creates grounds for deep reflecting the genre of symphony music; it has philosophical rationale in the history of the world music. A one-part form gives a possibility of creating an arbitrary structure in confines of the paradigm of symphony music. In this genre, as in other ones, O. Ilnytska bravely overcomes stereotypes of thinking and broadens the notion of what a symphony work should be like. "To Victory" is indicative both for understanding of mythopoetics of symphony music and the author's symphonic thinking, which revealed itself in the skill of large-scale thinking, combining different musical-semantic intonation models, uniting them in an integrate structure.

*Mythologization on the thematic level* occurs through contrasting of binary oppositions of Ukrainian and Russian worlds. Thus, the Russian world is represented by the sound-recording of air attacks and the motif of the Russian folk song "Kalinka", which has a harsh character, sung at a fast pace by woodwinds and strings. The tune is not so much noticeable for ear, but is visible in the score, where O. Ilnytska laid it out by means of micro-polyphony. This motif emerges in sound imaging episodes of air attacks and evokes a feeling of horror. The theme sounds several times, every times destroying previous musical-intonation model of peaceful Ukrainian space (a mother's talk with a daughter, the lullaby "Oy, hodyt son" ("The sleep is walking"), children's vesnianka game "Vydy, vydy, sonechko" ("Come out, come out, sunshine"), the sunrise after night air attacks). Rapid motifs of "Kalinka" form a short dialogue with a cello melody, which impersonates injured Ukrainian soul (figure 9); they destroy a habitual order, creating chaos (figures 12, 49) (e. g. 1).

E.g. 1

12

Fl.  
ff

Ob.  
ff

Cl.(B)  
ff

Fag.  
ff

Olena Ilnytska "To Victory", measures 116–118.

O. Ilnytska chose Ukrainian folk songs (“Oy, hodyt son” (“The sleep is walking”), “Vyidy, vyidy, sonechko” (“Come out, come out, sunshine”), and a Transcarpathian song “Plyve kacha” (“A duck is swimming”)<sup>12</sup> for the main themes of Ukrainian world. All of them not only are interpreted by the composer in intonation, but also in philosophical-existential sense. The vocal version of the lullaby “Oy, hodyt son”, the instrumental version of children’s vesnianka “Vyidy, vyidy, sonechko” are organically integrated into the general dramaturgy; they sound in the first part of the symphonic piece. The songs mentioned are attributed for children, who are the most vulnerable to the disasters of war<sup>13</sup>. O. Ilnytska opposes musical-intonation sound imaging spheres of war and of children world, sharpening the conflict between them.

“Plyve kacha” was sung during the first and second world wars. It became, in a way, a historical code of Ukrainian nation. Since the Euromaidan (2014) it grew to a hymn-requiem to the dead warriors. It is iconic for O. Ilnytska in her music<sup>14</sup>. The author used its motif in her piano piece “Reflections 2”, which as well is a reaction to the events of the Russian-Ukrainian war. These events are also reflected in the works by Andrii Liubka and Iryna Tsilyk. It must be noted that the composer is demanding to the song-poetic basis. For her works she chooses primary sources with deep textual and musical semantics. So, the song “Plyve kacha” is a core of the symphony piece “To Victory”.

As a genuine master of orchestration, O. Ilnytska defines *semantic field for instruments and human voices*. Thus, fast drum fraction creates anxious background, in front of which the theatre of war develops itself. Monotone continuity of typical formulas evokes tension and fear. Percussion

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<sup>12</sup> The song’s authors and origins are unknown. The researcher Vasyl Sokol argued that the song has a literary basis, since the first couplet was published in Transcarpathian writer and translator Vasyl Grange-Donsky’s collection “Kvity z ternom” (“Flowers with blackthorn”, Uzhhorod, 1923). The folklorist Ivan Hlanta witnesses that the song was for the first time noted by the composer and ethnographer Dezyderii Zador in 1940s in Volovtsi, Transcarpathia. “Plyve kacha” sounded during the first and second world wars; fighters of Carpathian Sich sang it in 1930s. Since 1960s it was performed by Ukrainian singers – Vira Bahanych, Oksana Bilozir, Viktor Morozov, Taras Chubai, and also by groups “Plach Yeremii”, “Skriabin”. Its most popular performance was that by “Pikkardiiska tertsiia”. The Lviv group sang it on Euromaidan, at the funeral of Belorussian activist Mykhail Zhyznevskiy, in January, 2014. Since that time, a tradition was established to sing it during farewell to perished heroes of the Revolution of dignity, Russian-Ukrainian war.

<sup>13</sup> A problem of deportation of Ukrainian children, whom Russia took on its territory without permission, arose acutely during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Besides it, the sphere of children’s world marks brightly horrific pictures of bombing of the maternity hospital, theatre, in front of which “Children” is written in Mariupol, in March, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> The 2004 and 2014 revolutions O. Ilnytska met on the Euromaidan, among a million throng of people, who fought for European democratic values. That is why “Plyve kacha”, which sounded on the Euromaidan 2014 became a part of her life, an intonation code of the Ukrainian people’s tragedy.

“TO VICTORY” FOR VOCAL SEXTET AND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BY OLENA ILNYTSKA:  
MYTHOPOETICS OF THE WORK

(bells, chimes, vibraphone) envelops with tender, fairy sounding, connected to reflection of children’s world. Besides, they signify transcendent station (a transition between worlds), an enlightenment effect. The dulcimer adds a national touch to symphonic sound, making association with Ukrainian world. Tam-tam and bass-drum create deep overtone aura, which combines with other timbres. Two short cello narrations symbolize wounded Ukrainian soul. In the third part brass winds calls to cohesion, to the Cossack spirit’s and inner forces’ mobilization.

Special role in the symphonic score belongs to the singers’ voices. Genre palette of their sounding is diverse enough; therefore, different episodes have different semantic filling. The dialogue between a mother and a daughter (*Mommy, sing me a lullaby*), where soprano and mezzo-soprano 1 sing the mother’s and the daughter’s parts, and mezzo-soprano 2 – the lullaby itself (vocalize), is tremblingly tender. In the song “Oy, hodyt son” mezzo-soprano 1 sings the lullaby, other voices recreate whistling and hissing sounds (s-s-s, ts-ts-ts, sh-sh-sh, ch-ch-ch), as if they are asking for quietness for the child (e. g. 2). The singers depict very naturally various stations of the injured people’s despair and sorrow: sobbing (combination of vocalize and *brumendo* on long sounds; figures 26–28), sighing (*glissando* between two tones; figures 31–32), whining (singing within minor third; figure 43).

**E.g. 2**

The musical score for measures 342-349 of "To Victory" by Olena Ilnytska is presented in a multi-staff format. The vocal parts include Soprano (S.), Mezzo-soprano 1 (Mz. sopr. 1), Mezzo-soprano 2 (Mz. sopr. 2), Tenor (T.), Bass (Br.), and Bass (B.). The instrumental parts include strings and woodwinds. The vocal parts feature various sounds like 'Ts', 'Ch', 'Sh', and 'S' with dynamic markings like 'mp'. The lyrics 'Oy - ta - ye - sia son di mo - ty' are written under the Mezzo-soprano 1 staff.

**Olena Ilnytska “To Victory”, measures 342–349**

*On the dramaturgic level* mythologization is manifested in the structure of the work, which has three parts (real life, funeral service for the perished, transition beyond the borders of the worlds). It corresponds to the three levels of the world system (earthly, underground, heavenly ones). In the first part the episodes of peaceful life (the talk between the mother and

the daughter, the lullaby, the sunrise, following the night air attack, the children's game) interchange with air attacks. Their sequence is signed by the change of tempo, characteristic of mythopoetic flow of chronos: slow singing of the lullaby changes with rapid running of war events.

The categories of musical time and space are characterized by heterogeneity. In the chronotope, time is compressed at the moment of sounding of the lexemes, portraying war attacks (fast passages, the motif of Russian folk song "Kalinka", sharp dotted rhythm); widens during the dialogue of the mother and the daughter, the lullaby's sounding, the scenes of peaceful life, lamentations). Music, which consists of different rhythmical formulas, creates the effect of changing of various phases of time dimension: rapid motion and its delay in the vector plane; day and night – in the cyclic one. Such a changing looks at the macro-level in the sequence: fluidity (the first part) – deceleration (the second part, "Plyve kacha") – fluidity (the third part).

The second part. "Plyve kacha" absorbed sufferings of all 20th century revolutionary and war events it had voiced. In the symphonic piece nine-minute a *cappella* performance by a vocal sextet turns into a *requiem* for all who have perished in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Strong genre basis of the funeral lamentations recreates crying of hundreds of thousands people. There are no most archaic parts here, such as crying, callings for the dead. This type of lamentation is kin to lyrical songs, which have mutual poetic images and symbolic<sup>15</sup>.

O. Ilnytska has kept the structure of the poetic text. In return, her musical interpretation is far more spread out, than the original. It manifests, firstly, in long singing of syllables: the composer strengthened longing of the song, making it more and more closer to lamentation. The characteristics of this genre are: long and complicated singing of syllables, presence of melismatics, grace notes, trills), rhythmic variety (syncopation, triples, tied notes, combination of different note durations), improvisation. The musical texture is saturated with polyphonic imitations, which strengthen the effect of *lamento*. The type of Melos is declamation (not melodious) (M. Haidai's classification<sup>16</sup>). In spite of stable measure  $\frac{4}{4}$ , rhythmical organizing gives impression of a free form of reciting, improvisation, characteristic of this genre.

Baritone voice sings the main tune and personifies the son-warrior who has to go to the army and leave his home. The development of musical texture and dramaturgy occurs gradually. The solo in the first couplet is replaced by four-voice imitation texture in the second one. The shift of tonality (the only one in all the song) takes place twice in the third couplet (*khto zh*

<sup>15</sup> Hrushevskiy, Mykhailo. History of Ukrainian literature. Lubid, 1990, p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> Haidai, Mykhailo. Folk lamentations. In *Ethnographic Bulletin*, vol. 7, 1928, p. 68.

“TO VICTORY” FOR VOCAL SEXTET AND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BY OLENA ILNYTSKA:  
 MYTHOPOETICS OF THE WORK

*my bude braty yamu?*). Choral texture emphasizes harmonic comparison (*e – g – h – fis*), with which O. Ilnytska marked semantic culmination of the song, thus drawing the hearer’s attention to it. Chord replicas of men interchange weeping women’s intonations. Here they are the most perceptible (which the semantic field of the poetic text points to); after all, the phrases have downward direction, chromaticisms, descending *glissando*. The soprano’s expressive replicas are associated to the mother’s weeping (e. g. 3).

**E.g. 3**

The image displays a musical score for a vocal sextet, measures 558-572. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Soprano (S.), Mezzo Soprano 1 (Mz. sopr. 1), Mezzo Soprano 2 (Mz. sopr. 2), Tenor (T.), Bass 1 (Bc.), and Bass 2 (B.). The lyrics are: "Khtozh my bu-de bra-ty ya-mu, [u] khtozh my bu-de...". The second system continues the score with the same vocal parts and lyrics: "bra-ty ya-mu khtozh my bu-de bra-ty ya-mu...". The score features various musical notations, including rests, notes, and slurs, indicating a complex texture with imitations and chromaticisms.

**Olena Ilnytska “To Victory”, measures 558–572**

The fourth couplet is saturated by imitations: in men’s parts of the basic melody, in women’s ones – lamentation. In the fifth couplet the composer combined variation and imitation principles (*yak by meni, synku, ne zhal?*), having given this phrase to the feminine voices. The last phrase

of the fifth couplet (*ty zh na moim sertsyu lezhav*) in homophonic texture appears as a summary. Clear choral verticals equalize the previous branched horizontal. This choral motif-mytheme will sound as an echo in the instrumental epilogue. In the last sentence the violins and violas enter, taking the relay from the vocal sextet.

In the instrumental postscript O. Ilnytska combined the intonations of the tune “Plyve kacha” with the lamentation, having created eight-voice imitation texture from violins’ and violas’ parts in the shape of continuous canon. The string-timbre postlude gives time for reflection over the things heard. Further timbre polylogue, which consists of cellos’, dulcimer’s, bells’, woodwinds’, and timpani’s replicas, terminates the second part with the intonations of the hymn-requiem of Euromaidan.

The third part is a sound-recording of accumulating of strength and power, gradual transformation and spiritual purifying. There are several waves of development here which smoothly transition into each other. Drums (bass-drum, drums, tam-tam) depict the birth of inner strength, thus creating resistant basis for spiritual transformations. Signals-callings of the brass winds are gaining momentum, becoming more powerful, seething in the background of continuous formulas of the timpani and drums. You can feel accumulation of Cossack spirit and inner strength in them. Trombones and trumpets add more strength and power. On the wave of that solemnity the tune of Ukrainian hymn, like a semantic signal of victory, appears in violas’, cellos’, and second violins’ parts.

On the next wave the thesaurus of musical language undergoes changes. The general direction is marked by the motion from the earthly to the heavenly: the violins conquer the third octave tessitura and gain the limit of their range; harps’ and cymbals’ phrases are built in upward motion, vibraphone’s and bells’ timbres are indicators of the transition from the physical to the metaphysical. In the sacral sound space, there emerge the intonations of the choral motif “Plyve kacha”, played by trombones and woodwinds; it closes the gestalt of its melody, creating the feeling of completeness of the life cycle, transforming the death into a new life.

The intonations of Ukrainian anthem, performed by women’s vocal parts and cymbals, appear in the code again. The composer has used vocalize as a pure timbre in order to continue the idea of transformation-purifying. Feminine voices become instruments, which are identify with metaphysical sounding. The strings’ flageolets, the harp’s and the bells’ light tremolo create a general aura of light, celestial, divine sounding. In spite of collisions, which dominated during the symphonic piece, its conclusion is bright and optimistic enough. It is similar to the idea of nurturing the spirit, spiritual purifying, realized in O. Ilnytska’s vocal cycle “Sam na sam” (“Alone”) on V. Stus’ lyrics.

The protagonist finishes his earthly life and, having purified himself, passes into another world. Works' optimistic conclusion not only is a characteristic feature of her style, but her world relation, that is, her sacral relation (after V. Lychkovah<sup>17</sup>) to the humans and their life.

## Conclusion

The piece "To Victory" is an indicator of symphonic thinking of O. Ilnytska and her mythopoetic interpreting of the symphonic genre. It has a clear and understandable program, bright imagery and scale. The author has used folk musical-intonation thesaurus (Ukrainian folk songs "Oy, hodyt son", "Vyidy, vyidy, sonechko") for reconstruction of children's world, which undergoes devastating destruction during the war. Genre models of lamentations, lyrical songs, which are actualized in the central part of the work – "Plyve kacha" – became spokesmen of hundreds of thousands of people's sufferings. Mythologization of the dichotomy "Me – the world" is marked with philosophical content, which needs deep reflection of the hearer.

As other works of O. Ilnytska, "To Victory" has optimistic finale; after all, the author models the world, in which she wants to live. She is convinced – it will be such as she creates it. In the path to Victory we can feel baroque sublimity, which manifests in musical-stylistic traits (polyphony of the texture, micropolyphony), and also in the human's existential choice – in the heading to the Light with the faith in the Victory.

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<sup>17</sup> Lychkovakh, Volodymyr. *The philosophy of ethnoculture: theoretical, methodological and aesthetic aspects of Ukrainian cultural history*. Parapan, 2011.

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**STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS „BABEŞ-BOLYAI” series MUSICA, ISSN: 1844-4369**  
**Editorial Office:** Str. Horea nr. 7, 400174 Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
**Editor-in-chief:** Univ. prof. dr. habil. Gabriela COCA, Phone: +40.742.932.923  
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University of Babeş - Bolyai  
Faculty of Reformed Theology and Music  
Music Department  
STUDIA UBB MUSICA, ISSN: 1844-4369  
The address of the redaction: Str. Horea nr. 7  
400174 Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
Editor-in-chief:  
Univ. Prof. Dr. Gabriela COCA, tel. 0742-932.923,  
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Registration number: 133  
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