



Journal for the **Interdisciplinary Art** and Education

Vol.4 No.1 Spring 2023

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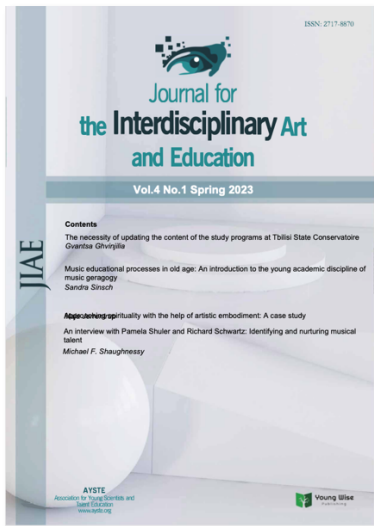
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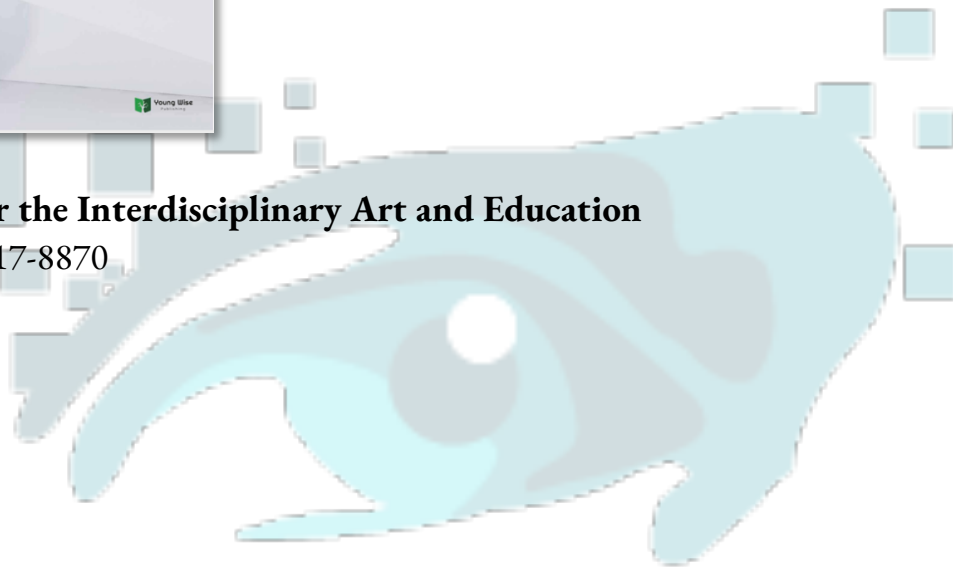


Young Wise
Publishing



Journal for the Interdisciplinary Art and Education

e-ISSN: 2717-8870



Interdisciplinary ART & EDUCATION

Vol. 4 No. 1 Spring 2021

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Genç Bilge Yayıncılık - Young Wise Publishing House

Editorial Management Office: 63 – 66 Hatton Garden, Fifth Floor, Suite 23, EC1N 8LE, London, UK
Web site: <https://youngwisepub.com/> E-mail: info@youngwisepub.com
ISSN-Ownership Office: Bahçelievler District 3015 St. No:9/1, Isparta, Turkiye
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Journal for the Interdisciplinary Art and Education (JIAE) supported by Association for Young Scientists and Talent Education (AYSTE) and International Symposium on Interdisciplinary and Progressive Arts & Education (ISIPAE)



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Interdisciplinary ART & EDUCATION



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Publishing

Research Article

The necessity of updating the content of the study programs at Tbilisi State Conservatoire¹

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Article Info

Received: 17 December 2022

Accepted: 5 February 2023

Available online: 30 March 2023

Keywords:

E-learning

Emergency Remote Teaching

Micro opera

Multi-media hybrid musical genres

Nano opera

Abstract

This article refers to the issue of updating the content of the theoretical musical subjects of the Tbilisi State Conservatory (TSC), which is very important considering the accumulated knowledge in science in general, including musicology. When the subject of discussion is musical education and innovative methods of teaching, it is no less important to review and update the content of the study programs. The Course Programs themselves should also correspond to the new epochal challenges. It will be most effective to change the content of the theoretical subjects of the TSC by including multimedia genres in the syllabus of the Music History Course Program. Why did the issue of the need to update the training program arise? The COVID-19 pandemic turned out to be the biggest challenge for Art Higher education institutions, including TSC because it was impossible to hold ensemble, orchestra, and choir rehearsals online. Despite these difficulties, it was revealed that after the pandemic, the need for rapid integration into digital reality was highlighted and students were interested in completely renewing educational courses, and their content. In this context, the renewal of the music history course with Multimedia musical genres is of outstanding importance. These genres reflect the new perception of the world, which is relevant to the student's requirements. Multi-media hybrid musical genres are inherently interactive, informative, and relevant to the challenges of the modern era. It would be appropriate to start with Georgian examples. For example, this kind of Georgian multimedia music is Eka Chabashvili's multimedia hybrid compositions. Thus, when we talk about the advancements of virtual reality and the future implementation of online learning in the educational process of TSC, updating the syllabuses of theoretical subjects, first of all with multimedia musical genres with their cross-disciplinary content, will provoke an unconscious influence on students for their better adaptation to virtual reality in the future.

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To cite this article

Ghvinjilia, G. (2022). A study on developing the evaluation scale of the polyphonic choir curriculum. *Journal for the Interdisciplinary Art and Education*, 4(1), 1-9.

Introduction

My scientific paper refers to the issue of updating the content of the study programs of the Tbilisi State Conservatory (TSC), which is very important considering the accumulated knowledge in science in general, including musicology.

When nowadays the subject of discussion is musical education and innovative methods of teaching, so it is no less important to review and update the content of the study programs. The *Course Programs* themselves should also correspond to the new epochal challenges. We think that in the future, it will be most effective to change the content of the theoretical subjects of the TSC by including multimedia genres for example in the syllabus of the *Music History Course Program*.

¹ This article was presented at the 2nd International Rast Music Congress on January 14-15, 2023, Antalya, Turkiye.

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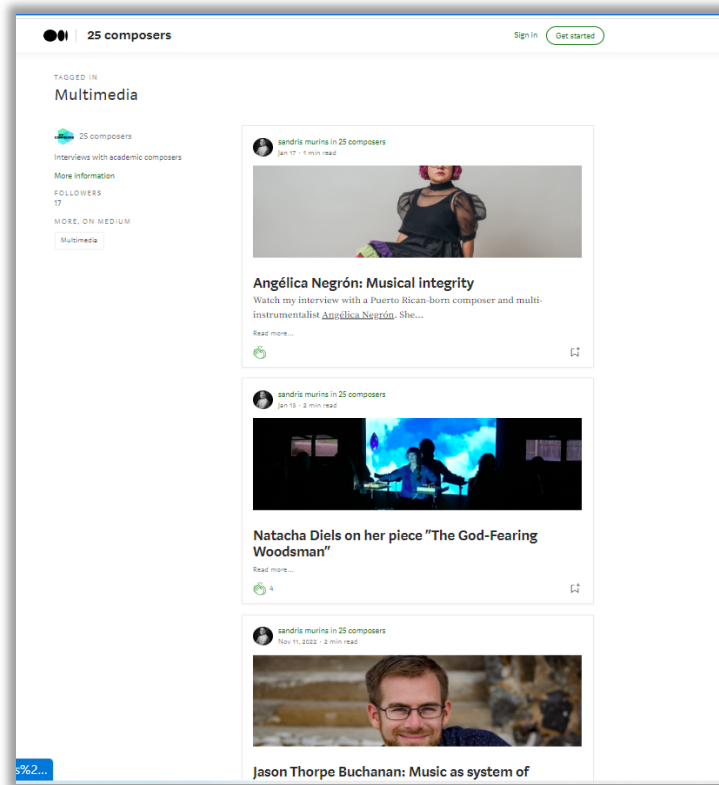


Photo 1. Multimedia composers (Web 1)

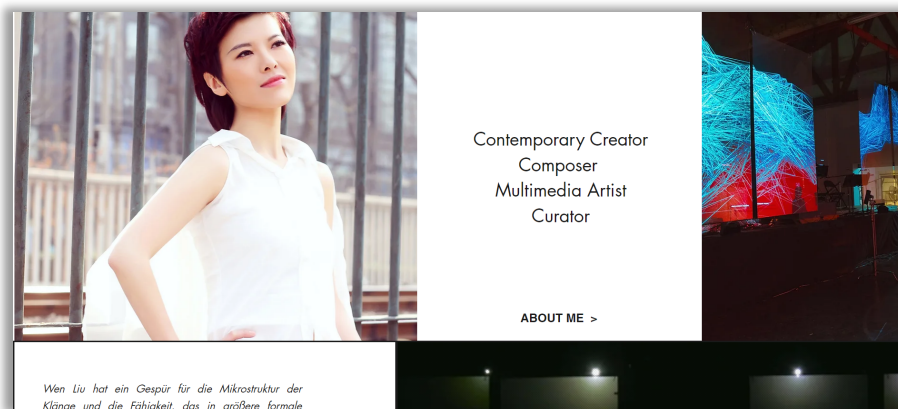
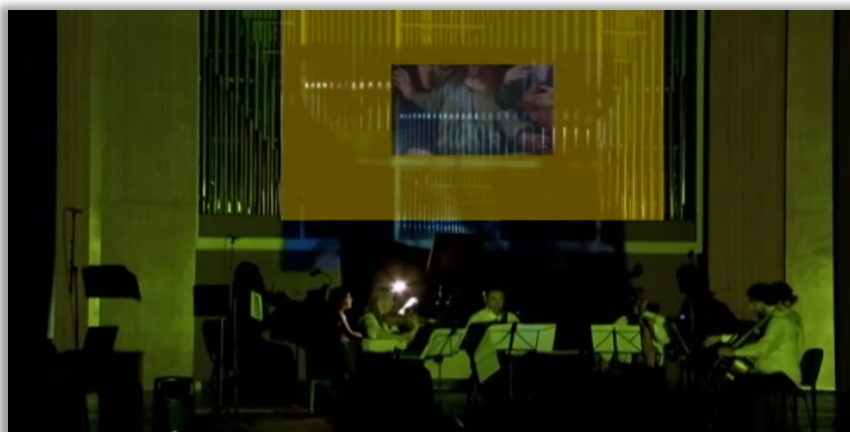


Photo 2. Contemporary Creator, Composer, Multimedia Artist: Wen Liu (Web 2)



Video 1. Eka Chabashvili Multimedia "Sounds and Colors of Seven Senses and Truth" (Web 3)

E-learning and COVID-19

Why is updating the curriculum content on the agenda? The covid pandemic turned out to be the biggest challenge for Art Higher education institutions, including TSC because it was impossible to hold ensemble, orchestra, and choruses rehearsals online. To compensate for the shortcomings of the educational process, the Conservatory actively used the fundamental component of distance learning live streaming capabilities. It is thanks to these live streams that Emergency Remote Teaching has proved to be very effective in terms of general education and raising intelligence. Despite these difficulties, it was revealed that after the pandemic, the need for rapid integration into digital reality was highlighted and students were interested in completely renewing the contents of musical subjects, in changing educational and scientific approaches. Thus, under the condition the pandemic, e-learning and the need of Updating the curriculum of theoretical subjects of music were connected to each other by a cause-and-effect relationship. Moreover, e-learning may become an increasingly proven practice in the future and the new content of the curriculum of theoretical subjects of music should be more relevant and convenient for both- the e-learning practice as well as to digital reality in which we will likely integrate into the nearest future.

The Advantages of the E-learning

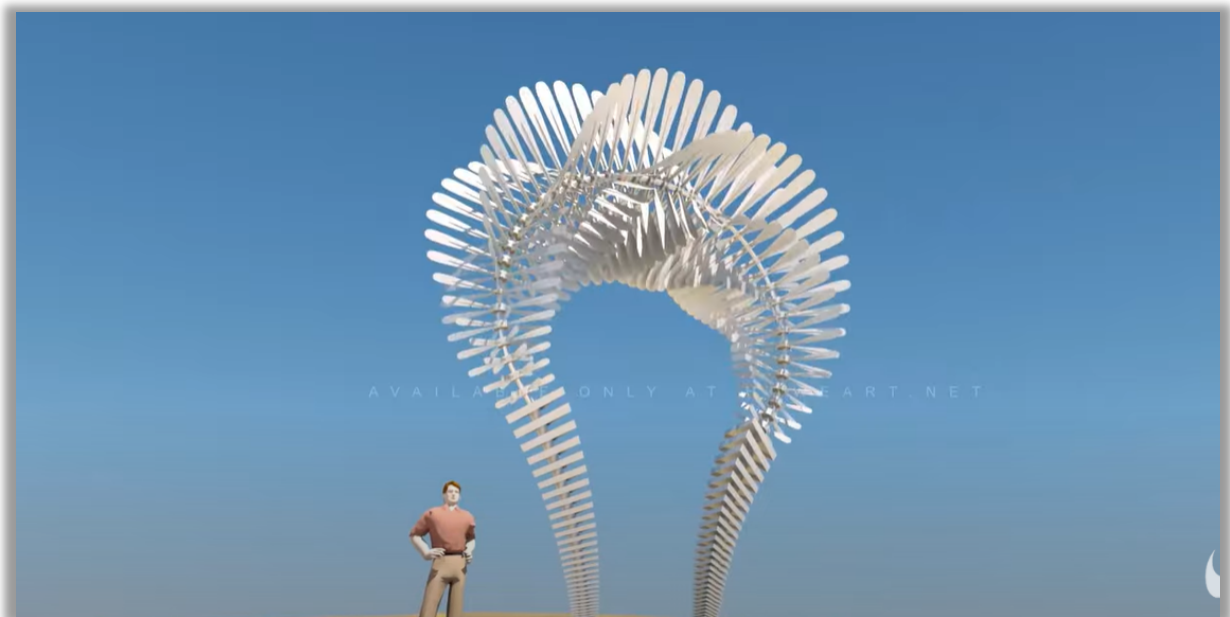
In order to discuss the issue of updating the study course for musicians with new content, it is necessary to start first of all with the problem of the advantages of the online/distance format of the teaching-learning process. It is a self-regulating and self-evolving process, directly proportional to technological progress. Synchronous (synchronous in time) and asynchronous (lost in time and space) forms of E-learning have become a successfully tested practice in the world educational space several decades before the pandemic. It is an evolutionary step towards the simplification of human life, which is why this very convenient and flexible system of teaching and learning has gathered a wide audience. Due to Covid-19, which established a new order and a kind of corona social structure of the world, E-learning turned out to be an alternative solution and its name was called also Emergency Remote Teaching, which implies synchronicity between the teacher and the student. Unlike the 20th century, when the Spanish flu spread widely in the 21st century, humanity was very lucky, because technology saved the educational system from collapse, and in the conditions of social atomization, it gave people a chance to communicate at least in virtual space. Exactly, The complete package of lockdown _ Social and Physical Distancing and Self-Quarantine have been manifested in various ways in the 20th and 21st centuries but in the 21st century, it was the technologies that made cyber globalization possible, moreover, the world became even more unified and People have become even more emotionally dependent on each other. Obviously, during the first wave of the pandemic, psychological and mental problems were revealed among the students and teachers, because the transition to emergency distance education was based on the principle of shock therapy, but humanity showed resilience to challenges, and the ability to overcome resistance. Since a person is a social being, therefore, the fear of social marginalization forced the student and the teacher to be more motivated and focused on learning, to study information technologies, various platforms, and digital products better, and to improve the skills of navigating and adapting to the digital reality, to self-organize. Everyone had plenty of time to acquire knowledge and reflection on what they have read. The migration to digital reality raised the level of rivalry, as everyone could clearly see the results of others and themselves in one digital reality.

The Metaverse and Education

The velocity of scientific-technological progress suggests that E-learning will become the form of education of the future even without any viruses or other challenges and we will increasingly be integrated into digital reality. Why? Virtual reality has come a long way in recent years and at present, we are on the edge of transitional eras from reality to intensive Cyber-globalization. Kinetic sculptures, and tech-centric, projection-based exhibits are everywhere.



Video 2. German sculptor and puppet artist Christian Werdin: Automata (Web 4)



Video 3. Anthony Howe: sculptures (Web 5)

This process intensively started for example from a video game experience with primitive installation, tools, and structure, this is yet a non-immersive system where you are still in the real world in terms of bodily sensations. This is how digital technologies have developed and soon we will enter the era of the metaverse, a quantum computer. More integration into virtual reality will lead us to the immersive system of Metaverse _ an enhanced 3D Internet Network that is generated by programming codes so that with special devices - glasses, virtual reality headset, helmet, or haptic gloves you can experience everything exactly as in reality. Simulating real experiences blurs the line between what is experienced in the real world and in the Internet Network. It is clear that these perspectives will lead to a change in people's outlook. Let's remember how the European's awareness grew after traveling to distant lands during the Renaissance.

Traveling in digital reality with your own avatar, - a kind of alter ego, will also expand our horizons and sensations. This will greatly expand the sense of spiritual presence as well. Obviously, the assimilation of Virtual Reality is a gradual process. Nowadays, the following types of digital virtual realities are: Semi-immersive, Augmented; Virtual, Mixed, and Extended realities. The common thing for all these types is that digital reality increasingly blurs the lines of reality. The simulation environment gives us the opportunity to use this technology with which we can access and create

immersive online spaces for the following activities in the game industry, business, medicine, social media, and education.



Video 4. The Immersive Room Web 6

it is natural that the educational sector is growing nowadays not only specialist in any field but also as a citizen of the digital age who is on the edge of this digitally expanded reality. Therefore, online learning is not only about knowledge of technology, technology platforms, and digital products, it is a tool in our hands.

Multimedia musical genres as the best proposals for musical education

In the conditions of increasing migration to digital reality, it is necessary to prepare young people mentally, to change their way of thinking and expand their worldview. In this context, the renewal of the block of theoretical subjects, especially music history with new content at Tbilisi state conservatoire is of outstanding importance. In this case, Foreign and first of all Georgian Multimedia musical genres are one of the best proposals. Multi-media hybrid musical genres are inherently interactive, informative, and relevant to the challenges of the scientific and technological progress of the modern era and reflect the new perception of the world, which is relevant to the student's requirements.

What is interesting about multimedia and why are they relevant for the near future?

The digital age has swept the world, and with multimedia genres, the composer has changed compositional approaches and shattered certain stereotypes.

- The multimedia work first of all destroys the cliché of using stage space, which comes from ancient civilizations. It's a cliché - the action takes place on the stage and the audience sits in the *theatron* - the word referring to the hall seat area section in a Creta-Mycenaean, ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine theater. In multimedia work, the stage and seats can be everywhere.
- For centuries, the listener performed the score written by the composer with more or less accuracy, depending on the aleatory level), while the spectator was sometimes informed in advance thanks to a pre-written synopsis or the script.

In the music of the past, the spectator listened to the performer passively and could not interfere in the performance. therefore spectators thought mostly about the quality of the performance. In multimedia, there are great opportunities for interaction, the listener is actively involved in the performance process, maybe also in the process of making music, which creates an interaction between the composer, the performer, and the listener/spectator. Thus, Spectators are no longer marginalized observers, but they are directly involved in the process of making music. The same would happen in the Metaverse network. This is how the user's avatar will be active in the Metaverse. Users will determine the location on the virtual map and will have the right to initiative while navigating in this space.

Multimedia genres destroy another stereotype - we perceive only sounds, and noises as music, although the function of the music may be given by the composer to a graphic image, or verbal text, every item has vibrations. Multimedia genres provoke the principle of synaesthesia, and listeners may experience mixed sensations between several art fields.

Multimedia genres were born precisely from the multidisciplinary approach to art to convey an idea. Thus, A variety of interaction types are possible, e.g. Interaction of music with choreography, sculpture, verbal sound source, literature forms or genres, the plastic of letters and hieroglyphs, scientific theories, medicine, cinematography, theater, and ecology, Music is already as a system of interactions, and such interaction significantly expands the scope of information and knowledge obtained from art; Multimedia genres are very much like digital reality, they will intersect in some similarities – both are synthetic and focused on the expansion of human knowledge and perception. Hybrid multimedia genres, due to the cross-disciplinary content, will give the student verbal as well as non-verbal knowledge.

Multimedia genres destroy another stereotype - people understand music only as a composition written by a composer for voice, instruments or digital reality, while the composition can be written as a work of multidisciplinary content. Multimedia genres gave the opportunity to perceive music as the universal communication language. This we call Eco-music, we created human music by imitating nature music from ancient times. We imitate the birds singing, lions roaring, and the sound of mountings Echo, and created musical instruments, so imitating nature humankind created instruments. “A musical instrument always echoes the epoch it was created in. With its structure, tuning system, and performance techniques, it could be considered a musical chronicler that tells a lot about the musical aesthetics of the age it belongs to.” (Chabashvili, 2022:51). Then step by step we have separated ourselves from the general sound of the universe. Other creations remained in the orbit of this communication language, and the man fell behind it. All sounds of nature, human voices, instruments, also electronic sounds are part of the earth’s ecosystem. Being interested in eco-music is a chance for a person to get involved in this network again and multimedia gives the opportunity to go back to eco-music.



Video 5. Sea Organ (Morske Orgulje) and the Adriatic Sea in Zadar, Croatia (Web 7)

Multimedia musical genres in Georgian music

In Georgia, Eka Chabashvili is the composer for whom multimedia is the principle of thinking. A review of Eka’s compositions will shed light on what it means to interpret the latest scientific thought in music, new compositional approaches, the relevance of the digital age, and a renewed worldview.

Micro-Opera/Exhibition: “Wandering Wishes”

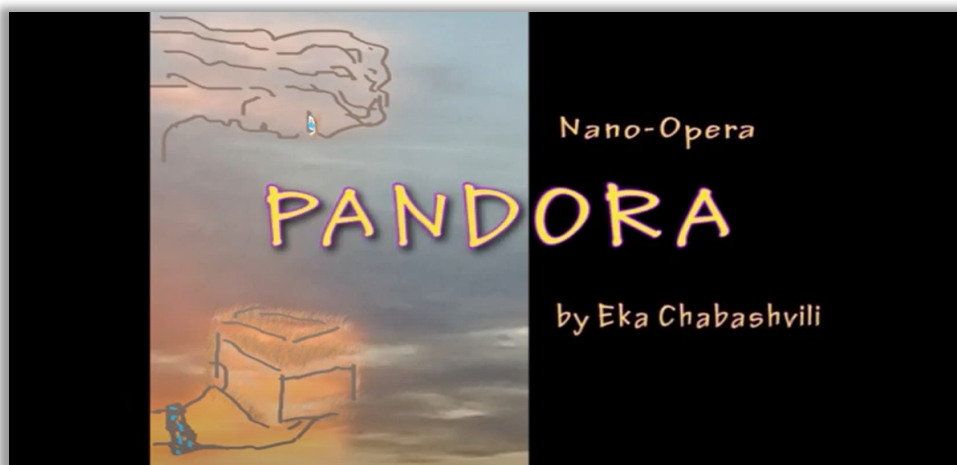
For example Hybrid genre Micro-Opera/Exhibition, “Wandering Wishes” presents 5 separate micro-operas, small scenes, that may be performed simultaneously. The audience can walk in the hall during the performance, going from one scene to another. In the preface of the score composer explains the peculiarities of the performance of the opera: “In order to control the sound result of 5 pictures performed simultaneously, I created the special score for the signalling system of the stage lightening, intended to signal when a particular picture leaves or joins the presentation.” (Chabashvili, 2018:4).



Video 6. Eka Chabashvili, "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk": III scene from opera/exhibition "Wandering Wishes" (Web 8)

Nano opera "Pandora"

Another example is the documentary nano opera "Pandora" (for internet space, 2021) - a new interpretation and deconstruction of a traditional opera. "Video-opera dramaturgy is based on conveying the processes taking place in two worlds through parallel montage. Episodes 1-3-5 reflect the reality that surrounds us in the macrocosm, and episodes 2-4 reflect what is happening in our microcosm." (Kavtaradze, 2021: 337). This is a journey of mutated Corona throughout macro and micro worlds. A virus wants to be implemented in our lives and the desire is so big that the corona makes mistakes. This is the Interaction of music with documentary film and microbiology, (genetics, atomic and quantum physics). Composition's size is significantly reduced in almost every aspect, 8 minutes, not only in the field of instrumentation. That's why it is nano and presents a journey in the nano or quantum world.



Video 7. Eka Chabashvili Nano-Opera PANDORA (Web 9)

Symphony/Exhibition "Khma"

There is another interesting example Hybrid genre Syncretic experimental multimedia project -Symphony/Exhibition, 'Khma' (the Voice, 2018-2022) First of all it is a sample of eco-music. The new configuration of the interaction between the composer, the performer, and the listeners are involved in the creating and performing process. "The listener has to follow the performer, his ear has to think along with the composer, and only in this case the sharing of energy currencies occur, and music fulfills its most essential purposes. That is impossible without the complete involvement of listeners." (Jvania, 2019: 40). A certain 'scenario' of the work envisages the interaction between music, visual art, lighting, and science through associative-metaphorical connections. The novelty is the composer's desire to return to the listener a sense of the wholeness of the universe, that art is not separated from the universe and art is not alone- all sounds are part of a single cosmic harmony. She tried to create with sounds the vibrations that would harmonize with

the vibrations of the universe. According to the composer, this is what will help the listener to become a cosmo-energetic person and to connect to the unified communications network of the cosmos as the largest energetic process.



Video 8. Symphony-Exhibition "KHMA" (Web 10)

Conclusion

Humanity is on the verge of global changes and is preparing to become more and more integrated into cyberspace. Against the background of such an objective fact, the field of education is primarily responsible for increasing the youth relevant to scientific-technological progress. Thus, when the subject of discussion is novelties for the education system or innovative methods in online or in-person teaching, not only technological innovations, sophisticated enterprise solutions, or special training for both students and lecturers are needed, but also training the consciousness of youth for exactly these next stages of digital reality psychologically and mentally. Examples of new compositional approaches reflected in multimedia genres will change their outlook and attitude toward the world, and destroy stereotypes and clichés. Enriched with multimedia genres the *Course Programs* themselves respond accurately to the new epochal challenges and we think that it will be most effective to update the content of the theoretical subjects of the TSC by including exactly these multimedia genres in the syllabus of *Course Programs*. They are inherently interactive, informative, and relevant to the challenges of the modern era. Incorporating multimedia musical hybrid musical genres into the learning process due to the cross-disciplinary content will give the student not only verbal but also non-verbal knowledge, genres they will provoke an unconscious influence for better adaptation in virtual reality in the future, will help the student:

- to change their way of thinking;
- to better adapt to a computer-generated simulation reality in the future;
- will give us the opportunity to experience a reality different from the one we live in.

And we should start with the national samples. Fortunately, Georgian music gave birth to samples of multimedia genres. Eka Chabashvili's multimedia compositions are clear examples of that.

Biodata of Author



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scientific and technical progress on music; multi-media hybrid musical genres; religion and music. She has authored more than 70 scientific papers and has participated in more than 90 national and international conferences.
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Web 3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBAbKcoJY3o>
Web 4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCvzE6A_g0o
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Web 7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QeGDjvCCkfk>
Web 8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHyfMpCnqbo>
Web 9. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIyt2mx4izI&t=6s>
Web 10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK-F6xY0eIE>

Research Article

Music educational processes in old age: An introduction to the young academic discipline of music geragogy¹

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Article Info

Received: 21 December 2022

Accepted: 6 February 2023

Available online: 30 March 2023

Keywords:

Dementia

Music education

Music education in old age

Music geragogy

Music pedagogy

Abstract

Music educational processes in old age require a specific approach. Methodological and didactic approaches from music education traditionally target children and adolescents in research and teaching. In Germany, the independent academic discipline of music geragogy emerged a few years ago. This article highlights the scientific background and practical applications of this new discipline. Music geragogy is located at the interface of music education and geragogy, the study of education and learning in old age. Since life expectancy is continuously increasing, it is necessary to understand, on the basis of methodological principles and best practice examples, what musical work with seniors must look like in order to promote the quality of life of the 60+ age group and to enable educational participation into old age, even with physical and mental ailments. 60-year-olds today are much more active and healthier than the previous generation. As a result, the demands on the quality of life in retirement age have also increased. For a long time, ageing research only focused on what seniors could no longer do due to physical and mental losses. Due to a paradigm shift in research, the focus is now on the competences and resources of seniors that are still available. Under the umbrella term of "successful ageing" the focus is on the abilities and experiences still available from one's biography, which are linked to educational offers. Music is an excellent field for transferring this resource- and competence-oriented perspective on ageing into practice. Studies show that more than half of 80-year-olds are still convinced that it is possible to acquire or develop artistic skills in old age. Apart from the motivation to be artistically active by playing an instrument or participating in a choir, social contacts or personality-building elements are important for the older generation. In addition to music activities with like-minded people, playing instruments and singing together with younger people, for example the grandchildren, also plays a role, the so-called intergenerational music-making. The methods and insights of music geragogy make it possible for actors such as educational institutions, institutions for the elderly, hospitals and private providers to adapt to the specific needs of the clientele. The spectrum ranges from activities for engaged, healthy seniors to musical support for dementia patients. Interdisciplinary networks of music geragogy exist with disciplines such as geropsychology, geragogy, geriatric medicine, social work, music therapy and nursing sciences.

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To cite this article

Sinsch, S. (2023). Music educational processes in old age: An introduction to the young academic discipline of music geragogy. *Journal for the Interdisciplinary Art and Education*, 4(1), 11-22.

Introduction

An important impulse for the development of a separate discipline of music geragogy was provided by the "International Year of Older Persons", which the United Nations proclaimed in 1999 under the motto "Towards a society for all ages" (Hokenstad, 1999). The aim was to draw attention to a demographic development that brings

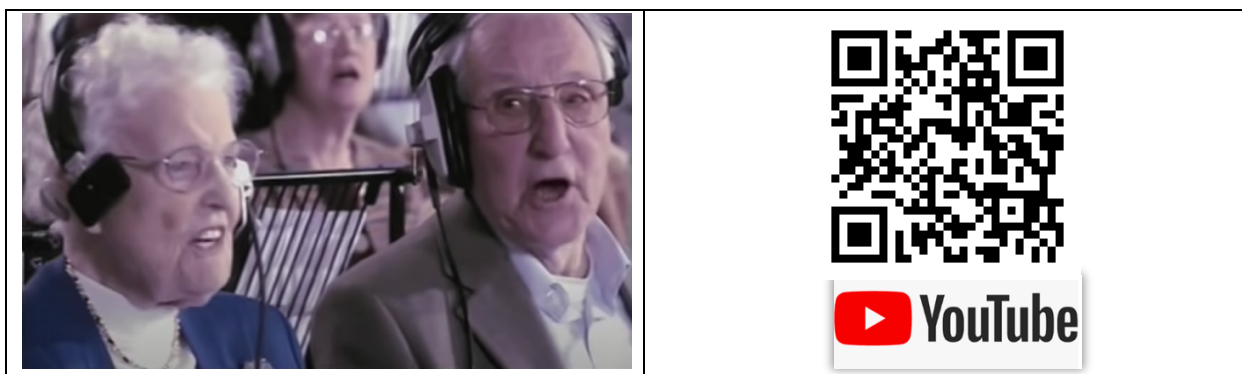
¹ This article was presented at the 2nd International Rast Music Congress on January 14-15 2023, Antalya, Turkiye.

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challenges but also opportunities for industrialised and developing countries (Hartogh, 2005). Along with Japan, Germany recorded the highest rate of demographic ageing at the beginning of the 21st century. The reasons for this are increasing life expectancy, but also a decline in the birth rate. Simulations show that this development will intensify by the middle of the 21st century (Birg & Flöthmann, 2002). The interaction of birth and death rates is called the demographic transition. Basically, a worldwide decline in birth rates can be observed, which also affects developing countries. Many developing countries are still at the beginning of this transition, which means that these nations are currently still growing strongly. At the same time, life expectancy has increased considerably in many of these countries (Betz, 2004), which also leads to a growing number of older people and thus specific challenges.

In Germany, for example, the cohorts of people over 60 will be the most numerous in 2050, and the proportion of 80-year-olds will be higher than that of newborns (BMFSFJ, 2010). Compared to earlier decades, over-60s are more active because they are healthier and have more time and money. Accordingly, the demands on the quality of life and the shaping of the post-working life phase are also increasing. In addition, this age group usually has higher educational qualifications and also shows a greater willingness to learn - even at an advanced age - than previous generations. In the future, there will thus be significantly more people interested in educational opportunities from the older generation (Köster, 2008; Schröder & Gillberg 2005). This development does not only affect physically and mentally fit seniors, but also people who live in nursing homes with health impairments. This is because physical and mental limitations are not necessarily an obstacle to pursuing educational interests (Hartogh & Wickel, 2014).

Age from a pedagogical and geragogical perspective should therefore be viewed primarily in qualitative terms. Relevant here are the changes in physical and psychological life circumstances, life forms and life demands, quality of life and life satisfaction as well as participation in social and cultural life in old age (Hartogh, 2005). Over the years and decades, chronological age is becoming less and less important (Staudinger, 2003). The view of old age is individual and is not necessarily in line with social attributes such as retirement age, which often occurs at the age of 65 or 67. Artists such as Tina Turner, Madonna or Mick Jagger, who are still performing on stage at an advanced age, are helping to redefine images of age in society. The business world is also increasingly addressing offers to the older generation, referred to in advertising as "best agers" or simply with the suffix 50+ (Hartogh & Wickel, 2014).



Video 1. Redefining the image of old age. Senior Band "The Zimmers" (The Zimmers/OskPetursdottir, 2008)

Resource-oriented Instead of Deficit-oriented: Paradigm Shift in Ageing Research

In recent decades, old age has no longer been viewed as primarily deficit-oriented; instead, the focus has increasingly been on the resources and competencies that seniors still possess. Scientifically, this paradigm shift is reflected in new theories of ageing. The "activity theory" or "competence theory" focuses on what older people can still do themselves and which biographical experiences can be used to learn new things or successfully expand existing knowledge. The concept of "successful ageing" can be illustrated by the SOC model. SOC stands for selection, optimisation and compensation. This perspective can be proven with meaningful examples, especially in the musical field. (Hartogh, 2005). Hartogh and Wickel cite the pianist Arthur Rubinstein as a prominent example of the SOC model. Rubinstein was asked in an interview how he still managed to play Chopin concertos successfully. Rubinstein replied that he had

reduced his programme and was selecting his pieces (S for selection). He would practise this selection intensively and thus optimise it (O for optimisation). Since the fluency of his fingers had diminished over the years, he discussed with the conductor in which passages in the orchestra the tempo had to be reduced. The proportionally slower tempo in the orchestra would still give the audience the impression of enormous virtuosity. Rubinstein thus devised a strategy (C for compensation) to compensate for his declining fluency of the fingers (Hartogh & Wickel, 2014).

More leisure time, higher living standards and quality of life challenge society to design educational opportunities that can be used by people well into old age, including in old people's homes and nursing wards. Musical activities give in late adulthood and old age meaning orientation, concrete life support, promote and create new social contacts. Through emotional activation, musical work contributes to life satisfaction and enhances quality of life. Since cognitive functions are also activated by music, a contribution is also made to health prevention (Gembris, 1998). Demographic developments, but also research findings on music in old age, have presented music education with new challenges. For too long, music pedagogical contents have concentrated on children and adolescents. Since the 1990s, there have been various initiatives in Europe to establish music education in old age. The European Music School Union (EMU), for example, called in a resolution for the development of specific music education programmes for older citizens in European countries (Hartogh, 2005). What was still missing at that time were concepts generated from theories that set out various practical images and objectives of music education in old age.

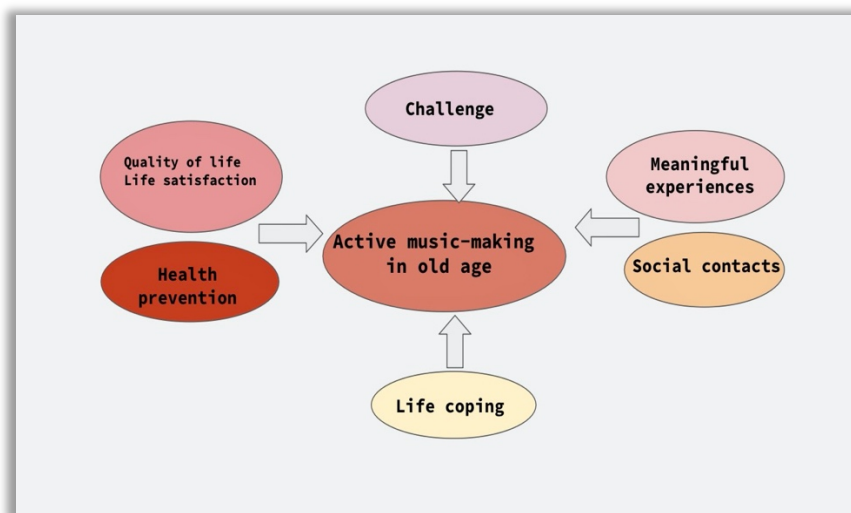


Figure 1. The benefits of making music in old age (Sinsch, 2022)

The Need for Music Geragogy as a New Academic Discipline

It did not seem sufficient to simply integrate didactic approaches into music educational processes in old age, but basic work had to be done to establish a new discipline of music geragogy, closely linked to relevant disciplines (Hartogh, 2005). The name music geragogy indicates that the subject area is located at the interface of music education and geragogy. Geragogy is the study of education and learning in old age. In addition to music pedagogical basics, findings, impulses and techniques from the neighbouring disciplines of geriatric psychology, social work, music therapy, nursing science and medicine (geriatrics) are incorporated. Thus, as a discipline of sociology of science, music geragogy has its own profile with direct influence on music education, in which a lifelong engagement with music is aimed at (Hartogh & Wickel, 2014). Since music geragogy also includes work with people suffering from dementia, it is important to distinguish the discipline from music therapy.

Hartogh & Wickel (2014, p. 5) write: "For all the similarities in terms of musical activities such as singing, improvising, moving to music and listening to music, music geragogy sees itself as educational work, i.e. it does not focus on the transfer effects or the therapeutic effect of making and listening to music, but on the music itself and its mediation". In music therapy, the focus is on improving the patients' state of mind (Timmermann, 2012). "The music geragogue's task is to stage an aesthetic space of experience." (Hartogh, 2012, p.11). Music therapy, music education

and thus music geragogy draw on common historical roots. History, media and target group are common, many music pedagogical concepts integrate therapeutic thoughts, which speaks for a complementary approach (Hartogh, 1998).

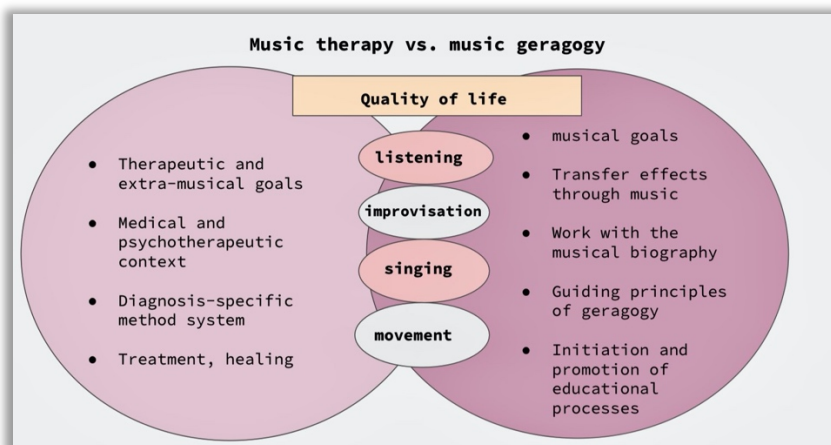


Figure 2. Music therapy vs. music geragogy (Sinsch, 2022)

Despite occasional overlaps and cooperation with neighbouring disciplines, the relationship between older people and music, as well as the methodical-didactic musical processes in old age, is the core of music geragogy. Thus, music geragogy encompasses all musical interventions in work with the elderly that are not therapeutic or educational in nature. From an anthropological point of view, it is about the interconnectedness of people and music. It is not institutional structures but patterns of interpretation and action that determine the individual educational process. As the evaluation of autobiographical material has shown, life experience, needs and interests steer the educational process. Therefore, lifeworld and biography are guiding principles for music-geragogical work; the goals are to promote competence and increase life satisfaction. Listening to music and actively making music represent an aesthetic space of experience in which no isolated experiences are made. In addition to the acquisition of specific musical knowledge, there is ample evidence of how positive the influences of music-geragogical work are on other areas of competence. Community experiences with music have an effect on the shaping of relationships in everyday life, help in coping with individual life crises, and convey a feeling of being accepted and affirmed in reference networks. (Hartogh, 2005).

Educational Potential Exists Even in Advanced Dementia

Numerous music projects have shown that even people in need of help with diminished autonomy have the need and potential for education and that it is possible to develop musical skills (Hartogh & Wickel, 2014). In the so-called Berlin Age Study, it was found that there are correlations between increasing age and memory loss, but that people are capable of learning well into old age (Mayer et al., 1996). Maintaining and promoting individual competencies is therefore an empirically supported demand. Although health status has an important influence on cognitive performance, intrinsic motivation and personal experiences are central to individual educational behaviour in old age (Hartogh, 2005).

Education in old age therefore includes all forms that serve the interests of seniors and their self-discovery. It is therefore no longer about acquiring qualifications; organised and externally determined learning are not relevant. The older person no longer allows himself to be educated or trained, but educates himself on the basis of acquired knowledge and competences so that new options for action become possible. Support and impulses from instructors therefore serve to develop or further develop self-determined competences in old age (Hartogh, 2005). Musical work can support seniors with dementia or other physical and mental impairments to not only be seen from a medical perspective with health deficits, but to be perceived holistically with resources and competences. In this way, the discipline of music geragogy simultaneously provides social answers to the phenomenon of dementia (Hartogh & Wickel, 2014).

A study from 2015 showed that, compared to other brain regions, the area responsible for long-term musical memory shows only minimal cortical atrophy and disruption of glucose metabolism in Alzheimer's disease (Jacobsen et al., 2015). This coincides with numerous observations made time and again in nursing homes and clinics. Even in advanced dementia, which is accompanied by loss of speech, patients are able to sing complete songs without errors. Music is therefore an important resource against brain decline. In addition, in many cases music shows a positive effect on dementia-associated behavioural problems, improvement of balance and gait stability (Kressig, 2022). A study conducted over three months with 90 residents of a Spanish nursing home suffering from mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease compared the effects of listening to music in the group with active musical interventions. In addition, there was a control group with whom no musical interventions were carried out at all. The pieces of music for the group that only listened to music were identified in advance with a questionnaire. The residents had the opportunity to express memories and feelings about the music played. The active group each completed a unit consisting of a welcome song, rhythmic games, music quiz and goodbye song. In the control group, animal videos were shown without music. The results showed that the brain areas responsible for cognition, behaviour and function improved in the active group, the passive music listeners showed stabilising effects and there were no changes in the control group (Gómez-Gallego et al., 2021).

Musical Biography as a Central Building Block of Music-geragogical Work

Critical analyses have shown that the needs and lifeworld foundations of the target group cannot be captured with didactics oriented towards the school. Biographical research is therefore an educational-theoretical basis for gaining insight into the demands that musical processes can meet in old age. In order to capture people's interpretative and action patterns in their individuality, music education and music geragogy must use methods that have been developed through qualitative social research methods (Hartogh, 2005). Grimmer worked with narrative interviews and used them to demonstrate the significance of life situations, motives, wishes, experiences of suffering and sensory experiences for instrumental lessons with adults. Wishes as a child, or the catching up on childhood dreams, were therefore shown to be particularly important for resuming instrumental lessons in adulthood, also as a kind of coping strategy. (Grimmer, 1989).

Hartogh conducted a study on educationally relevant aspects of music geragogy based on biographical material as part of his educational theory outline for the discipline of music geragogy (2005). Here it was shown that above all the parental home and then school as well as social environment in childhood and adolescence are decisive for a lifelong commitment to music. Songs performed by parents or grandparents are remembered for life. Parents' musical activities left a lasting impression, caused admiration and special moments in the sense of protection and security. In school music lessons in Germany, the singing of songs was influential until the 1970s, and beneficial aspects were often linked to the person of the teacher. Before and during the Second World War, even Nazi songs did not dampen the childlike joy of singing, which is interesting both in terms of music sociology and music psychology. Auditions and singing in class, like performances, also had a lasting motivational effect on those Hartogh interviewed. However, performance assessment at school also ensured that one's own musicality was classified and assessed well into adulthood. Great importance was also attached to the judgement of instrumental teachers. If there was a lack of encouragement, this was regretted well into adulthood. The interviewees often reported on the joy they felt in actively accompanying their own children or grandchildren in making music, by listening to them or encouraging their lessons (Hartogh, 2005).

Other musical biographies deal with autodidactic learning of instruments, for example when there was no money available in a family. Music created friendships, both in adolescence through singing together in a choir or in amateur orchestras. Visits to the opera were often initiated through friends or colleagues. Other interviewees report inspiration from street singers. Musical preferences also show themselves closely linked to performers experienced on stage in the course of life. Radio and recordings continue to play a major role in the formation of musical preferences. Regardless of the preferred style, respondents linked their favourite music with concepts such as joy of life or coping with life,

which means that music is charged with biographically grown meanings. Music is associated with the memory of the first kiss and, in general, music can have a relationship-promoting quality when singing or playing music together with the partner or listening to a song that connects the two. In old age, memories of musical situations can provide comfort, give the feeling of being young again, or make people who have already died more present through music. In addition, the musical biography can also be linked to spiritual experiences, for example through participation in the church choir or the sound of the organ. Events in the life course that lead to the interruption of active musical activities or prevent the learning of an instrument in adulthood are professional training, a marriage with divergent interests of the partner, starting a family, illness or even times of war. Later, the advanced age is often referred to in a sweeping way as a reason not to resume or to start music activities anew. (Hartogh, 2005).

Hartogh's biographical study has shown that promoting and maintaining quality of life and life satisfaction are central to the music education of the elderly. Although the musical lifeworld of childhood and youth no longer exists, it is possible to recall pieces or songs and exchange experiences. In music-geragogical work, it is possible to work highly individually. Group activities, on the other hand, require situational didactics and a high degree of methodological sensitivity, as very different musical interests of the participants come together (Hartogh, 2005). Feelings of strangeness can quickly arise, especially when members of different social classes come together (Muthesius, 2002). In music geragogy, therefore, there cannot be one curriculum for all in terms of methodology and didactics. Fields of work are too heterogeneous, access to musical biographies too different and often participants are severely limited in their communication due to an illness such as dementia. (Hartogh & Wickel, 2022). The starting points for biography-related musical work with older people are therefore to work out, discover and initiate musical educational opportunities that have not been lived, to create situations in which musical exchange can take place, and to remember and discuss key experiences with music, enabling access to music that is often difficult to access today, using previous musical knowledge in education for the elderly or in intergenerational music making, providing assistance in the use of media and working in a resource-oriented way to continue making music despite limitations or to make it possible for the first time (Hartogh, 2005).

Music-geragogical Studies and Competences

In his evaluation of musical biographies in 2005, Hartogh made it clear that initial and re-entry situations of musical work with the elderly can only be planned with difficulty by laypersons in order to trigger sustainable educational processes. Events in institutions must also be designed in such a way that self-organised educational processes can succeed. Factors such as physical and psychological impairments must also be recognised and mitigated in the work with seniors so that fulfilling music-making is possible. It was therefore necessary to professionalise the field of music geragogy with its own competence profile. The professional background of those offering musical activities for the elderly is still very heterogeneous. There are instrumental and vocal teachers, church musicians, instrumentalists, singers, music teachers at schools, music therapists, geriatric nurses, social workers and volunteers. As the field of work is very complex, a trained music geragoge must be able to leave his or her discipline of origin. Not only musical and music pedagogical knowledge is required for the job, but also geragogical and gerontological knowledge. The music geragogue is to be understood as a kind of moderator who stages aesthetic spaces of experience, initiates and accompanies educational processes, encourages self-learning and supports and positively evaluates results. Dialogue is to be understood as a fundamental mode of the music-geragogical relationship (Hartogh, 2005).

Since 2004, the Münster University of Applied Sciences in Germany has offered certification in music geragogy; the university course lasts one year. Music-geragogical elements are also integrated into the Elementary Music Education studies at the universities of Hamburg, Cologne, Würzburg, Vechta, Münster and in the Master's studies at the Pop Academy in Mannheim. Originally, music-geragogical training was aimed at people working in social work and care. It quickly became clear that there was also a need for further training for vocal and instrumental teachers as well as church musicians, and now doctors and music therapists are also seeking certification in music geragogy.

Especially the last two professional groups gain new perspectives on their patients through music geragogy. In this way, people with dementia are no longer only the addressees of therapeutic interventions, but are enabled to learn music in a barrier-free and purpose-free way despite sometimes considerable cognitive limitations (Hartogh & Wickel, 2014).

In addition to professional competences and biographical orientation, music geragogues must have the corresponding ethical attitudes and orientations in order to guarantee older people access to musical education in the sense of enabling didactics. By bringing generations into contact with each other while making music, an enriching exchange is created. Younger people can benefit from the knowledge of the grandparents' generation. Authenticity is another key qualification, because music geragogues must be able to accept other preferences while remaining credible in their own behaviour. Since people at any age want recognition for their musical performance, music geragogues need to work in an appreciative way. Through validation, they are also able to grasp the reality of people with dementia, including their thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and to take them seriously. The musical interaction must not degenerate into reality training, but the behaviour of the person with dementia must be used to sense whether musical contact is desired.

Since the number of elderly people with a migration background is increasing, music geragogues should be able to respond to the needs of this target group. So far, there are still few practical examples, but it has been shown that a relationship to the homeland can be established mentally through music. The music of the country of origin thus not only promotes the quality of life, but also strengthens one's own identity. There is a need for research in music geragogy not only here, but also in the area of gender sensitivity (Hartogh & Wickel, 2022).

Practical Examples

The German Society for Music Geragogy (DGfMG e.V.) was founded in 2009. It is responsible for the promotion of education in the discipline of music geragogy as well as the further development of the discipline in various fields such as care, health care, education and social services. The society is committed to improving the research situation so that the quality of life and life satisfaction of older people can be optimised (DGfM, Ziele des Vereins, w.d.). There are also music geragogues in Austria and Switzerland. The projects show the diversity of music-geragogical work. Some offers are designed to be continuous, others are carried out in project phases. Music geragogues work on a permanent basis or come to institutions as freelancers. Many projects focus on choir work. "Singen im Alter" sees itself as a network to promote choral work with seniors and to facilitate networking. Choirs in which seniors can become members are listed throughout Germany. The offer ranges from dementia choirs to intergenerational ensembles (Singen im Alter, w.d.).

Music-geragogical Work in Old People's and Nursing Homes

In the Pradl residential home in Innsbruck (Austria), there are various music activities for very old people, the approach is based on elementary music education. The units are planned in such a way that the participants with dementia interact with each other and that there is a dialogue between the group and the instructor. The music is not made for the residents, but is created together with them. The group size is limited to eight people, the atmosphere is calm and benevolent. Music is not always the goal in a unit, sometimes it is just the way to be in the moment and in the community. Emotional experience is in the foreground. Sensations are constant and remain even when memory fades. Cognitive impressions can disappear quickly after a music lesson, but the emotional impressions remain. It is important to stage certain lesson elements as a ritual. There is a consistent welcome song and a closing song. Participants are greeted by singing their names. The welcome song must be repeated often so that the seniors eventually sing along. Suitable lesson contents are songs from the past, simple musical movements that can be accompanied by the seniors with percussion or sitting dances. Materials such as cloths, stones or ropes sensitise the senses. Rhythmic activities have a particularly invigorating effect on senior citizens. Instruments such as large timpani are also perceived as pleasant by participants with hearing aids. In the course of the unit, it is possible to create musical dialogues with expressiveness, participants immerse themselves in the game and finish it with clear impulses (Bauer, 2022).

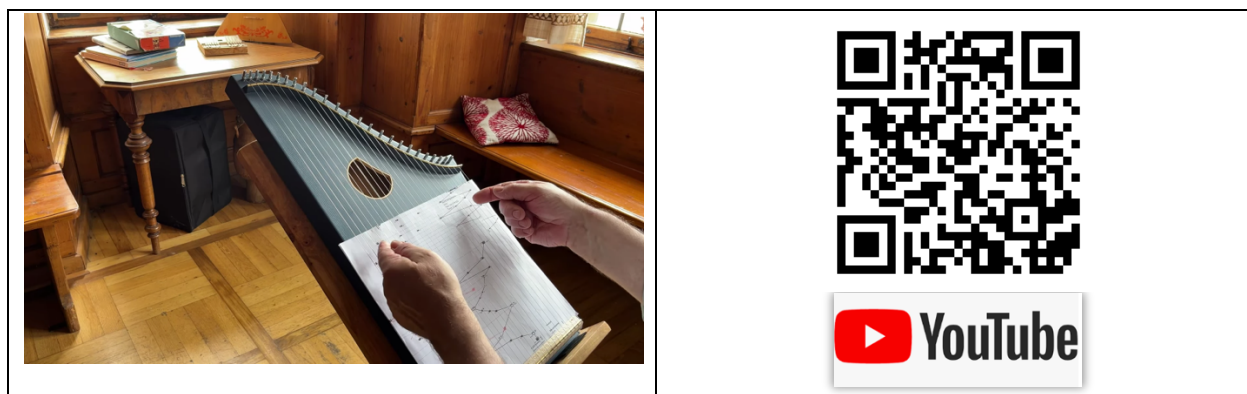
An example of mobile music-geragogical work is the so-called sound cart. A music geragogue visits old people's homes, clinics, but also private living rooms with a converted market trailer. The sound wagon not only transports a lot of instruments for musical work with senior citizens, but can also be used as a music stage or an intimate music-making room. The German Society for Music Geragogy also promoted courses for interested people aged 65 and older to learn how to play the saxonet as part of the project "New start after Corona". The saxonet is a woodwind instrument with a simple reed that is played similar to a recorder. It is easy to handle and well suited for beginners. Seniors can use the wind instrument not only to improve their cognitive skills, but also to benefit from other positive health effects with breathing exercises, sensitisation of the lip muscles and movement of the body (Neustart nach Corona, 2022). While a healthy adult still has every opportunity to learn an instrument, at an advanced age, changes in the musculoskeletal system, respiratory system and jaw area need to be considered. Playing the violin can be difficult with problems in the neck and shoulder area, artificial hip joints pose a challenge with the cello and harp. Some instruments are also perceived as uncomfortable by tinnitus sufferers (Walsleben, 2009). Music geragogy responds here with adapted concepts, including for string instruments, ukulele, chamber music offerings and even rock bands for seniors (Hartogh & Wickel, 2019).



Picture 1. First steps of a little artist by Erman Turkili. A piano method suitable for intergenerational music-making between grandparents and grandchildren (Turkili, 2020)

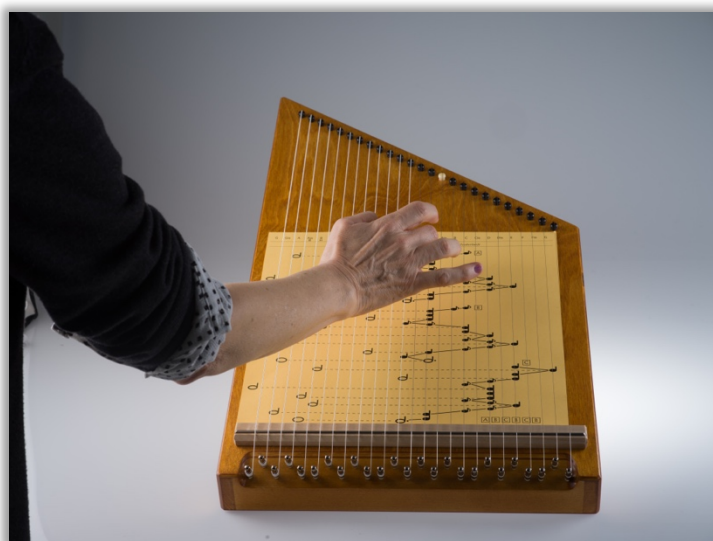
Learning an Instrument is Still Possible

The idea of offering piano lessons to people suffering from dementia is initially surprising. In a study published in 2013, Kehrer showed under which conditions and with which methods beginners with dementia can learn the piano, whereby her approach clearly distinguishes itself from music therapy and shows that age, illness and artistic quality do not have to be a contradiction. The result is also a teaching concept that can be directly implemented in practice (Kehrer, 2013). The method "First steps of a little artist", originally developed by Türkili for children, can also be used with seniors alone or in intergenerational music-making between grandparents and grandchildren. The piano method works with coloured symbols and explicitly encourages learners to compose (Sinsch, 2022).



Video 2. A Table harp is played with templates. (Tischharfe, 2022)

Table harps are also a popular instrument in music geragogy. It is an instrument similar to the zither that is plucked with the fingers or a plectrum. The instrument goes back to historical models, the current form is designed for people with physical and mental limitations and is thus also suitable for dementia patients. Playing templates, which are followed with the finger, can be slid under the strings. Pitch and tone duration are thus fixed like regular musical notation. In a project carried out with seven people suffering from various forms of vascular dementia, individual lessons were given on the table harp. The focus was on the promotion of joy of life and quality of life as well as the effect on deficits caused by the disease and motor skills. The assessment was carried out with the Barthel Index for the evaluation of daily living skills, the DEM-Tect as a screening method for dementia, Box and Block as well as the Nine-Hole-Peg-Test for the determination of motor skills. The results showed that playing the table harp improved both gross and fine motor skills. In addition, the severity of aphasia was significantly improved in two participants (Hoedt-Schmidt, 2010).



Picture 2. Table harp (Prisma Foto, 2020)

Music Geragogy for Prisoners

If music geragogy is to enable cultural education and participation, it is also necessary to think of imprisoned seniors. Criminological and forensic-psychiatric research has so far dealt preferentially with younger people. According to Leygraf (2009), criminality in science is a domain primarily of the second and third decades of life. However, not only demographic change, but also increasing mobility and activity of senior citizens are causing changes. As the ageing of the population continues, intramural music services for delinquent and additionally possibly mentally ill seniors must also be considered. At the Salus State Hospital for Forensic Psychiatry Saxony-Anhalt, a patient learned to play the table harp under music-geragogical guidance. Within only one year, he not only succeeded in playing the instrument in two voices without any previous musical knowledge. He even produced his own composition for table harp, which

won a prize in an art competition for prisoners (Mit Kreativität und Geschick gewonnen, 2022). The new aspects carried out in a musicgeragogical intervention in the context of a custodial measure are interesting. Acquisition and internalisation of new behaviours, along with the development of musical skills, are core to musical action in the penal system (Hartogh & Wickel, 2019), which is particularly interesting with regard to readiness for therapy in forensic clinics and for resocialisation in general. This is because intramurally new meaning references in music are recognised, the receptivity is expanded and one's own musical biography is perpetuated. (Hartogh, 2012).

Conclusion

The goals, orientation and attitude of the still young discipline of music geragogy have solidified in recent years. Cooperation with social work and music therapy has become closer, although this can still be expanded. Social inclusion as an artistic and music-pedagogical as well as music-geragogical challenge continues to determine the professional discourse. Practitioners are already doing excellent work at the grassroots level in old people's homes and centres and are also convincing with innovative projects. Didactic research, which provides practitioners with a basis for their work at the grassroots level, is being developed and must continue to grow. The discipline must also continue to establish itself in areas that were not originally envisaged as a field of action and also provide answers to intercultural and gender-specific challenges. Another example is the penal system, where the first foundations for music-geragogical work are currently being laid. One topic is continuous professionalisation, not only in further education. The question arises as to which degree programmes music geragogy can be anchored in. In order to achieve a social positioning, projects at the grassroots level are one way. However, music geragogy must also be present in concert life. A survey of German symphony orchestras in 2009 revealed that the situation regarding differentiated concert offers for seniors is rather sobering. At that time, just half a dozen orchestras offered concerts for the special needs of older people (Sinsch, 2009). Since then, things have changed and numerous concert formats for older people have been developed. The Cologne Opera launched the project "Opera for Young & Old". Other examples are the interactive concert "Unforgettable" for people with dementia or the project "On the Wings of Music", which is also aimed at concertgoers with dementia.

Biodata of the author



Sandra Sinsch is a certified music pedagogue, music therapist and music geragogue. She studied at the national music universities in Hamburg and Trossingen, the University of Applied Sciences Munster and was a scholarship holder of the German National Academic Foundation (Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes). From 2011 to 2016, she was a lecturer at the ITU State Conservatory in Istanbul, after that she worked as a music pedagogue in Egypt. Today Sandra Sinsch works as a music therapist at the Salus State Hospital for Forensic Psychiatry Saxony-Anhalt in Stendal, Germany. The clinical pictures treated there are: Schizophrenic psychoses, personality disorders such as antisocial/dissocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder/emotionally unstable personality disorder, sexual preference disorders, intelligence deficits, brain-organic disorders, autism and ADHD. She uses active and receptive methods of Western music therapy as well as classical Arab and Ottoman music therapy. Since musical work in the context of custodial measures goes beyond conventional music therapy, she also integrates music education and music geragogical elements into her work. This is also reflected in the topic of her dissertation project conducted at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. "Music education in the Forensic Psychiatry - conditional factors for strengthening resources and promoting participation, social learning and cultural education". She is a member of the following societies: AMPF- Research in Music Education, German Society for Music Geragogy, DGM German Society for Music Psychology, IASE- Islamic Working Group for Social and Educational Professions Germany. E-mail: sinschsandra@gmail.com

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Suggestions for Reading

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Research Article

Approaching spirituality with the help of artistic embodiment: A case study

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Article Info

Received: 28 December 2022
Accepted: 7 February 2023
Available online: 30 March 2023

Keywords:

Ambivalence
Art of spirituality
Artistic embodiment
Discourse
Evil
Good
Identity
Photography

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Abstract

In the scene of staged photography, in which ambivalent amateurs stage topics that are of relevance to them, spiritual topics are chosen again and again. This research was designed in accordance with the case study method, which is one of the qualitative research types. With the help of artistic embodiment, it is aimed to describe this subject in depth through the observations and interviews made by the researcher about the approach to spirituality in art. Interviews with members of the scene have shown that certain familiar motifs or motifs anchored in the collective unconscious are particularly popular, including the good, the evil, the ambivalent, and the foreign. For the photo team, these motifs imply work on personal identity, as well as the reassurance of their cultural identity. Furthermore, the photographs often deal with the *conditio humana* – what makes us human and what values we want to live by. Thus, these images often provide a creative setting for discussions, for the negotiation of values, both in the photo team, as well as among and with the recipients.

To cite this article

Jerrentrup, M. (2023). Approaching spirituality with the help of artistic embodiment: A case study. *Journal for the Interdisciplinary Art and Education*, 4(1), 11-22.

Introduction

Spirituality is a topic that can be seen as a cultural universal: nearly every society has come up with a concept of spirituality. Nowadays, spirituality is on the rise in so-called “Western” secular societies (Nomads 2022). This is attributed to the fact that “Western” societies ultimately do not offer the individual and personal support that is needed in the face of global problems and crises – be it Covid-pandemics, the Ukrainian war or the high inflation (Stolz et al., 2016, p. 1, Pollack and Olson, 2008).

A reflection of the importance of spirituality can be seen in the scene of staged photography, in which spiritual motifs play a recurring role. In the scene, there are primarily engaged and enthusiastic amateurs who accordingly implement topics they find personally interesting. This article will analyze which spiritual motifs are popular and why, and what significance this may have for the individual and the society.

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Photo 1. Angels: spiritual motif (Model: Maya Lou. Support: Sonja Saur and Udo Strickrodt. Make-Up-Artist: Nidolli Gleitsmann. Photo: M. Jerrentrup)

Angels are among the most popular spiritual motifs, however, just as in this picture, they are often combined with more ambivalent aspects. Here, the angel is wearing an armor.

Picture Motifs with Spiritual Background

Visual aspects of spiritual themes concern various aspects: for example, one sees figures from the Bible such as Mary or Angels, or beings from domestic folklore, some of which have been integrated in Christian (folk) beliefs such as demons or witches. Mixed creatures appear quite often. These can be winged beings like angels or the Egyptian goddess Isis, or anthropomorphic creatures like girls dressed as Easter bunnies, for example. Magical beings such as sorcerers or forest spirits are also staged quite often. Further, creatures of modern folklore like from J.K. Rowling's or Tolkien's works have entered the scene. Besides imaginable creatures, abstract concepts such as zodiac signs are also adapted. Sometimes it is also about actions, such as when a mortal sin is staged.

A look at the interviews shows that the people concerned are at first sight not always fully aware of spiritual references. Nevertheless, one can assume that these motifs have a place in the collective unconscious. According to C.G. Jung, this is the "part of the psyche that can be [...] distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not owe its existence to personal experience and is therefore not a personal acquisition" (Jung 2006: 45). In the collective unconscious Jung sees the anchoring of archetypes, basic motifs of human ideas – typical behaviors, narratives, figures, etc. They are observable in myths, fairytales, art, and dreams, and of course in spiritual motifs. Jung has defended himself against the accusation of mysticism by referring to his empirical studies of these. For the present study, Jung's assumption is useful because it ensures that even motifs that may not be (at first) consciously recognized as spiritual by every person involved and every recipient can nevertheless be interpreted in that direction.

Problem of Study

For the present considerations, the scene staged people photography offers a large fundus – at the same time, it is an area that has received too little attention in research, although this art form has become a very popular hobby and avocation for many through social media. But it is not only a widespread activity for many people, it also offers extraordinary spaces to experience and interpret topics that the people involved find relevant. Further, through the media presentation, a larger societal discourse is made possible. Therefore, exploring spiritual topics against a scene that helps making them tangible seems like a promising endeavor. Looking at the photographs that circulate in the scene, four main, but interconnected topics become evident: the good, the evil, the ambivalent, and the foreign. These

topics have been clustered with the help of a content analysis and confirmed and further explored with the interviewees.

Method

Research Model

This research was designed in accordance with the case study method, which is one of the qualitative research types. With the help of artistic embodiment, it is aimed to describe this subject in depth through the observations and interviews made by the researcher about the approach to spirituality in art. This article is based on many years of participant observation in the scene of staged people photography. In Europe, this scene comprises an estimated one million members who, as dedicated amateurs, deal with photographic stagings as models, photographers, make-up artists, stylists, and retouchers – often covering more than one role by one person, yet usually done in teams.

Unlike other art forms, the pictures created in the scene thus carry a clear relationship to real life, the indexical quality of photography: the images shown are based on actual stagings, no matter how much post-processing has been done or if artificial intelligence has been integrated – the indexical relationship to real life exists and is considered as a foundation. Purely artificially generated pictures so far only make up a small part of the works presented.

The choice of topics for the stagings is usually worked out in a team. Since there are usually no external clients, it can be assumed that the people involved have their own interest in the topics chosen. Previous studies have shown that topics often help to live out a facet of one’s own identity, represent one’s own wishes, desires and fears, or test one’s own limits (Jerrentrup 2020). Of course, a choice of topic can also be based on the hope of getting as many “likes” as possible, i.e., to hit the *zeitgeist* in the respective social group as well as possible.

Data Collection and Participants

In order to gain deeper insights into the topic, two methods were combined: as a base, I have been able to gain diverse insights over many years in the scene. Through this experience, I also found five interview partners between the ages of 27 and 43 with whom I have worked before and who were available for in-depth interviews: two male photographers, a female model and make-up artist, a female photographer and former model, and another female model. Quotations from the interviews were presented by coding the interviewees. Codes; participant number-gender(male, female)-ages. For example; P1-F-27 (See Table 1). Having a much higher percentage of female models is (still) typical in the scene.

Table 1. Codes for Interviewees

Participant No	Profession	Gender	Ages	Codes
1	model & make-up-artist	Female	27 years	P1-F-27
2	model	Female	37 years	P2-F-37
3	photographer	male	33 years	P3-M-33
4	photographer and former model	female	40 years	P4-F-40
5	photographer	male	43 years	P5-M-43

As the selection of interview partners is therefore based on my personal network, this bears the risk of a biased sample. However, since the topic is very personal, I felt it was important to conduct the interviews with people who are open in this regard and where a relationship of trust has already been established. In semi-structured in-depth interviews, the interviewees reported on their assessments and experiences and also presented photographs that showed their own staging of spiritual topics (See Appendix2)

Results - Motifs

The following section will first discuss typical motifs that the interviewees were familiar with and that can be found quite frequently on social media.

The Good

The good is a philosophically complex and difficult concept, moreover, it is culturally shaped and contested (Rustamovna 2022: 148). Roughly speaking, one could state that something is good that corresponds to the values of a cultural context, i.e., it is something that has been socially agreed upon.

With regard to visual implementations of the good, it has been shown that “the more physically attractive an individual is, the more positive the person is perceived, the more favorably the person is responded to” (Patzner 1985: 1) – the good is thus associated with the beautiful.

Prototypical here are angels from the Judeo-Christian and Muslim traditions who embody goodness in human-like form and function as “servants of God who were created by God” (Jones 2011: 10). They are considered otherworldly beautiful and their portrayal varies from adults to toddler-like, cute putti. What they always have in common is their hybridity – they combine human bodies with animal wings, and thus possess superhuman, celestial abilities. We encounter hybridity quite often in the context of spirituality and it can be understood as a metaphor for the particularities of spiritual beings – this is e.g. also the case with the embodiment of paganistic or paganistically inspired or Hinduistic or Hinduistically inspired beings and does not necessarily imply virtue.

Looking at angels, besides their beauty and specialness, their genderlessness plays a role. In Biblical descriptions angels mostly have male pronouns. The later, rather feminine connotation of angels could have arisen due to their connection to perfection and thus also physical perfection, i.e. beauty, which is usually connoted and idealized as feminine (Goldman & Waymer 2014: 2). However, even angels with female features were portrayed without breasts until the 19th century “because angels are purely spiritual creatures [...] there is no sexual difference between them. There are no male or female angels; they are not distinguished by gender” (Daley 2001: 10). Due to their genderlessness, traditional angels are also devoid of desire – they are not really physical beings. This trait can be linked to a general skepticism in Christianity concerning the human body: whereas in antiquity, the (nude) body would represent perfection, there were primarily two versions of it present in early Christian art. Jesus on the cross was depicted in all his physical suffering, the body virtually at its limit, but there were also Adam and Eve short before being expelled from paradise – thus, sinfulness, on the other hand, and vulnerability, on the other were the central themes connected to the physical body. In the late Middle Ages, “the physical and the sensual were increasingly given the function of representing evil par excellence, and at the same time – radicalizing ancient ideas – they were explicitly identified with the female sex. Thus, the female personification of luxuria (lust) has been increasingly transformed into a negative figure” (Krieger 2012: 32), which will be illustrated under the next point.

In staged photography, however, angels are almost always depicted by and as women, often as bright beings of light and sublime, sometimes as disillusioned – “they must be sad looking at what the world has become” (P3-M-33) – but sometimes also as daring, sexy, and ambiguous: “Slightly broken angels are irresistible” (P1-F-27). Angels are often presented during the Christmas season. During this period, also other positively connoted creatures get staged, so for example Christmas elves, Santa Clauses or female Santas, the latter often also as a gender statement. Especially when Santa Clause or Easter bunnies are the topic, humor often plays a role, which lives from combining opposites, especially genderlessness, with sexuality.

Besides angels, fairies and elves are often staged. They, too, are hybrid beings, usually with wings and pointed ears, as well as magical powers. They have been with a magical parallel world and stand for “elegance, peace, and wisdom” as one interviewee put it (P3). Zodiac signs, according to the interviews, a topic growing in popularity, are mostly expressed through costumes, jewelry, ornaments etc. By itself a neutral subject, they are associated with celestial power and energy.

The Evil

“In virtually every human culture, there has existed some word for ‘evil’” (Waller 2007: 10). So, we are dealing here with a cultural universal, although what is defined as evil is often culturally bound. An important aspect was brought

into the discussion by Zimbardo: evil is committed intentionally (Zimbardo 2008: 22, see also Frey & Oberhänsli 2012: VI), so it is not something that happens by chance. Accordingly, something can only be defined as evil if one assumes free will. From this derives a special creativity to be able to represent evil: while the good appears as absolute, evil can take on very many different forms. Consequently, the interviewees agreed upon the fact that it is interesting to stage the evil: “The evil can have so many faces” (P5-M-43), “Staging something evil requires a lot of acting skills and creativity, it is really challenging” (P2-F-37), “Stating the evil is great fun” (P1-F-27).

Frequently, evil is pictured as ugliness, which is already evident in the use of language when one speaks of an ugly side of character. Thus, Adorno characterizes ugliness as a “category of prohibitions” (Adorno 1997: 47), just like evil. However, the forbidden seems to exert a special attraction and power.

If we consider pictorial motifs, there are two varieties of evil (which is not as apparent in “the good”): evil characters, as well as evil deeds. Prototypical as an evil character is Lucifer, who is also often depicted as a hybrid of a monster with horns and a horse’s leg (see e.g. Gogol 2003: 20). Consequently, he is – just like the angel – a powerful creature and at the same time, a social outsider. Sometimes Lucifer is also surrounded by an erotically seductive aura – both when he is portrayed rather masculine or rather feminine: “in our cultural context, seduction and sex are often connected to the evil, whereas, at the same time, it seems to be everyone’s favourite topic” (P3-M-33). In addition to the fascination with evil, Lucifer, like other evil beings, can also stand as a symbol for the power of being different and, more concretely, for (political) agitation. Lucifer’s “fall had been associated with proud, unlawful insurrection against divine authority. Giving new meaning to this old theme, the Romantic Satanists transformed the fallen angel into a noble champion of political and individual freedom against arbitrary power” (van Luijk 2016: 114). Demons and other outsider creatures can be interpreted similarly: scary, bold and rebellious, sometimes even sensual. One interviewee (P4-F-40) said: “these creatures have something admirable about them.”

As evil deeds with direct reference to Christian spirituality, the staging of the “seven deadly sins” stands out in particular. Its popularity derives from various aspects: they are relatively easy to stage, most of them do not require very specific props, they are well-known and a series of seven is not too long, just a good length for a project or a little exhibition. Even though the seven deadly sins illustrate a fundament of morals our culture builds on, it has become fashionable to contravene: people indulge in sins and ads use slogans promoting to give in and sin etc. Sin in advertising is considered provocative, and “in our culture, taking on the role of the snake can always prove to be a selling point” (Vasel 1999: 218). This can be justified not only by provocation and the (short-term) fun that sinning brings to the individual and thus egocentricity, but also by constantly questioning societal values and again, by coming to terms with “not fitting in” or being rejected by others (Hughes 2012: 207).



Photo 2. Half swan, half human – hybrids may point out to the ambivalence of being human (Model: Svenna. Make-Up-Artist and headdress: Eva Hinsken-Ebbing. Photo: M. Jerrentrup)

The Ambivalent

As already shown, several motifs convey a more or less strongly ambivalent feeling, i.e., they do not clearly fit into the previously mentioned categories of “good” and “evil”, but combine both.

There are two basic ways to express this dualism: the diachronic perspective that shows a change from good to evil vice versa or the synchronous presentation of good and evil. A well-known version of the diachronic perspective is embodied by the biblical Maria Magdalena and her conversion from sinner to saint. Yet, for some, she is also synchronously ambiguous, as her physical relationship to Jesus remains somewhat unclear. Considering the temporal perspective, one either needs a series of pictures to explain the process or builds even more on cultural knowledge and e.g. picks the moment of culmination or turning point of the story. When it comes to vampires, it is widely known that in legends and movies innocent humans are usually unwillingly turned into ferocious vampires, thus, the depiction of a vampire with his or her fangs already comprises the underlying story: “Vampires are very popular in staged photography, because they easily evoke countless stories, from movies and literature. You don’t need to show much, a small hint like the iconic teeth will be enough”, states one interviewee (P3-M-33). It is similar with Zombies: “The zombie is the ultimately tragic figure, it is you and me – converted into something atrocious and stupid” (P3-M-33).

A synchronous example would be the sexy nun, whose popularity is probably owed to her multiple interpretations: she can be seen as a purely sexual motive, even more so, as the forbidden tends to convey secrecy and exert a great power: “The sexy nun is certainly on my list, as it simple and powerful” (P1-F-27). One can also interpret the sexy nun as a statement for the right for sexuality and thus against a rigid sexual moral coined by certain interpretations of Christianity – “why shouldn’t nuns be hot? Aren’t they women?” (P2-F-37).

Both readings actually suggest contraries: on the one hand, the depiction of a sexy nun represents a way women in photography may choose to please men, on the other it signifies the right to female self-determination and independence from men. Some interviewees expressed a preference for ambivalent motifs, which they found particularly interesting, so they liked to include some ambivalence even in the classically good or evil themes: “Nothing is all black or all white, we appreciate the shades in-between” (P5-M-43).



Photo 3. Maria Magdalena – the figure combines guilty conscience and sanctity. Model: Sayuri. Support: Helmut Willmann. Photo: M. Jerrentrup

The Foreign

The foreign has fascinated people since time immemorial. Even at the beginning of photography, “native types” were popular, motifs that were deliberately staged in such a way that the scenes appeared as authentic and exotic as possible to so-called Western viewers, often with an erotic undertone (Theye 1998: 57). Thus, it has not been a matter of representing the foreign or, in this case, foreign spirituality in a particularly adequate way. The tendency to let the foreign in art reflect above all “the wishes of the westerners, their ambitions, their obsessions and symptoms” (Faris 2002: 78) persists from then on. In this context, Edward Said famously coined the term “Orientalism.” In addition to desires for excessive eroticism, reflected in harem fantasies, mystical spirituality also plays a role here, as stylized poses, fake or existing symbols in makeup and jewelry, religious statues and other elements show.

This corresponds to social trends: for example, this fascination can be observed in connection with the Modern Primitive Movement (Musafar in Favazza, 1996: 328) and also current trends such as yoga and paganism are worth mentioning here (Baender-Michalska & Baender 2014: 175f.): Behind this may be the individual need to find meaning,

which can also be seen in the context of de-traditionalized, cross-model, dynamic and individualized mass communication and its countless possibilities for creating meaning (Bachmair 2017: 175). Staged photography allows these possibilities to be condensed into a visible option, a symbol.

A concrete example is the staging of an imaginary Orient full of symbols. Here, both more or less well-known symbols associated with certain values, such as chakra symbols or the hexagram, are used, as well as purely invented ones that should just carry the aura of meaningfulness. For example, one interviewee (P1-F-27) reported painting henna ornaments for shoots and imagining that they could be spiritual signs, another one said she would like stylized gestures and posings that “look as if they convey something meaningful” (P4-F-40).

Further, paganistic-looking motifs of women or men with horns, i.e. hybrid creatures, point in this direction. Horned hybrids are a motif that carries meaning in different cultural contexts and thus can be said to belong to the collective unconscious of many. In Hinduism, for example, the god Shiva can also take the form of a bull or has a bull as his mount. The horns are associated with the sun’s rays and represent both power and danger, “the fundamental, mysterious, and frightening otherness of animals” (Russell 1977: 70). The Greek god Dionysus was also often depicted as horned. His association with fertility, but also rather uncontrolled sexuality, leads us again to ambivalence. Ultimately, this leads to the question of what makes human beings human and distinguishes them from animals. “We love animals but also fear them, I think this is why staging hybrids is so popular” (P3-M-33).



Photo 4. A vision of Indian Gods and Goddesses, the costume have actually been created for religious processions. Shot at Indian Institute of Photography. Photo: M. Jerrentrup.

Results - Implications

In the following, we will now look at the extent to which the staging of the afore mentioned motifs can have an influence on the people active in the scene, as well as the extent to which this could be significant for the recipients.

Work on Identity

“Interest in ‘perfect’ form [...] no longer seems relevant. Instead, photographers are searching for variety in form and an expression of the uniqueness of each individual or thing” (Bonney 1985: 13) – with this quotation, Bonney was perhaps ahead of her time, but in fact, in an age in which works generated by artificial intelligence can be realized quickly and cheaply, the “authentically human” may come to the fore and individuality and identity are considered by the photo team, and embodied by the model. Embodiment here means the lived experience (Csordas 1994: 171ff.), which can result in a deeper understanding, because “bodily states in the self produce affective states” (Barsalou et al 2003: 43).

Staging offers countless possibilities for the embodiment of identities: “never before has the individual been able to make such a variety of decisions on his or her own [...] never before has the individual been solely responsible for so much” (Stolz & Könemann 2016: 1). The interviewees confirmed that especially the abundance of possibilities of digital post-processing would bring even more options: “With the help of Photoshop, we have even more opportunities to stage something magical and spiritual, we can embrace it in our products” (P5-M-43). However, life in the multi-option society can also be exhausting and bring with it a sense of insecurity (Wenzel 2016, Altmeyer 2016: 28): “individuals are increasingly required [...] to become the ‘architects of their own lives’, to engage in continual do-it-yourself identity revisions and to plot and re-plot individualized solutions to wider systemic social problems” (Elliott 2016: 70).

At the same time, however, the question of community and communal identity arises as well. Those who implement spiritual themes often assume that many recipients will understand or at least “feel” the message, and with them a community is established based on (unconscious) knowledge and possibly also appreciation of cultural codes, which is further strengthened by comments and likes.

Here, the feeling of kitsch that is evident in many photographs also takes on a specific significance: kitsch has been understood as an “all too human” condition, “like a sweet innuendo and a sour noise” (Mihailescu 1997: 49). In the practice of spirituality, kitsch is not uncommon; for example, the charming putti with which the Catholic Church sought to win back believers at the time of the Counter-Reformation could be seen in this context, just as the typical Hindu depictions of gods, such as Krishna as a cute baby or attractive shepherd boy (this can also be related to Indian art theory around the term “rasa”).

Strikingly, also the photographs and stagings the interviewees have mentioned mainly contain motifs that could be described as kitsch. Despite its popularity, the term is often used with a negative undertone, referring to too simple or “fake” art. However, “for if the world is indeed a meaningless conglomeration of facts, does not Kitsch offer us the only escape from the absurdity of man?” (Harries 1968: 82). Kitsch, then, by directly addressing the emotion, virtually without the detour through the rational mind, contains a psychological relief and at the same time provides a sense of unity with the work and its recipients. Works of kitsch should appeal to many people in a cultural context (Cilliers 2010) and thus establish a community based on feelings.

However, it should also be pointed out here that in postmodern art, kitsch often has an ironic undertone, that is, it includes its antithesis – which already points to the following point of the *conditio humana*. For the most part, however, kitsch was seen as an opportunity to express one’s own emotions and to be certain of the empathy of relevant others. Anticipated empathy thus played an important role.



Photo 5. Celestial and powerful, yet very human. Model and costume: Mandy. Photo: M. Jerrentrup

Dealing with the *Conditio Humana*

In many photographs, the examination of the ambivalent sides of being human becomes apparent: good and evil mix, fascination and repulsion, the secular and the spiritual, the desire for superficial likes and deeper engagement, the indulgence in kitsch and at the same time the critical reflection of the same. This is particularly clear in the staging of ambivalent and alien motifs, but evil is also often portrayed as somehow attractive. Further, the good can also carry an ambivalent dimension, at least in the sense that it is embodied by a human being who cannot be perfect.

The topic of the *conditio humana* extends beyond the question of one's own identity. All the more, it reveals a connection to other people (Alford 1997: 148). Staging spiritual topics and highlighting the ambivalence of being human, circulating the pictures via social media and actualizing them in the collective (un)conscious thus helps to emphasize the unity of humanity.

At the same time, it can also lead to discursivity. For example, one interviewee reported that her spiritually inspired photographs were sometimes harshly criticized, such as strictly Christian recipients taking offense. Yet, she found these discussions with regard to her pictures interesting and, as she stressed, important. With the help of such photographs, cultural values are negotiated. The artistic-creative field, in connection with digital media, obviously offers a suitable space for this negotiation – although questions of media access, curation of contributions, freedom of expression, and also cyberbullying naturally arise.

Conclusion

“All the presented photographic re-enactments are informed by a desire for the missing original” states media scientist Monika Schwärzler about spiritually inspired photography (2016: 52) – is it true for these kinds of pictures? Obviously, in many cases, no original exists – no overpowering anthropomorphic gods, no forest spirits, no Easter bunnies. At the very least, the original arguably has no visible form or clearly discernible materiality. The original is symbolic in nature, as is the re-enactment, whose result stands for something but does not bear an iconic or indexical relationship to what is meant.

At the same time, however, the photo shoots are by no means only about their results, but also about the process, in that the team chooses a topic, decides on its implementation, and the model finally embodies the topic under the advice of the team. This embodiment, which is indexical in nature, can help the team in a special way to negotiate the interpretation of the topic and to experience it first-hand. Friedrich describes that an actor may be experienced as superficial and inauthentic, whereas a liturgist is profound, serious, and true (Friedrich 2001: 11). For the recipients, however, both must be credible. Consequently, this polarizing separation cannot be maintained from the outside, nor does it apply to the internal view, because the embodiment can also influence one’s own cognitive and emotional world, or interact with it, which is exploited in certain schools of acting and was reported by the interviewed models as well. This is all the more true, because the topics are, after all, chosen and interpreted by the participants themselves, and do not follow a script or liturgical rules.

For photography teams as well as for recipients, the resulting pictures allow for the confirmation of archetypes and the reassurance of one’s own cultural identity, as well as the chance to enter into discourse about cultural values – first within the team, and then with a larger public that sees and discusses the resulting photographs. In a creative setting like staged photography, such discourses may be particularly sustainable and fruitful.

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Appendix 1. Interview Form

Interview Form

The following questions were asked in semi-structured oral interviews, giving the interviewees a lot of room for their own thoughts:

Introduction:

- Which photo motifs would you identify as spiritual?
- Have you ever staged a spiritual topic? If yes, which topic(s)?
- Would you please show me respective pictures (e.g. on Instagram)?
- Have you staged “the good” and/or “the evil” and if yes, please tell me your experience!

The process of the shoot

- How did you decide on the topic? Which team members had their say?
- How did you prepare for the shoot?
- Did you read books or articles on the topic, watch movies or documentaries, did you look at other forms of art reflecting this topic? If yes, which?
- During the shoot, how did you feel? What mattered to you?
- For the models: How did you try to embody the spiritual creature as appropriate as possible? Which help did the other team members give you in order to achieve a perfect embodiment?
- For the photographers and other team members: How did you choose your model? How did you help her to achieve a perfect embodiment?
- Which role did the post-production play? Did you plan during the shoot itself what will be added in Photoshop or similar programs?
- How do you ultimately feel about your own spiritual stagings?
- How do you feel about your own spiritual stagings being discussed on social media?

Specific creatures

- Angels, saints, gods, nuns, vampires, zombies, hybrids, zodiac signs – did you ever stage one and if yes, would you tell me about your reasons to do so and your experience?
- Which spiritual topics are you planning to shoot and why?

Interview Article

An interview with Pamela Shuler and Richard Schwartz: Identifying and nurturing musical talent

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Article Info

Received: 3 January 2023
Accepted: 8 February 2023
Available online: 30 March 2023

Keywords:

Music education
Music talent
Richard Schwartz
Pamela Shuler

Abstract

The identification, development, and nurturing of musical talent and abilities is an important aspect or element of the musical realm that needs to be explored. In this interview, two exceptionally talented musicians as well as music instructors respond to questions regarding music theory, music learning and musical performance. It is hoped that this interview will provide some insights to assist those involved in music curriculum, programming, instruction and mentoring.

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To cite this article

Shaughnessy, M.F. (2023). An interview with Pamela Shuler and Richard Schwartz: Identifying and nurturing musical talent. *Journal for the Interdisciplinary Art and Education*, 4(1), 37-43.

Introduction

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *First can each of you tell us a bit about yourselves and your background?*

Pamela Shuler: I hold a Bachelor of Music in Education degree from Youngstown State University, a Master of Music in Clarinet Performance and Literature and DMA in Clarinet Performance and Literature from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. I have spent time teaching band, choir, and general music in public and private schools at the fourth through twelfth grade levels. Currently, I am an Assistant Professor of Music teaching clarinet at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico.

Richard Schwartz: My name is Richard Schwartz and I was born in Philadelphia. I grew up in a nurturing suburban South Jersey household alongside an older sister and two younger brothers. My mother worked as a Philadelphia public school family consumer science teacher, and my father a chemical engineer for the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. We had a piano in the house – which my mother would play a few times a week – and my father would sometimes play the recorder alongside my mother at the piano, but rarely. My father also owned two guitars which he rarely played. Each child was offered piano lessons, though each of us seemed to quit in a year or two or moved on to other instruments. I was a member of a few informal garage bands while in high school and college: singing and/or playing bass or guitar. I enjoy classic rock (Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, etc.) and particularly like the progressive Canadian rock band RUSH, but grew up on 1980's pop music like Men At Work, Duran Duran, Michael

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Jackson, and more. Regarding formal education, I completed a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Temple University, a Masters of Music from the University of Michigan, and a Doctorate in Musical Arts from Boston University. While a doctoral student, I offered part-time instruction for a number of classes at Boston University, offered summer instruction at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, taught private lessons at Brandeis University, and cobbled together a private teaching studio of eighty public school students. I have been very lucky to find work as a full-time university level music teacher. My first location of full-time employment was Southeastern Louisiana University. I spent nine years teaching there as a jazz and saxophone instructor and two years serving as faculty senate president. I am now in my tenth year at Eastern New Mexico University as Professor of Music (Saxophone and Jazz) and serve as Chair for the Department of Art. Throughout these years I have worked as a freelance musician through my woodwind doubling skills, as a jazz saxophonist, or simply as a musical contractor. I am married and we have a son.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *How did you personally first get involved in music and then music education?*

Pamela Shuler: My mother was responsible for my first experiences in music. Some of my earliest memories are singing in a choir and playing handbells. The elementary school I attended started both school band and choir in fourth grade, so that is when I started practicing and making music every day.

Richard Schwartz: I was offered piano lessons as a child, perhaps around first grade. Piano seemed a natural path for me as a child since my mother and older sister played the piano. And, it seemed like they had fun playing the piano. As a child, my older sister would pick on me (pulling my hair, scratching me with her longer nails, or general bullying, etc.). Since she is five years older than me, understandably as a child I could not use physical strength to threaten her and leave me alone. The only thing I could think of to get even with her was to practice the piano and get better at the piano than her – which I eventually did. My parents interpreted my intensified practicing as talent and drive. I am not certain if they would appreciate the truth. Subsequently, they allowed my older sister to quit piano lessons, since it looked like I was the one that “excelled.” Frustrating. I wanted to switch from piano to any other instrument because my piano teacher slapped my hands. My next instrument was clarinet during the 4th grade. However, in 6th grade my band director asked me to play tenor saxophone in order to cover some of the low brass parts in our band – we had almost no low brass (trombones, euphoniums, etc.). I seemed to gravitate toward musical and other creative areas in middle and high school including choir, band, orchestra, theatre, playing guitar, bass or singing in rock bands, working on BMX bicycles, etc. In my senior year of high school I felt I would like to major in music, however my father protested. He stated that the only way he will allow me to major in music was if I major in music education – so that I will have earned a degree for which I can get a job. I agreed and so began my path in music education. At 19 years of age I began offering guitar lessons. And overall, I was not a serious student. When I was 20, my father passed away from liver cancer. This was a turning point in my life. I took music and my education very, very seriously. I would practice between eight and twelve hours a day...sometimes falling asleep in morning music education classes – even with a cup of coffee in me – but I did well in school at this point.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *How important is early identification of music talents and abilities?*

Pamela Shuler: Based on my own experiences working with young children in public and private schools, this is extremely important. We often hear information on how additional languages are easier to master if one starts at a young age. In many ways, we can consider music a language. Hearing the rhythms, pitches, and inflections of music at a young age can help enrich those with talents and abilities in this area.

Richard Schwartz: I believe the answer to this is a bit mixed and depends on the young individual. Some young individuals excel immediately and continue upon a musical path in the future. Some excel immediately, but find other interests for the future. My own thoughts: it can be important to not only identify musical talents and abilities, but to

nurture the drive behind why this individual wishes to continue in music - whether practicing and performing music simply brings them joy, challenges their intellect or physical ability, their desire to sound like a particular professional they wish to emulate, they wish to follow in a parent's footsteps, etc. I also wish to point out that there are "late bloomers." The "late bloomers" may have significant musical talent and ability, but choose not to, or simply cannot for one reason or another, engage in serious practice until a later date. If musical talents and abilities are identified early, obviously that offers more time to nurture. However like most cognitively demanding abilities, I believe drive and/or perseverance ultimately play a larger role in the development of musical talent.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *How often have you encountered parents who have seemed to recognize that their child possesses an uncanny ability to play an instrument that is sitting at home- for example the piano?*

Pamela Shuler: When I was teaching Elementary General Music, I had more contact with parents and experienced this a number of times. Earlier in my career, I had a number of parents reach out asking for recommendations for names of private music instructors after they had experiences similar to what you describe. I do not experience this as much as I am now working with college students.

Richard Schwartz: In my experience of teaching, I have encountered many parents that believe their child possesses uncanny abilities to perform an instrument well. And, of course, these parents would like a sizable college scholarship for their talented child! For each of these instances, perhaps one out of every fifty holds true. I have worked with remarkably talented students between the ages of 10 and 26 years old through private lessons and/or ensemble instruction at the elementary through university graduate level. Each student has their own story. Each may or may not have a parent that seemed to recognize that their child possesses an uncanny ability to play an instrument. However in all seriousness, I have encountered parents that recognize that their child possesses an uncanny ability to play an instrument. Overall, these parents tend to do whatever they can to assist in their child's musical development.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *How well in your estimation are the schools providing instruction for musically talented?*

Pamela Shuler: In my own experience, I remember going through the gifted and talented evaluation process in elementary school. After being told that the arts were an area in which I qualified for enrichment, my family was then told my school did not have offerings in this area. In looking at a number of schools today, I think instruction and additional enrichment can vary within each program. While some schools might offer after-school programs, such as a choir, Orff Ensemble, or musical theater, many schools simply do not have the resources to offer such programs.

Richard Schwartz: This is a difficult question to answer. For the most part, public and private schools offer a general music education with opportunities to learn and grow: that is if they offer music classes. Some schools will offer a general music class while others may offer only choir, band, guitar, and/or music theory. Some schools will have choir, band, orchestra, guitar, music theory, jazz ensemble, and more. Finally, some school systems do offer a "talented music" program, but this is rare. These talented music programs tend to offer private lessons and additional opportunities. Back to the question regarding how well the schools are providing instruction for musically talented students: I believe they are doing what they can afford, and that may or may not be good enough to best serve those individuals. If private lessons are difficult to afford, sometimes parents can reach out to family members for financial support or get creative in asking for support such as creating a crowdfunding account, fundraising, etc. Also, one may find organizations or online sites that offer inexpensive music lessons or free music theory tutorials. Finally, there may be available texts on music, music education, music theory, other musical topics, and sound and video recordings at local or school libraries.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *How important are early lessons?*

Pamela Shuler: In looking at music historically, lessons are an important part of the process of musical growth. In reading musician biographies from various time periods, one often sees a list of teachers that have had an impact.

Starting lessons early provides an opportunity for not just exposure to musical content, but also a space for the student to ask questions and explore musical concepts. A qualified private instructor will be able to share enriching content and pedagogy that can lead to tremendous student growth.

Richard Schwartz: Depending on the instructor, early music lessons can be beneficial or detrimental. In the text “On Playing the Flute” by Johann Joachim Quantz, one may read how beginning students are essentially at the fate of their teachers. A student in the hands of an excellent teacher may need just a few lessons to set-up proper posture, hand position, embouchure, breath control, etc. However, in the hands of a lesser experienced teacher, a student may need years of supplemental instruction to understand and utilize such topics, let alone fix issues not addressed. While early lessons can be beneficial, it is most important to ensure beginners learn from an excellent teacher so they are set on a positive trajectory

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *Now, how important in your minds are opportunities for public performance and recitals?*

Pamela Shuler: Music is an art form that is created and consumed via performance. Even if one is in a recording studio and does not have a live audience, there is still a performance process. In working with college students, exploring the process of performance is part of our study since so many students have not yet had opportunities for extensive solo or chamber type performances. Experience is one of the best ways to gain comfort doing something. Knowing how your mind and body will react in a performance is extremely important. If these experiences are gained early on, this can be of great benefit. Once an individual has time to experience and explore the mental and physical side of performance, this can open up the chance to explore a deeper level of performance as they continue. For example, at first, someone might develop strategies for relaxation, posture, and breath support that allows them to feel comfortable. As performance experience continues, this can grow into considering dynamics for a specific performance venue or listening to intonation and phrasing at a deeper level.

Richard Schwartz: So we, are on the same page, I consider a public performance to be any performance - in front of friends, family, classmates, or even in front of thousands of people. I think any sort of public performance – for the most part – positively impacts young and musically talented individuals for it not only allows the individual to demonstrate what they are able to do (this act may feed whatever ego/desire the student performer has) but they get to share their talents with others. When offering a performance, the individual has one chance to get everything right. And if it doesn't go 100% correctly, that simply leaves room for growth on the next performance. Theoretically, performing gets easier the more often one performs. One additional and important note is that everyone has different levels of performance anxiety. Some simply cannot speak or play their instrument in front of people, while the majority tend to suffer some level of anxiety. And then a small minority – the lucky few! – feel absolutely comfortable on stage. I believe performance anxiety can improve over time with excellent preparation.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *At the college level, what is important about the curriculum?*

Pamela Shuler: One of the things I find so important and exciting about college level music curriculum is the diversity. Students study privately in lessons with faculty, but also take courses in music theory, music history, aural skills, performance ensembles, piano, and a number of other areas. Study in each of these content areas helps musicians gain knowledge and insight that allows them to make informed choices in practice and performance. Another important aspect in applied lessons is being able to develop a specific curriculum related to repertoire for each student. This allows individual students to explore and strengthen areas of their playing.

Richard Schwartz: There are many ways to answer this question, for the question may need a bit more specificity. One could read this as curriculum over the entire four years as a music major, or as applied lessons on a given instrument or voice. Regarding curriculum as an undergraduate music major, I feel that there need to be foundational

studies, yet also some areas for flexibility. Roughly four semesters of music theory and music history is a “must” for students to understand how to read and write music and how to place what they are performing in musical context. A variety of performance based classes are vital: applied lessons, marching band, concert band, jazz band, concert choir, jazz choir, chamber music, etc. Finally, some flexible content would be highly beneficial. This would include classes in music business, music technology, composition, music education, conducting, and more. Regarding applied lesson curriculum, I feel it is important to have set goals with pedagogical approaches to learn the standard “war horses” of the repertoire, but also flexibility to explore specialized works of student interest

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *How do you juggle theory and practice?*

Pamela Shuler: Personally, I find it very important within my specific field to stay up to date with current research and pedagogy. Oftentimes, I will utilize new concepts and methods with students that have a large impact. Due to the nature that much of my teaching is at the one-on-one level, sometimes I will explore a concept with a student that just does not work. For me, it is important to find the correct concept that works for each student. Each student I teach is unique and has an individual set of experiences, motivations, and perspective. While one idea or concept might work well with one student, it may fall short with another. For me to be the best teacher I can be for each student, I try to stay informed on current pedagogy and also retain teaching ideas that have historically worked well.

Richard Schwartz: Good question. With roughly 30 years of instructional experience in private lessons, large ensembles, small ensembles, and a variety of classroom formats, I tend to discuss what works “in theory” with students and then offer them a reality of what works and what does not with clear demonstrations so they see and hear such concepts and can make judgements for themselves. This may be in regard to performance practice, pedagogical guidance for future music educators, or any other content area. As a student, I appreciated teachers who were open and honest about the content area they teach. I try to do the same for my students.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: *Small group instruction- how effective is it? Or is it simply better than no instruction at all?*

Pamela Shuler: While it is extremely impactful to work one-on-one with a student in an applied lesson situation, small group instruction can also hold value. For example, rehearsing, learning, and performing with a small chamber group can be extremely effective for musical development. If the ensemble functions with one performer on each part, such as a woodwind quintet, performers will be able to work on blend, balance, independence of lines, and establishing an ensemble rapport.

Richard Schwartz: I believe small group instruction can be very effective – it all comes down to the teacher and what techniques are employed. Some techniques that have worked for me in the past include group preparation with different students taking turns leading, have one student teach a portion of the class/lesson and subsequently other students take turns, each student presents a small portion of the class/lesson, etc. Sometimes setting an organized format for how the group is to be taught each and every class also works well; some students feel routine is comfortable, for they know what to expect each and every class.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: What are the basic factors or variables that lead you to mentor a student with exceptional talent?

Pamela Shuler: No matter the level of talent, it is important that a student has a desire to invest in and develop their talent. In speaking with a student, and parents/guardians depending on the student’s age, I place importance on exploring goals and what a student hopes to achieve. All students will reach a point that they are exposed to new and possibly challenging material and content. It is important that the student is able to schedule practice and have short and long-term goals. When challenges come, it is important that a student that can keep a regular practice schedule that focuses on steps towards improvement.

Richard Schwartz: In general I attempt to mentor all students, but for a student with exceptional talent I will let them know that I hear or see something special in their playing – because I really do – and often ask them what their musical goals are. Once investigating and compiling what musical direction the student wishes to take, I will offer the student recordings to listen to, repertoire goals, YouTube videos to peruse, and other objectives to strive for in pedagogical order. Though, I must admit I do this for all of my students.

Michael F. Shaughnessy: What have I neglected to ask about the importance of early identification of musical talents and abilities?

Pamela Shuler: I think these are fantastic questions! The only other thing I would add is the importance of parents, guardians, and even teachers exploring resources for students that demonstrate musical talent. I encourage reaching out to connect with possible mentors at surrounding higher education institutions, musical organizations, and musical ensembles for possible information on private lessons, classes, ensemble experiences, performances, and other opportunities.

Richard Schwartz: I think you have covered quite a lot and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this important topic. One thing I can mention is that students can vary in their musical talents and abilities. One music student may be a marvelous player by ear, but not have the patience or maturity yet to read music. Some music students are the opposite – they can read music but are dumbfounded when learning by ear. Some prefer specific genres of music – jazz, blues, or rock vs. baroque, classical, new music, etc. Some students have difficulty displaying performance talent, but they have brilliant “ears” and can compose or arrange works, or love listening, reading and writing about music and musicians. Again, I think flexibility and understanding as a teacher is very important.

Biodata of Author and Interviewees



Prof. Dr. **Michael F. Shaughnessy** is currently Professor of Educational Studies at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico USA. He has served as Editor in Chief of Gifted Education International and can be reached electronically at Michael.Shaughnessy@enmu.edu. ORCID: 0000 0002 1877 1319. His current research interests include talent development and intellectual assessment as well as the role of personality in giftedness, talent and creativity.



Dr. **Pamela Shuler**, originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is currently serving as the Clarinet Instructor at Eastern New Mexico University. At ENMU Dr. Shuler teaches applied clarinet lessons, directs the clarinet choir, and has taught music theory, music appreciation, and freshman seminar courses. As a performer, Dr. Shuler has been heard throughout the United States, in Spain, and Japan. She has performed with the Southwest Symphony Orchestra, Champaign Urbana Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia da Camera, the Concert Band of Central Illinois, and the American Wind Symphony Orchestra. Having served as a K thru 12 educator for a number of years, Dr. Shuler is passionate about working with students at all phases of clarinet mastery and enjoys serving as an active clinician and adjudicator for high school and middle school students. Dr. Shuler holds a Bachelor of Music in Education from Youngstown State University, and a Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts Degrees from the University of Illinois. Her principal teachers have included Joseph Edwards, Robert Fitzner, and J. David Harris. Shuler lives in Portales, New Mexico with her daughters Eleanor and Beatrice and husband Sidney, who is also on faculty at ENMU. Research interests of Dr. Shuler include the classical chamber commissions of Benny Goodman and performing new works for the clarinet and chamber ensembles. Composer Mike Curtis stated that Shulers recent performance of one of his chamber works was, Very well done! As a member of the Proha Clarinet Quartet, Shuler was invited to perform at the 2008 and 2009 Vandoren Clarinet Chamber Festivals. E-mail: pamela.shuler@enmu.edu (Web 1)



Grammy considered saxophonist Dr. **Richard A. Schwartz** has commissioned and or premiered nearly thirty new works for saxophone, performed for regional, national and international events in North and South America and Europe and is the grand prize winner of the 1997 International Henri Mancini Institute Concerto Competition and recipient of the 2010 Southeastern Louisiana University Presidents Award for Excellence in Artistic Activity. After performing the Boston premiere of Jan Curtis Transformations for voice, piano, and alto saxophone in Jordan Hall, The Boston Globe declared, Richard Schwartz displayed extraordinary talent on the saxophone, sympathetically mirroring the voice and contributing his own improvisatory imagination. Awarded three United States patents, Schwartz founded the music publication company SilverKeyMusic.com authoring the internationally recognized intonation tool The Tuning C.D. and many instructional guides in music education. His research interests include saxophone performance and pedagogy, jazz ensemble pedagogy, jazz history, jazz improvisation, jazz composition, musical intonation, advanced woodwind techniques including multi-phonics, circular breathing, double-tonguing, the altissimo register, and more, entrepreneurialism in music, sight-reading techniques, recruitment techniques and more. Email: richard.schwartz@enmu.edu (Web 2)

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