

THE PRINCIPAL NON-SPECIFIC AND SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MASTERING MUSICAL IMPROVISATION

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Abstract

This paper analyses the manifestation of principal specific individual-psychological factors which in the given context are musical abilities and which determine the effectiveness of mastering musical improvisation by students. Just individual-psychological factors are those that determine achieving high results in learning practical musical improvisation under equal pedagogical conditions, which in this context are non-specific factors. Learning consists of theoretical and practical parts. This specific case study showed that practical mastering of musical improvisation by students does not depend so much on non-specific factors as on specific individual-psychological factors.

The effectiveness of mastering theoretical fundamentals of the process of learning the didactic model for style modeling in musical improvisation by students involved predominantly the objective non-specific factors, and within this context they are pedagogical conditions. Among pedagogical conditions, the theoretical basis of the authorial didactic model occupies a special place. The activity of specific individual-psychological factors displays itself against the background of the principal non-specific factors and therefore, even if other conditions are equal, some students produce better creative results than the rest of them.

The paper describes the manifestation of specific individual-psychological factors of effectiveness, namely, musical abilities and their role in the process of practical mastering of improvisator's creative skills.

Keywords: *musical improvisation, principal non-specific factors of effectiveness, principal specific individual-psychological factors of effectiveness, didactic model, content-analysis of improviser's activity*

Introduction

On the basis of scientists' conclusions and results of their scientific research (Ferand, 1938; Mehegan, 1962; Мартинсен, 1966; Рунин, 1980; Сапонов, 1982, 1989, 1996; Potter, 1990; Мальцев, 1991; Юнг, 1992; Gardner, 1993; Pressing, 2000; Адорно,

2001; Мартынов, 2002; Ward, 2004; Kertz-Welzel, 2004; Курт, 2005; Теплов, 2005; McPherson & McCormick, 2006; Барбан, 2007; Кинус, 2008, 2009, 2011; Dairianathan & Stead, 2010; Kingscott & Durrant, 2010; Столяр, 2010) the author of this paper has formulated the skills necessary for mastering the fundamentals of improvisation by students (Spigins, 2013, 2017; Спигин, 2015). At learning the fundamentals of improvisation, the main students' task is to develop such creative skills of improvisor's activity as:

- Ability to be guided by integrated impressions, integrated images which fulfil the function of some kind of generalized "subject" frames;
- Ability to instantly assimilate any musical idea, to enrich with images and creatively embody the material offered from outside;
- Ability to intuitively search for creative solutions among the multiformity of impressions and emotions;
- Ability to change the previous program of activities during the process of improvisation;
- Ability to generate productive ideas, to promote intellectual spontaneous activity;
- Ability to analyze and model original musical ideas;
- Ability to organize the process of creating a musical form from accidental fragments of other integral systems.

This case study showed that under equal pedagogical conditions, some students achieve better creative results than the rest (Spigins, 2013, 2017; Спигин, 2018).

Mastering the theoretical basis of improvisation involves theoretical and practical components of the educational process. The analysis of the results of the case study clearly showed that practical learning of musical improvisation by students depends not so much on non-specific factors as on specific individual-psychological factors. Under equal pedagogical conditions, just individual-psychological factors are responsible for better results at mastering musical improvisation, which in this context are non-specific factors.

The activity of specific individual-psychological factors manifests itself against the background of principal non-specific factors. This paper analyzes the manifestation of principal specific individual-psychological factors which determine effectiveness of mastering musical improvisation by students. The description of the manifestation of specific individual-psychological factors of effectiveness is necessary to understand the role they play in the process of practical acquiring the creative skills for improvisor's activity.

Research object: fundamentals of mastering musical improvisation.

Research aim: to describe manifestations of principal non-specific and specific individual-psychological factors of effectiveness at mastering musical improvisation when forming and developing students' knowledge and skills during the process of learning the fundamentals of improvisation (Spigins, 2013, 2017; Спигин, 2018), as well as to creatively interpret the results of the case study on mastering the fundamentals of improvisation.

Research methods: analysis of pedagogical literature, logical method, modeling.

Principal Non-Specific and Specific Individual-Psychological Factors of Effectiveness at Mastering Musical Improvisation by Students

A. Principal non-specific factors

In this context, pedagogical conditions are specific factors. In case of this research, pedagogical conditions will imply the totality of necessary measures contributing to a successful development of students' creative independence: provision of a creative psychological climate, development of learner's creative independence, development of student's creative potential. Most frequently, pedagogical conditions are understood as factors, circumstances, measures on which the effectiveness of pedagogical system's functioning depends.

The theoretical basis of the authorial didactic model based on style modeling has a special role among pedagogical conditions. The didactic model serves for the formation of an independent creative cognition, where thinking processes involve such mental operations as comparison, analysis, correlation, deduction, judgement, synthesis. Independent creative work provides conditions where special psychological mechanisms start operating, such as student's intuition, creativity, and self-effectiveness. They provide for students' developing a very essential quality – the ability to transform. Non-standardized tasks, the change of the existing improvisation style, involvement of students into the activity that answers to their inner gravitation towards self-realization develop student's creative abilities and increase personal interest, wish and volition. ***Style modeling*** may become such an activity for students.

The basic teacher's function during the process of learning style modeling is to organize the pedagogical process in such a way that learning of improvisation fundamentals would have both theoretical and practical aspects (Reimer, 1989; Elliott, 1995; Hallam, 2006; Столяр, 2010; Spigins, 2013, 2015, 2017). This may be done by using various work forms, e. g.: the analysis of music pieces of different genre, style and epochs; modifying melodic, harmonious, rhythmic, and textural material; spontaneous composing musical pieces or their elements; choosing examples of audio- and video recordings adequate to the studied style and genre. And finally, joint improvisation based on the acquired skills. Joint improvisation implements the practical direction and is an indispensable condition for shaping and developing students' knowledge and skills necessary for the profession of a future music teacher.

The process of style modeling of improvisation consists of such stages as:

- Defining the aim of style modeling;
- Setting and describing tasks;
- Analysis of the object or the process to be modelled.

The process of style modeling of improvisation includes modeling of:

- Musical ideas;
- Logic of construction (the order of exposition, development and interrelation of musical ideas depending on the form of improvisation);
- Linguistic plane (melody, harmony, rhythm, texture);

- Principles of development (repetition, transformed repetition, elaboration, derived contrast, contrast of correlation).

The process of style modeling can be fixed as schemes which reflect the stylistic peculiarities of melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, and logic of the construction of improvisation and as various oral and written descriptions of a syntactic, intonation-imagery and contextual-historical analysis for identifying the stylistic regularities of improvisation (Pressing, 2000; Ward, 2004; Spigins, 2013, 2017). All theoretical descriptions are approbated in practice either in a collective or solo improvisation already in the initial stage of modeling. The obtained stylistic model is constantly supplemented by the necessary experimental changes identified during the process of an additional analysis and practical work. During the process of this work, it is necessary to use the method of sorting out variants and of comparing, analyzing and correlating them. This, in turn, will lead students to some judgements and conclusions during the process of style modeling; if necessary, additional experimental changes are made (Dairianathan & Stead, 2010; Spigins, 2013, 2017).

The effectiveness of mastering the theoretical basis during the process of learning the didactic model for style modeling of improvisation predominantly manifested the presence of objective non-specific factors. These objective non-specific factors are equally available for assimilation to all students, and the teacher's function does not consist of making all students improvisers but rather in maximally developing their creative abilities. The manifestation of principal specific individual-psychological factors of effectiveness occurs against the background of the principal non-specific factors, therefore under all other equal conditions some students achieve better creative results than the rest. We will describe now the manifestation of principal specific individual-psychological factors.

B. Principal specific individual-psychological factors

Let's see how against the background of principal non-specific factors the activity of specific individual-psychological factors is manifested, due to which under all other equal conditions some students achieve better creative results than the rest. In the given context, the principal specific individual-psychological factor of effectiveness is the basic or general musical abilities (Назайкинский, 1972; Теплов, 2005). The contemporary science is of the opinion that to the basic musical abilities belong ear for music, sense of musical rhythm, musical memory, musical thinking and musical imagination (Овсянкина, 2007).

In the introduction to this paper, we listed improvisers' creative skills which they develop during the process of mastering the fundamentals of improvisation. Let's discuss now the skills mentioned above in detail.

The ability to be guided by integrated impressions, integrated images, which fulfil the function of some kind of generalized "subject" frames. At the concert, the improviser is guided by integrated impressions, integrated images which fulfil the function of a kind of generalized "subject" frames. An integrated impression appears to be, first of all, an unconscious, 'spontaneous' process which has nothing in common with the moment of the conscious, artificial combination of elements (Курт, 2005). During the improvisation, this skill manifests itself in the professional competence of regrouping by suggestion the stable and mobile elements of improvisation. Traditionally,

improvisation based on generalized subject frames is understood as different types of expounding musical events. For example, introduction or exposition, elaboration or some other developing expounding of musical events, culmination, conclusion or the coda (in the best examples of improvisation) are improvised by suggestion. The way of developing musical events implies different sequence of using methods for developing and correlating elements of melody as well as improviser's motivation for transforming musical material. Modification is made on the basis of already finished fragments of melody: motifs, phrases, melodic formulas, according to improviser's selection. In this way, it is possible to diversify types of expounding musical events in the improvisation, for instance, by changing the sequence of methods of the development and motivation for modifying the musical material. It is also possible to change the sequence of and motivation for using stable and mobile improvisation elements themselves. For this, musical images must freely flash through imagination. This is why musical thinking and musical imagination are necessary (Теплов, 2005). Music must be comprehended, evaluated penetrating into its specific content. When students study and master improvisation note-graphic and musical-sound structures are used as auxiliary means. They may identify them with both ideal and material models (Spigins, 2017).

Improviser's ability to instantly assimilate any idea, to enrich it with images and creatively embody it in the material offered from outside; for example, during a collective creation, at exchanging replies in an ensemble improvisation, and, in general, at perceiving and developing an alien improvisation line in the ensemble. In this case, this is not a spontaneous lyrical self-realization, but a public and urgent obeying a strange creative will - a skill of stirring up the whole improviser's creativity, the whole richness of imagination at the needed moment for fulfilling a single musical task dictated from outside and transforming it into a personal creative act. Within the given context, it is irrelevant to speak about the initial freedom and absolute independence of will and consciousness at creating images. The speech sooner is about the improvisation on the given theme (in a broad sense of the word). To cope with the tasks which improvisers face in such situations, the improviser needs qualities relating to the influence of previous experience on perception – apperception. And this experience must have a definite content and quality. B. Teplov emphasizes the fact that only a person with great spiritual – intellectual and emotional – content may be a great musician (Теплов, 2005). To assimilate any musical idea, to enrich with images and creatively embody the material offered from outside, we need such a psychological factor as ear for music which allows not only for hearing the sound, but also for evaluating all qualities of a sound, intonation, and the whole musical construction; first of all, musical timbre, pitch, loudness, and sound length.

The ability to intuitively search for creative solutions among the multiformity of musical impressions and emotions

Using K. Martinsen's (Мартинсен, 1966) statement, during the process of improvisation, improviser's sound-creating volition is heavily based on the moment of spontaneity and instantaneousness. Separate stretches of a thinking process, as a unity of the sensual and the rational, flash through the consciousness relatively unconsciously, but the outcome – a specific embodiment of the intuitive into the realities of musical texture – is absolutely clear and conscious. The decisive importance in the process of materializing musical ideas does not belong so much to the experience

of creating sound constructions guided by consciousness as to subconsciousness (Юнг, 1992). On the one hand, musical ideas, which the improviser is aware of, release the assets of sub consciousness, on the other hand, subconsciousness, by sending different impulses into the consciousness, enriches them up to materialization (Спигин, 2008; Spigins, 2015, 2017). This is why many researchers of problems on mastering improvisation insist on learners' developing their creativity and intuition (Green & Gallwey, 1987; Burnard, 2000; Burnard & Younker, 2004; Thompson & Lehmann, 2004; Barrett, 2005; Koutsoupidou, 2005; Webster, 2005; Goncy & Waehler, 2006; Hickey, 2009; Spigins, 2013, 2015, 2017).

The process of improvisation is a succession of moments during which materialize unpredictable to some extent mental constructs of a sound-creating will that follow each other in real time of performing. To develop the ability to intuitively search for creative solutions among the multiformity of musical impressions and emotions, we need such psychological factors as musical memory, musical thinking, and musical imagination. Musical memory enables to retain impressions and emotions, musical thinking creatively combines links and relations between different musical impressions and emotions, while musical imagination intuitively arranges different musical impressions and emotions in a succession of moments during which materialize unpredictable to some extent mental constructs of a sound-creating will, that follow each other in real time of performing (Spigins, 2013, 2015, 2017).

The ability to change the previous program of activities during the process of improvisation

Any process of improvisation (if it is really a creative but not a mechanical and deliberately uncontrollable) is accompanied by some new melodic nuances, fresh harmonic coloring, unusual textural solutions and articulative shades. Sometimes, the dynamics of accents, repletion of intonations and sounding are changed; sometimes even the very plastic of a creative behavior and the character of embodying improviser's personality into the created musical image are transformed. This happens due to various reasons. Sometimes the improviser is encouraged to such an impromptu by a creative dissatisfaction, an unforeseen search for a different solution, a strong need for experimenting, but sometimes - by a changed creative feeling which also determines the modus of improvisation process. And sometimes these might be unusual visual factors, a new situation, different acoustics, an unusual instrument, unfamiliar audience, new performers. In such cases, the improviser is hardly aware beforehand about the necessity to change the previous program of activities and often himself feels quite stunned by the situation (Адорно, 2001). For example, a rhythmic pulsation (stirred up to life by the improviser) suddenly gains an influence over the process of the development of form. And then, yielding to its potential, its immanent logic, its inner dynamics, its creative imperative, the improviser also further follows the direction of the creative development prompted by it, even despite his/her initial plan. In this context, improvisation can be regarded as a logical and psychological model of a creative process in general. The ability to change the previous program of activities during the process of improvisation is implemented on the basis of the great variability of temporal correlations. By relying on the sense of musical rhythm, the improviser can change the previous program of activities during the process of improvisation, but the rhythmic pulsation must not be lost.

*The ability to generate productive ideas,
to promote intellectual spontaneous activity*

A collective improvisational beginning (especially at exchanging replies in ensemble improvisation with the necessity to go into the structure of genuine artistic) genuine original cognition which can be comprehended also as a succession of local, happening in a real time of performing, improvisations. A collective creative process is experimental throughout its whole course at generating any (not merely musical) productive ideas. By the principles of generating new ideas, collective improvisation greatly resembles the methods for promoting intellectual spontaneous activity in research and invention programs. And at some stages of collective improvisation, in some of its manifestations - this is not so much following the already existing plans and models as a naturally developing rejection of them (Рунин, 1980). Occasionally, on the textural, syntactic and compositional level, there appears something unforeseen even for the improviser himself/herself. However clear and perfect the conception might have been, the improvisation opens up, appears before us in all the totality of its tasks only during the process when the texture materializes under improviser's fingers. In such cases grows the role of apperception: turning to the past, to the image of the events in the past. Here, for both the performer himself/herself and other participants of this activity, there is always place for new and unexpected solutions. The ability to generate productive ideas, to promote intellectual spontaneous activity requires the whole complex of basic musical abilities – ear for music, sense of musical rhythm, musical memory, musical thinking and musical imagination.

The ability to analyze and model original musical ideas

During the act of creation, the improviser holds a constant dialogue with what he/she is creating and through this also with the reality around him/her. The improviser might become aware of the fact that the needs of the audience essentially differ from his/her initial perceptions, however a sensitive and thoughtful improviser will analyze and assimilate them – and this is what allows us to call the process a creative cognition, and it often becomes a source of original creative findings. Through the moment of improvisation, a musician forces also the process of perceiving the logic of composition. A lot of musicians consider improvisation the generator of a creative process. Creativity is a process of self-organization, of self-disposition, and here the starting point, the first impulse is extremely important. And in this case, the improvisation may perform the function of inspiring personality's creative state and may determine the whole course of further development of a creative idea (Рунин, 1980; Spigins, 2013). Improvisation promotes musician's immanent potential; it saves the mind from inertia, gives life and spontaneity to this art. The ability to analyze and model original creative musical ideas relies on musical memory, and musical memory, in its turn, implements the procedures of sorting out variants of combinations of musical ideas for modeling.

*The ability to organize the process of creating a musical form
from accidental fragments of other integrated systems*

A careful examination of improviser's creative work cannot be closed into the sphere of regularities. Any improvisation can proceed within the framework of only 'relative necessity'. It is impossible to calculate some certain empirical or theoretical totality of improviser's experience, and it is difficult to establish the informative context of his/her choice. The style and content of improvisation art are not stable, they can change, and

they do not obey any precise laws of their existence. Everything that is necessary and possible for the improviser and which he strives to collect and merge together even under the conditions of maximal intention, is, until the moment of creating a musical form, only accidental fragments from other integrated systems. Improviser's creative work is the struggle of his/her individuality with the trends – depersonalizing it, with styles, dominant ideas in music and a modeling of an individual informative system, which partially transforms later into a common system. In improviser's activity, chance determines his/her changeability in respect of information sources, changeability of functional meanings of the material in them (style, genre, improvisation content) and depends on a number of moments, for example social, historical, biological. The development of the ability to organize the process of creating a musical form from accidental fragments of other integrated systems is based on the whole complex of basic musical abilities.

Conclusions

1. Having successfully passed the tests in theory of mastering the fundamentals of improvisation, some students felt quite helpless at practical classes. Students felt rather perplexed. In the result of different kind of testing carried out among the students, it became clear that only those students who have ear for music, sense of musical rhythm, musical memory, musical thinking and musical imagination are able to understand regularities of links and relations between elements of musical form. The point is that mastering the fundamentals of musical improvisation consists of learning the theoretical basis of the didactic model for stylistic modeling as well as of the development of theoretical skills of improviser's practical activity. In the effectiveness of learning the theoretical fundamentals of the process of mastering the didactic model for the stylistic modeling of musical improvisation, the objective non-specific factors were the prevailing ones.
2. But the effectiveness of the development of creative skills of improviser's practical activity during the process of mastering the fundamentals of the didactic model for the stylistic modeling of musical improvisation depended completely on specific individual-psychological factors, which has been shown by the results of this specific case study. Under equal pedagogical conditions, which in this context are non-specific factors, just individual-psychological factors are those that determine achieving good results in students' activity at mastering practical musical improvisation.
3. We have to bear in mind the fact that even a very musically gifted person was not born with 'ready' musical abilities, but only with potentialities for them (Выготский, 1960, 1998; Леонтьев, 1975). The development of musical abilities from these potentialities requires hard teacher's as well as improviser's work, and this also needs environment imbued with musical culture.

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