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PROBLEMS IN MUSIC PEDAGOGY

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Problems in Music Pedagogy is an international refereed journal concerned with all aspects of music pedagogy. Topic areas include music teaching/learning process in a new education paradigm context, music learning outcomes, assessment in music pedagogy process, music teaching and learning activities, music teacher competence in the context of sustainable development, music education institutional responses to current trends. The journal is committed to promoting excellence in these fields by providing an international forum for the debate and evaluation of a wide range of music pedagogy issues and professional concerns.

The journal aims to publish articles which will contribute to improving theory and practice in the field of music pedagogy.

These articles may variously:

- raise and debate contemporary issues;
- report on new research;
- relate new research to theory;
- relate theory to practice;
- offer informed comment on contextual and professional matters;
- describe cases and their implications for a wider field;
- discuss a historical movement in terms of its relevance to present and future situations.

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Contents

EDITORIAL

The new volume of "Problems in Music Pedagogy" contains articles reflecting the research, practical experience and theoretical propositions dealing with the problems in music education.

Rūta GIRDZIJAUSKIENĖ and Milda VITARTAITĖ from Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater focus on the musical identity of a music teacher. Using the method of narrative analysis, authors stress that the perception of teacher's professional identity should be the focus of attention of both teachers and schools. Data of this research could be a valuable material for offering recommendations how to improve music teacher's training.

Katri-Liis VAINIO from University of Helsinki (Finland) offers the results of a multiple case study, which aimed to determine Estonian music teachers' needs for a better development of their voice training. In the frames of the elaborated study, course "Teachers' Voice" the embodiment-based vocal training method VoicePilates is characterised.

Two articles are concerned with the problems in the field of instrument playing pedagogy:

- *In their article Kateryna ZAVALKO and Adilie KHALILOVA (National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, Ukraine) discuss the problem of diagnosing a preschooler's readiness for learning to play a musical instrument. Authors stress that the formation of preschoolers' readiness for learning to play a musical instrument can be carried out during musical lessons in kindergartens by using elements of pre-instrumental training;*
- *Maksim Bendelston and Jelena Davidova characterize the classical guitar curriculum in the context of the development of junior school-age children's musical culture.*

The study by Māra MARNAUZA and Tālis GŽIBOVSKIS (Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, Latvia) is concerned with the development of steadiness of attention and ability to concentrate during the process of learning to play percussion instruments. Using the COG Test authors determined the pre-conditions necessary for expressing the young musician's personality and musical abilities.

The purpose of the study by Antonios VERVERIS (University of Ioannina, Greece) and Nigel MARHSALL (University of Sussex, United Kingdom) was to explore the experience of elderly adults who sing on a regular basis with a community choir. Authors have discovered that the main factor that attracts singers to the choir is the opportunity to participate in a successful organization in addition to the aesthetic and social joys that it

offers. It means that a conductor of a choir with elder singers should maintain a balance between activities that bring joy to the singers but also give the opportunity for a further improvement.

At getting acquainted with the research findings of our colleagues from various countries we enrich our own experience, broaden our vision of processes in music pedagogy and reach the conclusion that we have much more in common than different.

On behalf of editor-in-chief of the journal, I express my appreciation to the authors, Editorial Board, Editorial Staff, Council of Science of Daugavpils University and the Academic Press "Saule" for successful teamwork, perseverance and valuable support to the continuation of this periodical.

Editor-in-chief
Jelena DAVIDOVA

MUSICAL IDENTITY OF A MUSIC TEACHER

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Abstract
The article analyzes the problem of musical identity of a music teacher. Alongside with the presentation of the research on the subject, the concept of identity, specific features of teacher's identity, controversies of music teacher's identity are discussed as well. The strategy of narrative analysis has been chosen for the empirical research, the narratives provided by four music teachers are examined, after having answered the question: when did you feel yourself to be a musician in the context of a pedagogical activity? The research data has been analyzed through the method of thematic analysis, i. e. the aim was to look for common thematic elements among the participants of the research and their stories. Analysis of the presented narratives helped to highlight the categories of teachers' musical identity: artistic individuality of a music teacher, interpretation of music as the expression of musical identity, interaction between identities of a musician and a pedagogue.
Keywords*: music teacher, musical identity*

Introduction

Identity is one of the most problematic concepts of social sciences and the humanities (Valantiejus, 2001). This is because each person has several identities: national, professional, institutional, cultural, gender, race, ethnic, etc. (Čiubrinskas, 2008; Mensah, 2012; McClellan, 2017; Sakadolskienė, 2017). Personal identity can be related to a person's roles performed in

a) a specific social group (for example, in family a woman is a mother, a wife, a daughter, a chef, and a women at the same time),
b) in professional activity (for example, a musician can be a performer, an artist manager, a music pedagogue, a seminar tutor at the same time),

c) in society (for example, a musician can be a freelance artist, a public servant or a citizen at the same time).

Some identities are particularly striking, others are less, depending on the surroundings and the role performed in a specific situation. Identification can be both a long-term and an instanteneous process, determined by a specific situation and its context.

Representatives of each profession have their own identity. The problem of a teacher's identity has been extensively investigated by educologists, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and is related to the purpose of a pedagogue's profession 'to bring up' a society (Verbylė, 2014; Carrillo, Baguley & Vilar, 2015; Sakadolskienė, 2017). Ballantyne, Kerchner & Arostegui (2012) perceive a teacher's identity as the essence of this profession. According to the scientists, a teacher's identity performs an essential role in the educational process, since the perception of one's role as of an educator, and the prevailing educational philosophy determine the character of teacher's participation in the educational process.

In works by the authors who have investigated the identity of a music teacher (Isbell, 2008; Ballantyne & Grootenboer, 2012; McClellan, 2017) the constituent parts of a music pedagogue's identity are presented, and their characteristic features are discussed. Scientists

a) analyze the identity of a music teacher as the result of his/her socialization (Isbell, 2008; Pellegrino, 2009),
b) relate it to personal qualities and specifics of professional activity (Ballantyne & Grootenboer, 2012; Martišauskienė & Tavoras, 2012),
c) present the models of identity (Ballantyne & Grootenboer, 2012; McClellan, 2017),
d) demonstrate the controversy of the identities of the representatives of this profession – a musician and a pedagogue (Pellegrino, 2009).

Various models of music teacher's identity were discussed in scientific literature. Wagoner (as cited in McClellan, 2017) considers that identity of a music teacher is based on five criteria: self-assessment, dedication to profession, inner strength, team spirit, all-encompassing activity of a music teacher. Isbell (2008) discusses three forms of the identity of a music teacher: teacher – self, teacher – other and a musician. Hargreaves and et al. (as cited in McClellan, 2017) identifies the following components of the conception of a music teacher's identity: time management, emotional perseverance, confidence, problem solving abilities, ability of setting adequate targets and respecting priorities.

Pellegrino (2009) presents a research carried out in Sweden in 1998 with 169 music teachers, during which the participants answered to two questions: *Who do you think you can be? Who do you want to become?*

Based on the research results four categories of music teacher's identity are distinguished: *all-around musician*, *performer*, *pupil-centered teacher, content-centered teacher*. Music pedagogues, defined as *all-around musician* or *pupil-centered teacher*, indicate their preference to knowledge of various music styles and development of different musical abilities. Meanwhile *performer* and *content-centered teacher* devote

more attention to individual music preferences, i. e. to the genre where they are most experienced and the instrument, which a teacher himself/herself can play.

Ballantyne & Grootenboer (2012) discuss the identity of a music teacher in three aspects: a music teacher as a pedagogue, a music teacher as a musician, interaction of these identities. According to the researchers, when identifying with the role of a pedagogue, teachers emphasize relations with pupils, their knowledge and mutual respect. Authors regard musical identity as necessary condition for successful teaching of music. According to McClellan (2017), orientation of a teacher-musician, self-concept and social identity of a music teacher (contact with co-workers, managers, lecturers, understanding of the value of teaching music, work environment) emerge as key components of music teacher's identity.

Reviewing scientific literature, Pellegrino (2009) related to the problem of music teacher's identity, believes that the conflict between music teacher's double identity exists. Controversy occurs when high expectations are set out not to one, but to several roles performed by teachers. According to the scientist, time management, attempt to harmonize teacher's professional life (lessons, rehearsals, meetings, document management), socialization and family life become a problem. High expectations, orientation towards different spheres of professional activity might have an adverse effect on teacher's performance at work and on the professional career. On the other hand, according to McClellan (2017), different identities of a music teacher are not necessarily controversial and can be the essential factor of success in music education.

Researchers (Pellegrino, 2009; Ballantyne & Grootenboer, 2012) show that music pedagogues prefer identity of a musician and tend to identify with the role of a music performer. Particularly music experiences become the instrument enabling music teachers to perceive who they are and what they are doing. Musical abilities determine identification of music teachers with relevant roles: pedagogues with high musical abilities are more likely to identify themselves as musicians, meanwhile teachers, aware of the lack of their musical abilities, have a tendency of identifying with a role of a teacher (Ballantyne, Kerchner & Arostegui, 2012). Isbell (2008) points out that the identity of a teacher becomes stronger with age and experience accumulated in a particular sphere.

A short review of research on music teacher's identities shows that this problem has been quite extensively investigated. However, only some researchers have paid attention to understanding of teacher's musical identity. Analysing teacher's identity the method of interview with music teachers is applied in most cases. Varied research by using different methodological approaches has not been done often. We succeeded to find only some examples of narrative analysis in scientific literature investigating a teacher's identity (Pellegrino, 2009; Carillo and at al., 2015). In the opinion of the authors of the article, narrative analysis is the most appropriate to reveal the characteristics of music teacher's identity since the participants are indirectly presenting their personal views about the issues raised. Given that, the research questions have been raised:

- *In what contexts of professional activity does teachers' musical identity manifest itself?*
- *What are the spheres of its expression?*

The object of the research: musical identity of a music teacher.

The aim of the research: to reveal the features of a music teacher's identity.

The methods of the research: analysis of literature and a narrative interview with music teachers.

Methodology and Sample

The strategy of narrative analysis has been chosen for the empirical research. Narrative can be *„the structure of the reflexion on research, the method, the object of the research (phenomenon) and methodology at the same time. <...> It is a form of a qualitative research, containing collection of narratives – written, oral and visual"* (Žydžiūnaitė & Sabaliauskas, 2017, 232). According to Seidman (2006), a narrative can be a short story about a specific event, retelling of significant events in an individual's life or the narrative of the whole life. The basis of this research is narratives of music teachers. Teachers were asked to tell about a situation in their professional activity when they felt to be musicians. Analysis of the research data helped to identify the spheres of expression of teachers' musical identity.

Participants of the research

The strategy of narrative analysis is not appropriate to explore the population. In this case, the analysis limits itself to the narrative of several people or even one person (Riessman, 2012). The basis of this research became the narratives of four music teachers (Rasa, Daiva, Vida, Jane – names have been changed), working at schools in Klaipėda city. While choosing the participants of the research, teachers' experience in music and their professional activity were the main arguments. All teachers have been working as music pedagogues for more than 15 years, they all have the category of expert teacher, they conduct lessons and manage pupils' music collectives that have won in national and international contests multiple times. During the research, the participants were regarded as intelligent, flexible figures capable of adapting to the situation profesionally and with understanding. Participants of the research were not considered as informants, acting in accordance with the framework established by the researcher, but rather more like the subjects of the research, its participants, co-workers (Žydžiūnaitė & Sabaliauskas, 2017).

Collection and analysis of the research data

The essential method used in the narrative analysis for the collection of data is interview. The main aim during the interview is to recreate personal experience of the participant within the framework of the theme investigated. The researchers carried out the following three-interview series model by Seidman (2006). During the first interview, the context of the participant's experience was explored; during the second interview, there was a discussion about specific experience within the framework of the theme analyzed; in the third interview, the participant was asked to reflect on her experience. In the beginning of the meetings, teacher told her stories. Later, in order to collect the material as informative as possible, teacher contacted again to supplement and specify the information. Researchers asked teacher to tell briefly about her work

experience, present and past musical activities. This information was regarded as a social, artistic, pedagogical context of the collected stories.

Teachers answered to open question: tell a story about the case when you felt yourself a musician in the context of a pedagogical activity. The researchers presented the question a week before the meeting. This way the teachers had an opportunity to remember and decide which story was the most significant to them. The participants could tell their stories in the form chosen.

During the interview, the researcher fulfilled the requirements set to the narrative interview: there were no prior hypotheses made before the interviews, this way allowing the participants' freedom and the researchers a necessary space to put forward hypotheses and draw conclusions later while analysing the research materials. The aim was to remain open, to discover what the stories had to offer (Seidman, 2006).

Transcription of the information obtained during the interviews was performed meticulously, recording every word of the participants, alongside with such elements as pauses, laughter, smiles. In the opinion of the researchers, in certain cases these details influenced the understanding of words' meaning. After the transcription of the interviews, the authors of the work shaped each teacher's personal history from the material obtained. Attention was paid to a specific event that, according to the teachers, reflected the theme of the work and more fully answered the question presented. In order to give to a reader the story in fluent language, the researchers edited transcriptions by performing the following actions:

1) *unnecessary, repeating words, and word parts that do not change the meaning of the word or a compound were eliminated;*
2) *in some cases the word order in a sentence was changed;*
3) *additional words were inserted for a reader to understand the idea better.*

Based on transcribed narratives the researchers performed the interpretive data analysis (Riessman, 2012). The research data was analyzed using the method of thematic analysis, i. e. by looking for common thematic elements among the participants of the research and their stories. The primary stage of the data analysis consisted of reading the interview transcriptions in order to immerse into the data (Harlow & Cobb, 2014), to perceive *"the variety of understandings, behaviour, strategies and interactions"* of the research participants (Žydžiūnaitė & Sabaliauskas, 2017, 58). The next step was encoding of the data and their allocation to as many categories as possible. The third stage aimed at reducing the number of categories by combining them in larger thematic groups. During the research, the issues related to performance of the research and interpretation of the results were considered; they were compared to the conclusions found in scientific literature. In order to ensure the validity of the research, description of the research results was presented to the participants of the research to determine whether their experiences were correctly understood. There were not any remarks or adjustments presented.

The Results of the Research

Empirical research on musical identity of a music teacher has revealed the following thematic categories: artistic individuality of a music teacher, interpretation of music as

the expression of musical identity, interaction between the identities of a musician and a pedagogue. Alongside with their presentation, quotes from teachers' stories will be provided.

A. Artistic individuality of a music teacher

According to Martišauskienė & Tavoras (2012), artistic individuality in teacher's activity manifests itself through reflexivity, creativity, responsibility and artistic elements. Responsibility in Rasa's and Jane's narratives is observed through their work with pupils while preparing them for performances, respect for the audience, understanding of personal role to obtain results. Jane tells: „*I teach my pupils that we have to go on stage fully prepared, respecting the listener. Being on stage has to be respected*". The teacher considers the moment on stage as very important, requiring particular preparedness from a pupil or a group: „*I tell my pupils – let's always put more effort during rehearsals*". Attention to responsible preparedness is highlighted in Rasa's narrative: „*We went to sing like in a concert, not in a rehearsal*". Teacher's personal attitude towards the performance of the interpreted music is important: *„If a composition does not sound properly, I myself did not do everything needed, did not open the composition, did not understand it*"(Rasa).

Artistic individuality is also reflected through teacher's inner strength (McClellan, 2017), through decision-making power based on experience (Martišauskienė & Tavoras, 2012). In narratives inner strength manifests itself through teacher's ability to influence pupils, a pedagogue's energy: „*If a teacher is interested, pupils will also get interested*". According to Vida, a teacher's strong belief in the value of something is passed on to the other person. This idea is supportted by Rasa's narrative, which illustrates how a teacher's inner strength is manifested during the time when the composition is prepared. Then a teacher serves as an inspiration, as an example showing to pupils how to experience and render the idea of the composition suggestively, and how to become a leader to the listeners helping them to perceive the music performed. „*This is highly dependent on me*"(Rasa).

Inner strength is necessary to not only create an interest or inspire. In Daiva's narrative the importance of teacher's belief in her powers in the contexts of an artistic activity can be seen. The pedagogue tells that pupils without any music education come to her to sing, but „*still with patience and work a lot can be done*". Daiva speaks about the concept of personal powers by paraphrasing a well-known proverb: „*Everyone is the master of one's destiny, the result will depend on the effort made*".

Artistic individuality is related to the orientation of a teacher – a musician (McClellan, 2017). Perception of oneself as of a teacher or a musician influences the pedagogue's attitudes, decisions made. The narratives analyzed could serve as an example showing the conflict between the identities of a musician and a teacher described in literature. Two teachers – Daiva and Jane – have different attitudes. According to Jane, *„a music teacher firstly has to be professional musician*", meanwhile Daiva is convinced to the contrary: „*I am not a performer, I am a teacher*". Even though their professional understanding differs, teachers' narratives enable thinking that they both are oriented towards pupils and work with them.

If we regard a successful teacher as the one who is capable of working brilliantly and bringing up the young generation, then success of a musician – a performer or a

creator – in many cases depends on how well teacher's personal and musical abilities are developed. The theme of musical abilities appears in teachers' narratives several times, when the content of music education requires certain musical abilities that manifest themselves in particular contexts. Most often beyond lessons. Due to this reason, the situations where pupils get acquainted with musical abilities of their music teacher are special. This is illustrated by Vida's narrative. A teacher claims: „*I never sing in operatic voice, which I studied in university*". Once the teacher demonstrated her vocal abilities; her pupils „*could not believe*. *They looked at me as if enchanted, this was completely out of the ordinary to them*". In this situation Vida as though discovers her musical abilities again: „*Then I felt that I have preserved that opera basis, <...> that was the moment, when I understood myself that I was still capable of using the experience accumulated*"; „*I felt like an expert in vocal*".

For teacher Jane musical abilities are necessary to work with the choir: „*It is enough only to hear that sound of four voices when fifty people start singing, it is a complete satisfaction. Then I think – how much I can do, how much we can do together*". Although in the quotation musical abilities are attributed to the whole collective, a teacher also evaluates the influence of her own musical abilities on the result: „*How much I can do"*.

Daiva feels herself to be a musician in similar situations, i. e. when she performs music together with her pupils: „*I sing on stage together with children. So I am a musician permanently*". Daiva also has a firm attitude towards musical abilities of music teachers: „*Obviously, a teacher has to be professional, undoubtedly. He/she has to know musical issues, particularly playing music, singing, vocal, for sure. Otherwise, there will not be any result*". Even though teachers' musical abilities often stay ‚aside', however, the participants acknowledge their importance.

B. Interpretation of music as the expression of musical identity

From pedagogues' narratives, a teacher is comparable to a musician when he/she organizes non-formal activities, participates in events, concerts, competitions. It is particularly in these contexts where teachers' musical identity reveals. Referring to the narratives presented, teachers relate musical activity to the interpretation of compositions. All narratives present musical experiences beyond the context of a lesson, the identity of a musician is discovered during non-formal musical activity.

Teacher Rasa starts her story with the description of a person interpreting music: *„As a musician I could present many and various examples of performing music, since you try to interpret each composition <...> to look for the way of its performance. I like it, I enjoy looking for that key".* Searching for the variant of interpreting the composition is a situation experienced continuously. Concerning pupils' preparation to the contest, Jane claims: *„I searched, they searched, we searched together".* The process of musical activity is constantly accompanied by finding a new arrangement, designing the plan of interpreting the piece. „Looking for those keys"is interesting to Rasa, this process inspires and excites her.

The motive of 'leaving school frames' is significant in narratives. Teachers perceive playing music at school as an everyday, challenge-free activity. The participants do not relate music lessons to artistic activity and they even define lessons as 'frames'. Escaping the frames, according to Rasa, means *„feeling good on stage, rendering one's inner world, sharing music and the gift of musicianship*". However, in the opinion of

teachers, performing abilities are not the most important. As Vida argues, „*performance technique is not everything*. *Maybe pupils are not capable of performing everything as professional artists, but majority of them have values higher than school standard*". The lack of pupils' abilities to perform does not lessen the opportunity to bring value to the composition, to convey musical message.

Teachers' thoughts regarding listeners' reactions, recognition received, impression made on the audience are also important. Jane urges her pupils: „*Let's enjoy our singing*, *people's reactions*", and talking about the performance she considers: „*Our work has been presented and it has been performed in such a way that it could reach every listener*". During the preparation for the international competition Jane says to her pupils: „*Let's tell a story about Lithuania in songs*". In teacher's opinion, it is mandatory for a music performer to not only discover and fill compositions with meaning, but also to convey this meaning to listeners: „*If you are on stage, then you are higher than the audience in the strict sense. This means you have to respect them and sing in such a way that they understood why you are on stage"*.

The effect of music performance on the listener was mentioned in the stories of all teachers. Therefore, teachers set high requirements to themselves and the pupils. As maintained by Rasa, „*You can sing notes very well and without faults, but you need to convey the content, to send out a message*". It depends on the teacher whether and how pupils will succeed in expressing the idea of the composition. Rasa assumes the responsibility for the performance of the composition: „*It depends on me a lot, since we travel together with pupils the road of sharing music*".

C. Interaction between the identities of a musician and a pedagogue

Conversations with the research participants, transcriptions of the interviews and later stories prepared on their basis show that in music teacher's profession identities of a musician and a teacher are inextricably linked. Even though the question given to the teachers focused their attention on musical identity, still their stories are full of statements showing that they perceive themselves as educators. Even in the first coversation Jane argued: „*Why do I particularly feel that as a professional musician? Because some of my pupils have chosen a career in music*". Pupils, their achievements in music, choice of a career in music are pointed out as factors allowing regarding oneself as a musician. Pupils' success allowed Jane to consider herself a successful musician. Vida's experience is similar. Vida discovers herself as a musician after sharing with pupils in her skills: *„When I started singing in operatic voice, pupils were astonished. Then I felt myself such a professional singer"*. Both stories show that pedagogical moments encourage teachers to perceive themselves as musicians and vice versa.

In the narratives different identities of a teacher are revealed: some constantly performed, others – in certain situations. Teachers perceive themselves not only as musicians or teachers, but also as 'inspiration' to pupils' activity. Rasa thinks that a teacher is the basic impetus supporting pupils' activity, their inspiration for search, intensity of activity: „*If a teacher is interested, children become interested as well*". The narratives reveal that a teacher's activity is oriented towards not only music education, but also towards the development of a pupil's personality. Such an attitude stimulates a music teacher to undertake a responsible and meaningful activity. In the stories of the research participants, a frequent theme is a desire to give, to convey, and to show. Sharing the experience is a striking motive in Vaida's story, where she discovers for

herself how meaningful music teacher's profession is: „*You start to understand that you already feel them and you can give them a lot. A magic moment when they acquire teacher's knowledge, experience, understanding*".

The ability to perceive pupils' potencial is of no lesser importance. Vida points out that *„it is obvious how pupils think, what their opinion of meaningful moments of understanding music is".* Jane reasons: *„The essence of pedagogical work is not to overload with tasks, with theoretical subjects. Pupils need to be open for music. Not the tasks performed in the classroom or their quantity is of the key importance".* What is essential in pedagogical work then? According to Jurga, *„…humanity comes in the first place".* The theme that recurs in the stories is the relations of the participants with pupils, their wish to work in educational sphere. *„I love children",* - Daiva explains her choice to become a teacher. Rasa argues: *„This contact with children is, in fact, the most important".* A need for unity and warm relationship with pupils is expressed in Jane's narrative: *„It was a fantastic feeling to be on stage and not to conduct my pupils, but to be a part of their collective, to be together with them. Being on stage with pupils is what motivates me".*

Conclusions

1. Identity is defined as a constantly evolving multi-faceted phenomenon, enabling to give meaning to oneself and to find one's place in the society. Each individual creates one's personal (Self) and social (the role performed in the community) identities. Depending on situation and context, a person performs different roles in life and activity that could be designated as identities. Each individual has many different identities.

2. A teacher's identity is a construct based on which a teacher designs one's existence, behaviour, perception of work and one's place in society. In a contemporary educational paradigm, the attitude towards a teacher is radically changing: he/she is perceived as a creator, an initiator, a leader. Controversy concerning a teacher's profession has also been analyzed in scientific literature: a teacher is characterised as a person relying on personal philosophy and assuming responsibility for pupils' education, but at the same time 'pandering' the system and formal commitments. A teacher's identity is recognized as the essential condition for the implementation of educational goals.

3. The main characteristic feature of a music teacher's identity is controversy manifesting itself in the conflict between the identities of a musician and a teacher. Some authors regard this conflict as a negative phenomenon; others - identify it as a factor of success in a professional activity. Taking into account the relationship between the identities of a teacher and a musician, music pedagogues form their educational philosophy alongside with priorities and a teaching style. It is also observed that music teachers create 'Self' through relations with music and people.

4. Empirical research on musical identity of a music teacher has revealed the following thematic categories: music teacher's artistic individuality, interpretation of music as the expression of musical identity, interaction between the identities of a musician and a pedagogue. Artistic individuality of a

music teacher manifests itself through reflexivity, creativity, responsibility and artistic elements. Artistic individuality is also defined as the inner strength of a teacher, decision-making power based on experience to take decisions oncerning music. In most cases, teachers relate musical identity to the interpretation of compositions, when music is experienced in a non-formal musical activity. New arrangement, creation of a plan for the interpretation, and performance of the composition to the listener, a desire to influence the audience are the constituent parts of the process of music performance. Even though teachers' aspirations are not always 'noticeable', they are significant to a teacher's musical identity, enabling to deal with the challenges in a professional activity. Personal educational philosophy is reflected in the research through the values fostered by music teachers: patient work, perseverance, humanity and community with others. In most cases, identities of a musician and a teacher are interrealated, supplementing each other. While talking about their experience as of musicians, teachers in most cases mention work with pupils.

5. In summary, perception of teacher's professional identity should be the focus of attention of both teachers and schools. It is particularly relevant to find ways how teachers could reflect on their professional activity, to guide music teacher's work taking into account the double professional identity (of a pedagogue and a musician), to initiate or orient teachers towards activities which would allow them to develop their identity in desired direction. Data of this research also enables universities to make recommendations how to improve music pedagogues's training. Cooperation between schools / teachers and universities could also be considered as a way allowing future music teachers to understand the structure of professional identity as well as their own identity. Study programmes, and particularly pedagogical practical placement, should be oriented towards perception of future music teacher's identity, individual needs of students.

6. Narrative analysis has helped not only to obtain information about teachers' musical identity, but has also enabled pedagogues to share their experience, to explain what they think and how. Therefore, the narrative analysis has to be regarded as an efficient research method to perceive educational processes (Harlow & Cobb, 2014). However, in order to understand music teachers' musical identity better, it would be appropriate to perform comparative analysis of identities of music teachers and teachers of other subjects as well as to take a comparative analysis of the factors influencing their formation, a more comprehensive justification of teaching and learning processes in this respect. Theoretical knowledge of music teacher's musical identity and knowledge of the situation based on research could contribute to training the teachers, and thus to the improvement of educational processes.

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DEVELOPING A CORPOREAL REFLECTIVE VOICEPILATES INTERVENTIONS FOR ESTONIAN TEACHERS' VOCAL NEEDS

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Abstract
Estonian teachers are at high risk of voice problems. In 2004-2005, 170 higher and pre-service teachers answered two voice questionnaires. Vocal education programs may prevent the emergence of vocal pathologies, using one-day study course "Teachers' Voice", in the frames of which the embodiment-based vocal training method VoicePilates is characterised and used. This method developed in Tallinn University and tested as multiple case-study with 240 Estonian teachers in 2005-2011 to identify, using open-ended semi-structured post-questionnaire, the self-perceived changes in the mechanics and sensation parameters of participating teachers´ voice, posture and body alignment, and to gather teachers' suggestions for continuing to develop the course. The key themes that emerged and helped continuing the course development, were: 1) Theory; 2) Organizational; 3) Practical voice and 4) Practical bodywork.
Keywords: *voice disorders, teachers, primary prevention, direct and indirect training, voice intervention design*

Introduction

Of all occupations, those engaged in teaching, are considered to be the most at-risk of incurring voice problems, this being common among teachers worldwide (Fritzell, 1996; Titze et al., 1997; Smith et al., 1998; Roy et al., 2005; Lyberg Åhlander et al., 2011b). Teaching requires vocal endurance, often in stressful conditions, where there is an expectation of optimal voice quality, and in environments that encourage ineffective voice use (Duffy & Hazlett, 2004). The vast majority of teachers, being professional voice users, are unaware of how to maintain or improve on their voice, which is their greatest professional asset and communication tool (Hazlett et al., 2009). Three levels of prevention are to be considered (RCSLT, 1996). Primary prevention, being ideal and most cost-efficient, promotes good practice before a problem has been identified, and one suggested method is voice training (Duffy & Hazlett, 2004). Secondary prevention is concerned with the identification of a problem, as the third level, tertiary prevention, focuses on the remediation of the impairment, disability, or

handicap of a condition (ibid). One of the main factors contributing to the high prevalence of voice disorders is the lack of voice training especially during teaching training courses (Niebudek-Bogusz et al., 2008). Vocal education programs for teachers, which include correct voice use training and information about vocal hygiene, may prevent the emergence of vocal pathologies (Bovo et al., 2007).

Voice practitioners from all over the world use following words to describe the perfect voice: healthy, expressive, connected, open, released, flexible (Shewell, 2009). Hollien suggests that 'good voice' has a lower than average habitual pitch level, softer rather than a louder voice level, variability in both loudness and pitch, a slower than average speaking rate and will 'not exhibit noise' (such as breathiness, harshness) (see Shewell, 2009).

According McAllion, speaker should always be able

a) to use the voice without hurting oneself in the process;
b) to use the voice fully and energetically for as long as he/she wants in a day with no deterioration of flexibility during that time;
c) to convey all the accuracy, subtlety and emotional expression needed for work demands, with the voice remaining absolutely under his/her control (see Shewell, 2009).

Voice is produced by coordination of three systems: respiration (lungs and diaphragm), phonation (the larynx, specifically the vocal folds), and resonance (the movement of the resulting sound waves through the vocal tract, the supraglottic spaces of the mouth and nose) (Shewell, 2009). In all of these systems voice depends on different movements: 1) movement of the muscles of respiration and skeleton keeping us upright; 2) movement of vibration of the vocal folds and of the air that becomes sound; 3) (a) movement of the tongue, lips, jaw, palate, cheeks; (b) movement of the muscles of the larynx, pharynx, the base of tongue. To be able to move such a complex system, the voice depends on the work of the rest of our systems (skeletal, muscular, and nervous). The vocal tract consists of face, lips, tongue, soft palate, pharynx, and larynx; by moving these parts, the resonance is created. When higher and lower qualities resonate together, the voice is rich in nuances and sounds pleasant (called *'chiaroscuro'*, the same time 'bright and dark' in Italian). Normal breathing is a function at the subcortical level (Eerola, 2017). The thoracic diaphragm moves up and down to regulate the air pressure, but is itself half-conscious. The muscles of the rib cage and the spine, where the diaphragm is connected, do the work. The abdominal area must be free to let the thoracic diaphragm move flexibly and the normal breathing must be free and deep. Ongoing daily effort and practice is needed to be aware of the tensions in the body.

In phonation breathing, the speaker has to let the subcortical breathing do the work and 'will power' and emotions take care of phrasing and at the same time keep the torso open (Eerola, 2017). This is not a muscular function, instead it is a matter of posture and 'excitement'/'will power'/'living' the phrase/word, where the 'excitement' of the expression automatically prepares the body to expand into the prephonatory state (ibid). The torso expands; diaphragm descends and causes the 'tracheal pull', causing so-called vacuum effect in the rib cage, thus air coming in automatically. Exhaling triggers an autonomous reflex to collapse the ribcage area, thus the breath 'support' meaning that speaker needs to keep himself/herself flexibly open in the ribcage area until the end of the word or sentence; otherwise natural reflexes make him/her to

'collapse'. The work of the vocal cords is a unique and specific process, happening properly only if this area is unrestricted, and the process not interfered with by muscle contraction. Any habits of tension in voice production are doubled here at least 8 million times per day (normal 8-h working day of teachers), which hurts the soft tissue and muscles of vocal cords, not to mention the tight and unpleasant sound the listener hears. The function of speaking should be aimed as much as possible at a subcortical automatic level of the brain. As to how to produce sound, resonance and vowels that should be left to the reflexive part of the brain not using the 'straight-up conscious orders' to subcortical functions. The only way we can improve our voice is to use better 'preparation' for voice resonance areas inside of our body, before the voice starts. Chest voice (deeper sounds, authority, strength in the voice) needs activation of the lower body, head voice (clarity, precision, higher sounds) needing activation of the head area, using 'surprising'/'smiling' feeling in the mouth/nose/eyes, thus opening the spaces in the body for voice resonance. Because of higher overtones of the resonance, the voice is then easier to listen, speaker will have less tension in the larynx and will look and sound like it is easier and more comfortable for him/her to speak.

Research Background, Aim of the Study and Design

This paper provides a multiple case study of the development of study course *Teachers' Voice* in Tallinn University for supporting the Estonian teachers' vocal needs in field condition. Research was carried out in two phases: 1) in 2004-2005 gathering information about the situation in Estonian teachers' voice condition and their needs for vocal training; 2) based on the gathered data, in 2005-2011 developing and testing the content of the voice course.

According to Yin (2003), a case study design should be considered when

a) the focus of the study is to answer 'how' and 'why' questions, as was the case in both phases of the current study;
b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study;
c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or
d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

Two key approaches to case study methodology (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) base work on a constructivist paradigm, one of the advantages of it being the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories, which was an important part of the 2nd phase of the study.

In this study, the exploratory case study has been used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). This study was also a multiple case study, enabling the researcher to explore differences within and between cases (in this study voice training), and the goal being to replicate findings across cases. According to Yin (2003), the multiple case studies can be used to either to *"(a) predict similar results (a literal replication) or (b) predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)"* (p.47).

Research questions, methods, participants and the context of the 1st phase of the research

At phase 1, in 2004-2005, 10 one-day voice hygiene courses were organized with 170 Estonian higher and pre-service education teachers, group size being from 10-30 persons (the author acting as the educator of the courses). These universities and kindergartens had reached out for organizing the courses, because there were not much voice hygiene courses available in Estonia then. Gathering data from these courses was thus a convenient example. To be able to offer in the future the courses exactly matching the needs of the participants, the research questions for the 1st phase of the research were:

1) *What is the situation in Estonian teachers' vocal health?*
2) *What needs teachers have for their voice education from field condition?*

To answer the research question 1, participants filled in two questionnaires, before entering the course. Both questionnaires (*The Risks and Contributions of Voice Disorders* and *How is Your Voice?*) were modified from Finnish Occupational Safety & Health questionnaires, used also in Smolander et al. (2006). The first questionnaire consisted of seven questions, categorical scale being not at all, partly/not so often, moderately/every week, and very much/every day. The second questionnaire had two parts, first with 10 and second, called "At work", with 13 questions on voice, working background and stress aspects, rated on a categorical scale of "Yes, No, Can't say".

To answer the 2nd research question, the 'portfolio work' was used, gathering trainer's field notes, reflective diaries and intervention contents as a portfolio, with the purpose of picturing trainer's professional growth and development as well as the changes in the courses, for enhancing the building of professional identity and narrative identity work (Vainio, 2018a, 4). The main aim was to understand the needs teachers have for their voice in field condition for better development of teachers' voice training. Narrative reflections, thus experiencing 'oneself' as a production of self-achievement, choosing and verbalizing relevant representations for one's own identity building, represent teachers' textual interpretations of their lived experiences and were partly explained in Introduction of this article.

Research questions, methods, participants, data collection, analysis and the context of the 2nd phase of the research

In the second phase of this research, in 2005-2011, the study course *Teachers' Voice* was tested with 240 Estonian higher, normal and pre-service teachers in 19 in-service 1-day interventions, which consisted of voice hygiene lecture and group voice trainings. Open-ended semi-structured post-questionnaire was used to measure the effects of the course in Estonia: 1) The grading for the course on scale from 1-5; 2) What do you want to know more of; 3) Was there something too much, too little; 4) What did you like most; 5) Suggestions for the course development.

Applied Thematic Analysis (ATA) of exploratory study, commonly used to generate hypotheses for the further study, was used in the second phase of the research. The term applied is considered as something that has to do with understanding the world and trying to answer research problems of a more practical nature, as was the case in this study. Defining features of ATA are:

- Identifying key themes in the text;
- Themes are transformed into codes and aggregated in a codebook;
- Using techniques in addition to theme identification, including word searches and data reduction techniques;
- Can be used to build theoretical models or to find solutions to real-worlds problems, as was the case in this 2nd phase of the study (Guest et al., 2012).

The epistemological leaning of the ATA is

- Positivist/Interpretive, meaning positivist in that assertions are required to be supported with evidence (text);
- Processes are also systematic and qualification can be employed;
- Methods and processes in ATA (except those of a quantitative nature) can be also used in an interpretive analysis.

Guest et al (2012) considers the strengths of APA as following:

- it's suitable to large data sets;
- inclusion of non-theme-based and quantitative techniques adds analytic breadth;
- interpretation is supported by data;
- can be used to study topics other than individual experience;
- it's pragmatic focus tries to use the all appropriate tools to analysing the data in a transparent, efficient, and ethical manner.

One of the limitations of APA is that it may miss some of the more nuanced data.

Permission for all phases of the research was obtained from hosting universities, schools and kindergartens as well as from Tallinn University. Participation was voluntary, and the participants had an opportunity to withdraw from it at any time, and also to ask about more detailed information about the research and the course. All participants received written information about research objectives and goals. The research data was handled and preserved according to *Estonian Personal Data Act* (RTI 2007, 24, 127). All measurements and statistical analyses of the data were done without personal information and names, only with randomly picked number codes. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, the pseudonyms and de-identifying academic institutions, schools and kindergartens were used. All data and materials were saved in locked storage space.

Results

Answers to questionnaire "How is your voice?"

Answers of Estonian pre-service and university teachers in 2004-2005 see in Table 1 (Appendix 2).

Most significant percentages from "Every day" are the need to cough (32%) and the voice in mornings being lower and hoarser (24%). As most of the participants were females, the long and repetitive periods of voicing may threaten the vocal endurance especially for females, who could experience during one workday a million (or more) vocal cord vibration cycles (Rantala, 2000), as for males the vocal loading because of

their lower basic frequency can be only half of this amount (Ohlsson et al., 2016). The biggest percentage for every week is the *"Voice getting overloaded and tired"* (32%), voice getting lower and hoarse and the coughing need being also relatively lot mentioned (22%, 18% and 18%). The symptoms of vocal disorders can occur as among the following: voice getting tired, hoarse, or the loss, weakness or roughness of the voice, inability to sufficiently change the pitch or volume of the voice or physical discomfort or abnormal perceptions in throat while speaking, i.e. the uncomfortable, tired, hoarse or aching feeling in the throat as well as when speaking needs more physical effort as usual (Pekkarinen et al., 1992; Sapir et al., 1993; Sihvo, 1997; Mattiské et al., 1998; Smith et al., 1998; Sala et al., 2001; Simberg, 2004; Simberg et al., 2005; Ilomäki, 2008). Although from the table above the "not so often" percentages and also the "not at all" - answers for Q4 (44%, 38%) and Q5 (48%, 38%) tell that teachers don't lose their voices unexpectedly or don't have difficulties to make themselves heard, there is a considerable amount of different voice problems Estonian teachers face every day and every week.

In addition, the author needed to explain all the questions to participants at every course, as if the participants seemed to be thinking about vocal issues for the first time in their life, needing in-depth explanations for every question. Ilomäki (2008) points out that sometimes teachers could have a dismissive attitude to their voice problems, as for one reason it is difficult to get a sick leave because of voice problem. Researchers (Morton & Watson, 1998) have also pointed this out: teachers seek medical advice less than other occupations. Vilkman (2000) argues that the weak Occupational Safety and Heath aspect of teachers' voice problems have been based on voice usage being seen as belonging to speech communication and behavioural sciences, the result of 'tackling' the voice problems thus being as an issue of 'training the right voice usage'. This worldview contains the assumption, that the speaker sees mostly himself/herself as responsible for his/her voice condition, this thus also containing a slight guilt feeling. This we can see also in the voice research by focusing a lot on what is 'incorrect in speaker's speaking habits', seen and used in literature also as terms voice abuse and voice misuse (i.e. Colton & Casper, 1990). Perhaps, these feelings of guilt and incompetence are not the best basis for speakers' vocal well-being and endurance, also when developing new trainings. Interestingly, 14 years later, as the writer is still working with Estonian teachers in 2018, the teachers say (as comparison to Q4 in this questionnaire) that nowadays they do have the problems to make themselves heard, as the teaching methods have changed to more participatory ones and also the background noise in classes has risen. Kompus (2010) states that in Estonia every third female teacher has voice problems, most of the teachers (68%) having too much voice loading in work. Secondly, teachers' voice loading has not changed within last years due to voice problems, but they have changed their working style as giving up from too much verbal instruction etc., affecting learning process negatively (ibid).

Answers to the questionnaire „Risks and contributions for voice disorders"

Answers of Estonian pre-service and university teachers 2004-2005 see in Table 2 (Appendix 2).

Numerous researches show teachers reporting different voice disorders from mild to severe, part of it being vocal fatigue (Q1 in the questionnaire above) (Pekkarinen et al.,

1992; Smith et al., 1998; Mattiské et al., 1998; Rantala, 2000; Simberg et al., 2000; Yiu, 2002; Simberg et al., 2005). Voice disorders are often multi-factorial in nature (Smolander et. al., 2006). The four basic risk components of occupational voice disorders comprise environmental, life style, health and psychological factors (ibid). Q3-Q10 cover the personal speaking style, psychological factors and voice hygiene skills that affect the vocal loading. Phonatory effort, that is 'central fatigue', leads to compensatory functional changes (eg, greater adduction of the vocal folds), which, in turn, leads to alterations of neuromuscular processes and changes of the *lamina propria* (eg, prevention of a stable blood circulation and organic micro-changes). These alterations result in non-volitional changes of voice quality, that is 'peripheral fatigue', increasing the phonatory effort, further leading to increased central fatigue, and so forth (Lyberg Åhlander et al., 2011a). Accordong Ohlsson et al. (2016), the individual risk factors for the students with voice problems included previous vocal and speech problems in childhood or adulthood, frequent throat infections, airborne allergy, smoking, hearing problems, voice-demanding work, and voice-demanding hobbies. As asked in Q1, Q3 and Q4, some factors affecting the voice (i.e. the upper respiratory infections) could in some case cause the threat with permanent vocal problems (Carding & Wade, 2000; Sala et al., 2001; Vilkman, 2000).

Answers, that mainly contributed to developing the teachers' voice course, were Q5, Q6, as well as for 'background information' Q2, Q7-10. The results show that 37% of teachers think that they are not using their voice properly, as the 34% are using the voice properly. Still 91% of participants think that they need to learn to use the voice in more effective way, which served as a basis for developing the new voice course. The overall usage of the voice (as asked in Q2, Q7-9) helps to build the vocal hygiene skills. Understanding one's natural tendencies, such as being talkative, using loud volume, quick pace, having stage fright, will help to understand how these can affect the voice as risk factors. It has been indicated that vocal risk factors are cumulative but preventable (Vilkman, 2000, Williams & Carding, 2005). Duffy & Hazlett (2004), as well as Ilomäki et al. (2008) reported that direct training was more beneficial than indirect training among the postgraduate student teachers and primary school teachers.

Answers of Estonian pre-service and university teachers 2004-2005 see in Table 3 (Appendix 2) ("Risks and contributions for voice disorders, part 2, at work").

The answers to Q1 show that 93% of teachers use their voice a lot during the workday. Noisy environments and big classrooms with a lot of echo compel also the teachers to raise their voice significantly, although they may not perceive it that way (Q2), also when the listeners are sitting relatively far (Q3), they need more volume and projection from the voice, thus adding vocal loading (Pekkarinen et al., 1992). Working positions, as asked in Q12 and 13, also affect the vocal production (Sihvo, 1997) and lifting and/or bending positions can accelerate the reflux (Sala et al., 2001). In the voice clinics, patients with voice problems often mention aspects of the indoor climate in classrooms or offices to be troubling. The most commonly mentioned aspects are 'dry air', 'poor air', and dustiness (Q 6-9). One additional factor sometimes mentioned is 'bad smell' because of dirty filters in the airshafts (Q8) (Lyberg Åhlander et al., 2011a).

According to Ohlsson et al. (2016), feelings of stress or distress may influence the voice in a negative way. As shown in Q10 and 11, questions about the overwhelming and work exhaustion the answers are quite 50/50%. The biggest negative effect, voice problems

have to teacher voice, is their emotional state and the quality of life (Ma & Yiu, 2001; Yiu, 2002; Roy et al., 2005), also being insecure, stressed, isolated. Most of teachers avoid hobbies, which demand much voice using, such as singing (Smith et al., 1998; Sala et al., 2001; Roy et al., 2005; Kooijman et al., 2006).

What is needed from study course "Teachers' Voice" content?

Diverse vocal requirements for teacher's work include, among others, the following: clarity and receptivity for message transmission; accessibility and friendliness of the communication style for facilitating a positive working atmosphere and formatting the assertiveness and persuasiveness of the teacher-student relationship (Nussbaum, 1992, 173). From a nonverbal point of view, voice is a key channel in expressing these (Ilomäki, 2008, 21).

Preventive strategies are recommended to reduce the risk of voice disorders, voice training being one of the strategies (Child & Johnson, 1991; Duffy & Hazlett, 2004; Williams & Carding, 2005). Kompus (2010) suggests that teachers' voice training in Estonia should be available for all teachers in teacher training. It should include practical voice work, in-depth vocal hygiene lectures and phoniatric study. Voice therapy and training should be available also for all teachers in field condition, thus improving the knowledge about vocal health, healthy voice usage techniques and awareness about the effect of vocal loading, environment, lifestyle habits and emotional state to teachers' vocal health and quality. To be able to implement these habits as life-long, there is a need for a systematic long-term period training. Kompus (2010) also suggests that phoniatrists, who are working at schools, could be asked to organize voice trainings, as well as assisting and coaching colleagues when any vocal problems occur. As the financial resources for schools are limited, the same resource being used also for buying the microphones for teachers or assisting teachers for taking part in the voice trainings, these courses must be cost-efficient, which makes their length an issue. The course length and intensity of its content have been an issue for the writer from 2004, and it is pointed out several times by participants of the 2nd phase of this study.

To answer the 2nd research question (*What is needed from study course "Teachers' Voice" content?*), the trainer's field notes, reflective diaries and intervention contents were studied.

For the best vocal loading and optimum vocal fold condition, as for maximum acoustical benefit with minimum mechanical and physiological tissue strain, the lateral breathing, where the diaphragm descends freely, is needed (Laukkanen & Leino, 1999; Eerola, 2017), establishing a phonation balance on the vocal fold level (Vainio, 2018a). Bodily knowledge can cultivate teachers to trust their own body awareness and embodied responses in order to understand the voice production, the usage of one's own voice and after that taking more responsibility for the voice production as a physical exercise (Vainio, 2018a). The study course *Teachers' voice* was based on VoicePilates (VP), motor learning theory based practical method, helping to learn new muscle memories for phonation balance (ibid).

One-day course consisted of indirect and direct training parts with six interchangeable tenets: corporeal awareness; posture alignment; balanced speech; context-based simulation exercises; video training and reflective feedback (Vainio, 2018a). Direct experiential learning, building self-awareness of the voice through the somatic self-

discovery of physical, sensory and auditory perceptions, consisted of four sections of exercises: 1) The Reflection, 2) The Body, 3) The Voice, 4) The Simulation (Gilman et al., 2014, 9). Direct voice training aims to train in facilitating effective techniques for voice production and retraining habitually negative vocal behavior that may not affect vocal performance for everyday needs, but it may create difficulties when given the demands of teaching (Duffy & Hazlett, 2004). Carding (2000) sees the importance of including indirect training with direct training as the two cannot be mutually exclusive.

Conceptual, theoretical, and practical foundations of the 'corporeal awareness'- and 'posture alignment'- parts of VP are given in Vainio (2018a). In Vainio (2018b) the 'context-based simulation training'- and 'reflective feedback'- parts of VP are introduced. This study focuses more on the 'balanced speech'-part of the VP, as voice exercises were the main, most important and expected part of VP courses in their beginning at 2005. As this study was a practitioner research, Aigner (2014) points out a conflict between the more distant position of the impartial scientific observer and the proactive role of the teacher managing dynamic pedagogical processes. In this research there could be found parts of the *Praxisforschung* (practice-based-research), meaning on one hand author acted as a single teacher reflecting on my own practice (Cain, 2008), with an accent on promoting self-reflection, optimizing my own teaching or publishing practical guidelines (Prengel et al., 2008). There was also a part of *Handlungsforchung* (action research) in author's work, aiming to match theory and practice, also aiming at the improvement of local practice as well as at the generation and publication of new research results (Aigner, 2014).

The effects of study course "Teachers' voice": The grading for the course on scale from 1-5

The distribution and mean of the grades from the 19 courses are given in Table 4 (Appendix 2): participants were able to give grades from 1 to 5 (first being lowest and fifth – highest).

83% of participants gave the grade 5, 15% gave the grade 4 and 2% gave the grade 3 to the course, and no grades of 1 or 2 were given. Teachers stated that as this was in most cases their first voice course in their lives; they had no expectations and were thus positively surprised about the course and its effect, this being thus comparable as self-evaluation of other studies. Also Ilomäki (2008) states that direct voice training or the combination of direct and indirect training, as this training was, have resulted as improvements in teachers' voices, when done by self-evaluations (Bovo et al., 2007), acoustically (Duffy & Hazlett, 2004; Bovo et al., 2007) and perceptually (Bovo et al., 2007). Indirect training, which was also a part of this study, has improved the voice, when studied acoustically (Chan, 1994) and by self-evaluations (Pasa et al., 2007) or maintained and prevented worsening the vocal situation, when studied acoustically (Duffy & Hazlett, 2004) and by self-evaluations (Duffy et al., 2004; Roy et al., 2005).

Participants´ assessments about the positive and negative aspects of course content

The goal of testing the study course *Teachers' Voice* was using open-ended semi-structured post-questionnaire, to identify the self-perceived changes in the mechanics and sensation parameters of participating teachers' voice, posture and body alignment, and to gather teachers' suggestions for continuing to develop the course. The key

themes were first identified in the text of answers of post-questionnaire, and after that, codes were developed to represent the identified themes and applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis (Guest et al., 2012). The key themes that emerged were:

1) Time-management of the course/ The length of the course / Overall themes of the course;
2) The balance between both theory and practice as well as between individual and group work;
3) More detailed info about exercises;
4) What I learned as a result.

The most frequent answer to *"Was there something too much/too little in the course?"* was "All was in balance" (n=82). 40 participants needed more time for the course, and 15 of them pointed out the course being very useful. 19 participants thought the balance between theory and practice was good, but 18 participants wanted more practice, less theory. Nine participants wished more individual work and six for less videoing. The needs for exercises were: more speaking and singing exercises (n=9) and more exercises overall (n=5). For more detailed wishes from participants see Appendix 1. For section "As a result", participants were more interested in pilates, felt that they had good overview and continued to work with exercises. Answering on this question, participants mentioned the balance in the course; all their suggestions ("was there something too much, little") were based mostly on individual view. As a result, there are many suggestions, made by only one or two persons, which are very interesting, but when thinking about the whole course, there is no possibility to include all themes. Another interesting thing was that the course for some participants was too long, for some too short; some wanted more theory, some more practice. Throughout the questionnaire paerticipants frequently mentioned, that a) this was the first voice course, so everything was new, and b) that was one of the reasons it was sometimes difficult for participants to answers the questions, especially to give suggestions.

The topics to be more explored in details

The key themes that emerged were: 1) Theory; 2) Organizational; 3) Practical voice work and 4) Practical bodywork themes.

The most frequent answers to *"What do you want to know more of?"* were from part 'Organizational': "All was well" (n=45), and from part "Practical voice work": "I want to know more exercises" (n=41), and "More experiential, practical exercises for changing old muscle memories" (n=21). The most mentioned theme in "Theory" was "I want to know more of my personal risks, and different methods for voice care" (n=5), and "More of anatomy and voice production" (n=3). In the part "Organizational" there were certain themes mentioned several times: "I would need more exploratory, practical trainings and material" (n=19), "I want to know more of everything" (n=15) and "I want more individual feedback with smaller group" (n=15). The interest in practical voice work was noticeable: several different types of exercises were pointed out, as "Voice exercises, methodology, plays, remedies especially for children" (n=6); "How to better project the voice" (n=7); "How to better control the voice" (n=6); "Exercises for voice care" (n=5) etc. For practical bodywork themes, participants needed more of "Breathing exercises, also for children" (n=10); "Pilates-exercises" (n=8); "Exercises for individual

posture and body alignment in speaking" (n=8); "Alexander-technique" (n=6); "How to release muscle tensions, and implement all learned skills" (n=6) etc.

In this section of questionnaire, the answers were divided into two: on the one hand, there were a lot individually (only 1, 2 or 3 same answers to the questions), but, on the other hand, for some answers as "All is well" (n=45), and "More exploratory training" (n=19) etc., there were several participants thinking the same thoughts. Therefore, this section served as a very good basis for developing the next trainings. The suggestions for part 'Practical voice work' were very interesting. Although the courses focused a lot on training simple voice exercises with excessive amount of repetitions to build the new muscle memories for the body, participants wanted to have even more voice exercises (n=41). Participants suggested practical voice work. Among already above mentioned answers were: "Supported singing, hitting high notes" (n=5); "Exercises for clearer voice, to avoid hoarseness, voice trembling, "Filling words as 'mm'" (n=3); "How to use the voice in different situations" (n=2), "Different voice techniques" (n=2); "How to observe and help others" (n=2); "Warm-up exercises for the morning and before singing" (n=2 and 2); "Different voice relaxation exercises" (n=1); "Voice exercises for connecting the head-and chest-voice to avoid the "break" (n=1); "Exercises for better usage of one´s vocal range" (n=1); "Exercises to make to voice be able to 'carry more', more intensive" (n=1); "How to project the voice for better order in class" (n=1) and the interest in Finnish vocal methodologies (n=1). These wishes are quite specific and show that there is a real interest in in-depth exercises and 'hands-on'-work on this area. Participants also wished for longer training for "Finding one's own voice" (n=2), which could also be said as 'natural', 'liberated' voice. Rodenburg says that nothing is quite so freeing and enlarging as a liberated voice and distinguishes the 'natural' voice from 'habitual', which may be encrusted with restrictive tendencies that only awareness and exercise can undo and counteract (see Shewell, 2009). Linklater described the aim of her approach as designed to liberate the natural voice rather than to develop a vocal technique and she wrote that there is a vital difference to be observed between what is natural and what is familiar (see Shewell, 2009).

The favorite topics, themes and content of the participants

The key themes that emerged, were: 1) Practicality overall; 2) Corporeal awareness; 3) Aligned posture; 4) Balanced speech; 5) Simulation exercises; 6) Video analysis; 7) Reflective feedback; 8) Atmosphere, 9) The trainer; 10) Pedagogical; 11) Suggestions and 12) What I learned.

The most frequent answers to question *"What did you like most?"* were: "Video analysis overall" (n=80); "Practical exercises" (n=54); "Individually tailored feedback for everybody" (n=42); "Good structure of the course" (n=37); "Positive, optimist, inspiring, activating, energetic, joyful, humorous, free, human, barrier-breaking atmosphere" (n=28); "Tension-releasing, friendly, nice, trustful atmosphere- the only way to be able to open oneself " (n=24); (7) "Aligned posture in standing and sitting position" (n=19); "Energetic and hard-working trainer" (n=14).

Interesting was that from participants' answers it was already possible to find the same theme categories that inspired the trainer for the future trainings, namely the five of six interchangeable tenets of VoicePilates: corporeal awareness, posture alignment, balanced speech, video analysis and reflective feedback. The 6th tenet the "Simulation" was only once mentioned here as "Improvisation exercises" (n=1). This can be

attributed to the fact that the participants did not probably recognize the 'simulation' as different from the video training, since it is part of it. In addition, the video training got most of the answers (n=80), so as a trainer's point of view; also the 'simulation' is covered here.

Participants´ suggestions for course development

The key themes that emerged were: 1) "Longer course; 2) "All is well"; 3) "Venue, organization"; 4) "Content and material", 5) "Individual work/ Smaller group size"; 6) "Nothing", 7) "Practicality"; 8) "Video" and 9) "To curricula".

The most frequent answers to *"Suggestions for course development"* were: "Longer course" (n=48); "Nothing to change/improve" (n=36); "Keep doing the good work" (n=29); "Should be mandatory and /or available for all/special area teachers" (n=21 altogether); "Smaller group size" (n=17); "More individual work" (n=10); "Better time-management" (n=8); add more practical exercises (n=7); "Training materials needed also in print" (n=6); "Bigger, ventilated room for practical exercises" (n=6); "Less is more, use only few themes, but in-depth" (n=4).

All these suggestions were very useful, concrete, and most inspiring for the writer and were taken in use, first in Tallinn University, but later also in courses at Finnish and US universities.

Discussion and Conclusions

Underjudge reliability is recognized as being problematic in perceptual voice schemes (Webb et al., 2004). Kreiman et al. (1993) wrote of the need for reference voices as 'fixed external standards' or 'explicitly anchored paradigms' to avoid the fact that listeners tend to rate voice qualities by using personal internal standards. According to Ilomäki (2008), the condition of voice can be studied from several different perspectives: through self-evaluation, acoustic measurements, clinical-instrumentally or using perceptual evaluation. Thus the understanding about the voice and its condition could be different depending on who is studying the voice and how. More research has been done on how clinicians evaluate the voice, but less data can be found about voice users' self-perceptions (Sellars & Dunnet, 2002; Lee, Drinnan & Carding, 2005). Lee et al. (2005) noticed when comparing patients and clinicians perceptions, that patients evaluated their voice disorders more serious than the clinicians did. This could be interpreted that a novice observer and the expert are using different vocabulary and rating scale while evaluating the voice. Other reason could also be the fact that the voice user does not evaluate the voice based only on the auditory features, but also using the perceptions how the voice usage feels. This could be very different from the expert's evaluation based only on his/her auditory and visual observations. Thirdly, voice users could evaluate their voice also based on how much the voice disorders are already complicating daily working or being involved in their community (Ma & Yiu, 2001; Yiu, 2002; Sukanen et al., 2007). This is important to notice, as in this study both, the participants (referred above as 'novice', 'patient') and the trainer (referred above as 'expert') worked with the same course, trying to establish the same vocabulary.

Concerning the answers to open-ended questionnaire in the second phase of the study, it was interesting that overall the participants had used more time and space to answer

the third question of the questionnaire. Therefore, we can find more themes here with more answers and variety of these, which all in their details served very well as a basis for the development of the study course "Teachers' voice". "Practicality" was the most frequently mentioned theme overall in this question, as well as throughout the whole questionnaire, and four of the eight key themes in this section represent it.

The big influence of the course atmosphere and a trainer on this course in participants' opinions was an interesting fact. Good course structure (n=47) helps the participants to learn. But they raised the positive, energizing and supporting course atmosphere as equal, as well as pointed out in their 80 answers (equally big amount as the other biggest amount of answers in this section: "video analysis", also n=80) the different features of the trainer that helped them (participants) to open up, trust, learn and implement different skills and knowledge in this course. These results inspired the author to write the article about the possibilities to unlocking US teachers' vocal potential by raising awareness about the body-mind-interconnectedness in VoicePilates training (Vainio, 2018b).

Important part of answers to this 3rd question was also *"What I learned?"*, as the participants were eager to point out their learning experiences, although it was not specifically asked in this question, which served also as an important part of developing the course. Participants mentioned the main learning experiences: "Started to perceive my body better" (n=6); "Got new skills for my work, for myself, for children I work with" (n=6); How to use the voice based on aligned posture (n=4); "I am happy that I managed my stage fright, got more courage" (n=4); "Felt in my body where the voice starts" (n=4); "Learned a lot by observing my peers and from their feedback" (n=2) etc.

Based on the author's experience as a long-term voice trainer, these themes (which participants are pointing out here) are actually. Not so easy to learn and identify with these, verbalizing and perceiving bodily sensations of these show that participants have really had some in-depth and 'hands-on' experiences in the course, from several different angles, such as from psychology, as well as how they are experiencing the voice resonance, body awareness, posture alignment and interconnectedness through mind, body, emotions and voice.

A major shortcoming of solely informative voice hygiene lecture, compared to combined voice hygiene lecture and voice training, is its limited capacity to train embodied postural and vocal exercises as well as to facilitate reflection on the affective processes underpinning people's engagement with vocal well-being and recognizing one's vocal strengths and abilities (Vainio, 2018b). The concept of teachers' body awareness has recently received growing attention in research, but despite this interest, embodiment has to date not been systematically connected to teachers' vocal training. More in-depth research is thus needed for studying teachers' voice trainings, their body awareness and voice and resonance perceptions in it for better vocal and voice disorders prevention outcomes.

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Appendix 1

Table 1. Was there something too much, too little

QUESTION 1 - Too much/little	*n*
Themes, time-management	
- All in balance	82
- More time	40
- Very useful	15
- More of everything, so exciting	6
- Group size too big	5
- Longer course	4
- Time flied	3
- More of everything all was new	3
- Can´t say	3
- Better time-management	2
- Time was used in maximum	2
- Too long course	1
- Too intensive	1
- Should be obligatory for teachers	1
- Got more than expected	1
Theory/Practice; individual/Group work	
- Good balance	19
- More practice, less theory	18
- Too many individual work	9
- Less videoing	6
- More time for Natural tendencies/MBTI	5
- Less anatomy and medicine	3
- Excellent individual work	2
- More theory, less practice	1
- Less videos about vocal cords and diseases	1
- More time for voice hygiene	1
- Less exercises connected to singing, more for teaching	1
- Theory explained while training practically	1
- More about connections between voice, anxiety, defense mechanisms	1
- More pre-information	1
- Avoid "come back to it later"	1
- More videoing, analyzing	1
Exercises	
- More speaking and singing voice exercises	9
- More exercises overall	5
- Too many voice exercises	2
- More body perception exercises	2
- Avoid "acting", overdoing in exercises	2
- Concrete morning warm-up exercises	1
- More video training	1
- Less physical exercises	1
- More physical exercises	1
- More voice care exercises	1
- More breathing exercises	1
- More muscle releasing exercises	1
- Concrete exercises for everyone	1
- Good video training	1
- Use feedback time from video training for doing own exercises	1
As a result	
- Interested in pilates	1

-	Work continues with exercises	1
-	Got good overview	1

Table 2. What do you want to know more of

QUESTION 2 - What do you want to know more of		*n*
Theory/themes		
-	Body-mind-soul connection	1
-	Mindfulness	1
-	Stage fright	1
-	Controlling emotions and anxiety in voice	1
-	Voice and self-esteem	1
-	How mental stage affects the body alignment	1
-	The effect of the voice and its tone to listeners, children	1
-	Acting and voice	1
-	Natural tendencies, MBTI	2
-	How to better understand own teaching, learning based on this training	1
-	Anatomy of the voice production	3
-	The hearing	1
-	Voice disorders, reflux, preventing, effect of foods	1
-	Quick tips & tools for voice care	3
-	Personal risks, and different methods for voice care	5
-	Pharmaceutical and natural remedies for voice	3
Organisatory		
-	All was well	45
-	More exploratory, practical trainings and material	19
-	More of everything	15
-	More individual feedback with smaller group	15
-	Can´t say	11
-	Follow-up	5
-	More video/analysis	1
-	After the training to come back some basic theoretical model	1
-	Video program for supporting self-learning	1
Practical voice work		
-	Voice exercises	41
-	More experiential, practical exercises for changing old muscle memories	21
-	Voice exercises, methodology, plays, remedies especially for children	6
-	How to better project the voice	7
-	How to better control the voice	6
-	Exercises for voice cure and care	4
-	Supported singing, hitting "high notes"	5
-	Exercises for clearer voice, to avoid hoarseness, voice trembling, "filling words" as "mm"	3
-	Longer training for "finding one´s own voice"	2
-	How to use the voice in different situations	2
-	Different voice techniques	2
-	How to observe and help others (I´m music teacher)	2
-	Warm-up exercises after waking up	2
-	Warm-up exercises before singing	1
-	Different voice relaxation exercises	1
-	Voice exercises for connecting the head-and chest-voice (to avoid the "break")	1
-	Exercises for better usage of one´s vocal range	1
-	Exercises to make to voice be able to "carry more", more intensive	1

-	How to project the voice for better order in class	1
-	Finnish vocal methodologies	1
Practical body work		
-	Breathing exercises, also for children	10
-	Pilates	8
-	Individual posture and body alignment in speaking	8
-	Alexander technique	6
-	How to release muscle tensions, and implement all learned skills	6
-	Different body alignment techniques, especially for he back	2
-	Yoga	2
-	Voice yoga	1
-	Relaxation and muscle tension releasing exercises	1
-	Massage	1
-	How to use better voice production muscles	1
-	How to get better contact with one´s body	1

Table 3. What did you like most

QUESTION 3 - What did you like most?		*n*
Practicality overall		
-	Practical exercises	54
-	Useful, interesting tips& tools for better voice usage	12
Corporeal Awareness		
-	Physical perceiving of different exercises in one´s own body	13
-	Learning to perceive the voice and body as a whole	2
-	Perceiving how tall I am and could be	1
-	"Opening" the body	1
-	Feeling the body staying open and resonating as a "barrel"	1
-	Very good feeling in the body, instead of felt "closed" as earlier	1
Aligned Posture		
-	Aligned posture in standing and sitting position	19
-	Posture exercises	8
-	Physical exercises for releasing the tensions in posture	7
-	Alexander technique	6
-	Breathing	6
-	Pilates	4
-	Got help with back pain	2
-	Yoga	1
-	Voice production muscles	1
-	Massage	1
-	Body- and voice techniques	1
Balanced Speech		
-	Good amount of voice exercises	13
-	Help with voice endurance	11
-	Theory and anatomy of voice, its production, usage	4
-	how to use the voice properly	3
-	Exercises for lengthening the vowels ("weekday-exercises")	3
-	Pharmaceutical and natral remedies	2
-	Connections between voice and body	2
-	Exercises how to widen your vocal range	2
-	How to use my chest voice	2
-	Knowledge about one´s voice´s real range	2
-	Breathing exercises	1
-	Warm-up exercises	1

-	Rhythm-exercises	1
Simulation exercises		
-	Good amount of presentation skill exercises	2
-	Training the sentence-exercises	1
-	Presenting the poem	1
-	Being proud of to be able to overcome one´s fear of presenting	1
-	Improvisation exercises	1
Video analysis		
-	Video analysis overall	80
-	Videoing own presenting	20
-	Self-analysis through video	3
-	Giving and receiving feedback from peers	2
PSYCHOLOGY		
Reflective Feedback		
-	Individually tailored feedback for everybody	42
-	New info for oneself	4
-	Peer-feedback and very positive learning experience from small groups	4
-	Happy that the trainer had time individually for everybody	3
-	Very useful concrete feedback for one´s body and posture	3
Atmosphere		
-	Positive, optimist, inspiring, activating, energetic, joyful, humorous, free, human, barrier-breaking atmosphere	28
-	Tension-releasing, friendly, nice, trustful atmosphere- the only way to be able to open oneself	24
-	Most useful and interesting trainings I have had	2
-	"The presence" gained by trainer	1
-	Time flied	1
The trainer		
-	Energetic, hard-working	14
-	Emotional, positive	12
-	Charismatic, colourful	11
-	Professional and very competent in own field	11
-	Ability to engage all listeners	11
-	Supporting, inspiring, tactful, sensitive for `nuances´	9
-	Wide knowledge about voice-related matters	5
-	Optimistic, barrier-breaking	4
-	Tension-releasing	2
-	Sometimes too energetic for Estonians, but it was no problem	1

PEDAGOGICAL		
-	Good structure	37
-	Good videos about vocal cords	11
-	Clear presenting, good real-life-based examples, good repetitions	5
-	Practical and active participation, self-reflection and -perception, peer and self-feedback and -analysis	4
-	Should be obligatory for all new teachers	4
-	Good small group size	3
-	Liked the theory	1
-	Good organizing of the course	1
SUGGESTIONS		
-	Nothing, all is well	3
-	MBTI and natural tendencies in more in-depth	2
-	Feedback, suggestions could be in video or audio, not to forget	1
WHAT I LEARNED		
-	Started to perceive own body better	6
-	Got new skills for my work, for yourself, and for children I work with	6
-	Learning how to use the voice based on aligned posture	4
-	Happy that I managed my stage fright and got more courage	4
-	Felt in my body where the voice starts	4
-	Learned a lot by observing my peers and from their feedback	2
-	Have better got to know myself, how to better use the body and voice	2
-	Got a package of exercises for continuous learning	2
-	Got conviction to that it all starts form teachers´ mind and being in balance in oneself	1
-	Thanks to Alexander-technique started to use the body and voice in better ways in everyday life	1
-	Happy that I want now to continue searching for more knowledge in this area	1
-	Learned how to better balance my body	1
-	How to breathe deeply	1

Table 4. Suggestions for the next courses

QUESTION 4 - Suggestions		*n*
Longer course		
-	Longer course	48
-	Follow-up day	7
-	Course not in the end of semester	
All is well		
-	Keep doing the good work	29
-	All is well	9
-	Venue and content good	7
Venue, organization		
-	Bigger, ventilated room for practical exercises	6
-	Better IT technical equipment from venues	2
-	Pre-information about clothing	1
-	Use assistants in bigger groups	1
-	Use outdoor facilities	1
Content, material		
-	Better time-management	8
-	Training materials also in print	6
-	Less is more, use only few themes but in-depth	4

-	Change role-play to reading texts, breathing, word-exercises, or do notably shorter and intensive way	2
-	Reflection in the beginning and the end of the day	1
-	In exercises use different than sitting order to avoid stage fright	1
-	Trainer could show the best outcome for different presentations for the voice, breathing etc.	1
-	How to make the voice more interesting, emphasizing etc.	1
-	Slower tempo with more practicality	1
-	Useful to be able to write down own development points	1
-	Less "good!", more concrete feedback	1
-	Avoid "I´ll come back to it later"	1

Individual work/smaller group size

-	Smaller group size	17
-	More individual work	10

Nothing

-	Nothing to change/improve	36

Practicality

-	Add more practical exercises	7
-	Add more voice exercises with movements	3
-	Train the voice more by doing presentations	1
-	How to control the voice while being angry, nervous	1

Video

-	Video own presenting for further analysis	2
-	More concrete guidelines for presenting and analyzing the video training	2
-	Pre- and post-videoing to notice the difference in the voice	1
-	Always use real-life situations, avoid "acting" in simulations	1
-	Pre-videoing could use some text, not improvised	1

To curricula

-	Should be mandatory to all teachers in pre-and basic education	11
-	For all voice users	4
-	For BA students	3
-	Should be mandatory for pre-school assistants	1
-	Should be mandatory for musicians	1
-	Should be available also for Tartu university	1

Appendix 2

Table 1: How is your voice? Based on answers of Estonian pre-service and university teachers 2004-2005

	Every day		Every week		Not so often		Not at all	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Q 1	31	24	23	18	54	41	23	18
Q 2	15	11	42	32	60	45	15	11
Q 3	15	12	29	22	62	48	24	18
Q 4	5	4	5	4	58	44	63	48
Q 5	15	12	15	12	49	38	49	38
Q 6	41	32	23	18	45	35	21	16
Q 7	21	16	17	13	60	45	34	26

Q 1 - Is your voice lower and hoarser in mornings?
Q 2 - Does your voice get often overloaded and tired?
Q 3 - Does your voice get lower and hoarse while speaking?
Q 4 - Does your voice unexpectedly break or is lost completely while speaking?
Q 5 - Do you have difficulties in making yourself heard?
Q 6 - Do you need to clear your throat or cough while speaking?
Q 7 - Does your throat ache, is it tense or feels like something is “stuck in the throat”?

Table 2: “Risks and contributions for voice disorders, part 1”

	Yes		No		Can't say	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Q 1	20	17	58	48	43	36
Q 2	68	54	48	38	9	7
Q 3	49	39	56	45	20	16
Q 4	31	26	61	51	27	23
Q 5	42	34	46	37	36	29
Q 6	114	91	4	3	7	6
Q 7	65	51	51	40	11	9
Q 8	59	47	54	43	13	10
Q 9	99	79	19	15	7	6
Q 10	85	69	22	18	17	14

Q 1 - Do you perceive voice fatigue (laryngitis)?
Q 2 - Do you use your voice a lot in your free time?
Q 3 - Do you have any problems in your health condition?
Q 4 - Do you have medical condition that could cause voice problems?
Q 5 - Do you use your voice properly?
Q 6 - Do you need to learn how to use your voice in more effective way?
Q 7 - Are you naturally talkative person, with using loud voice volume?
Q 8 - Do you use quick pace when speaking?
Q 9 - Do you have stage fright before any public speaking?
Q 10 - Do you need to improve or do any changes in your lifestyle?

Table 3: "Risks and contributions for voice disorders, part 2, ´At work´"

	Yes		No		Can't say	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Q 1	115	93	6	5	2	2
Q 2	83	67	38	31	3	2
Q 3	25	20	87	71	11	9
Q 4	32	26	82	67	9	7
Q 5	29	23	85	69	10	8
Q 6	63	51	44	35	17	14
Q 7	44	35	66	53	14	11
Q 8	46	37	68	55	10	8
Q 9	47	38	65	53	11	9
Q 10	58	47	52	42	14	11
Q 11	63	51	49	40	11	9
Q 12	49	40	58	48	15	12
Q 13	69	57	42	34	11	9

Q 1 - Do you use your voice a lot during the workday?
Q 2 - Do you need to raise the voice significantly or shout at work due to background noise?
Q 3 - Are your listeners sitting relatively far?
Q 4 - Does your working space has a lot of echo?
Q 5 - Do you have difficulties in making yourself heard?
Q 6 - Does your working space have dry air?
Q 7 - Does your working space have dusty air?
Q 8 - Does your working space have smells?
Q 9 - Does your working space have air pulling/wind?
Q 10 - Are you very overwhelmed with your work?
Q 11 - Are you often exhausted with your work?
Q 12 - Does your working positions prevent you using your voice properly?
Q 13 - Do you have to use your voice in rotated or other positions, like reaching from high, raising the chin and twisting the head?

Table 4: The distribution and mean of the grades from the 19 courses given. Participants were able to give grades from 1 to 5, 1 being lowest and 5 highest.

		Grade			
Course	*n*	3	4	5	mean
#1	30	0	3	27	4,90
#2	18	0	2	16	4,89
#3	13	0	1	12	4,92
#4	13	0	1	12	4,92
#5	3	0	0	3	5,00
#6	21	0	2	19	4,90
#7	6	0	1	5	4,83
#8	11	0	0	11	5,00
#9	13	0	0	13	5,00
#10	14	0	0	14	5,00
#11	7	0	3	4	4,57
#12	7	0	0	7	5,00
#13	15	0	4	11	4,73
#14	3	0	1	2	4,67
#15	21	2	8	11	4,43
#16	12	1	3	8	4,58
#17	14	0	0	14	5,00
#18	11	1	3	7	4,55
#19	7	1	3	3	4,29
Total	239	5	35	199	4,81
		2 %	15 %	83 %	

THE DIAGNOSTICS OF A PRESCHOOLER'S READINESS FOR LEARNING TO PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

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Abstract
The article discusses the problem of diagnosing a preschooler's readiness for learning to play a musical instrument. Preschool age is favorable for preparing a child for further training to play a musical instrument. Pre-instrumental training of preschoolers is a specially organized process for developing readiness to play a musical instrument, which includes the development of motivation, musicality, physical and mental qualities, as well as the accumulation of musical knowledge. Readiness of a child for learning to play a musical instrument is an indicator of the achievements of his or her personal development in the preschool period and is the basic level for mastering playing a musical instrument. Considering the structure of the readiness of a preschooler for learning to play a musical instrument, we distinguish personal, motivational, physical and emotional readiness. According to the results of the diagnostics of 25 preschoolers, it was found that 28.0% of children had low level of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument, 56.0% had average level of readiness and only 16.0% had a high level of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument. The results have shown insufficient level of maturity of their readiness for learning to play a musical instrument, which allows distinguishing areas of work for the development of a course on pre-instrumental training of preschoolers. Meanwhile, in our opinion, during musical lessons with preschoolers in kindergartens, elements of pre-instrumental training can also be implemented and the formation of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument can be carried out as well.
Key words: *preschooler, readiness for learning to play a musical instrument, pre-instrumental training*

Introduction

Musical education and training, an early-age music education in particular, allow introducing children to cultural values. The process of teaching children to play a musical instrument from the preschool age becomes widespread in our days. Pedagogical science and practice prove that education, which is carried out in accordance with age characteristics and taking into account the latest achievements in the field of musical pedagogy, becomes an important factor in the musical and aesthetic development of children, promotes not only the formation of the spiritual potential of the individual, but also creates the preconditions for the successful development of a harmonious personality, introducing children to cultural values. The process for children learning to be players includes being provided with the opportunities to listen to good models of playing, to play that is appropriate, being encouraged to listen with concentration and to focus on detail and being given encouragement and feedback (Young, 2009). Therefore, the process of teaching children of preschool age to play a musical instrument requires the formation of their readiness for learning to play a musical instrument.

The problem of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument attracted the attention of many musicians-teachers. In particular, there were considered such topics as the psychological and pedagogical basis of instrumental performance (Савшинский, 1961; Баренбойм, 1979; Коган, 2004; Цыпин, 2016), pedagogical conditions for the achievement of the unity of the performing and general musical development of students (Zavalko, 2013, etc.), the process of initial mastering of playing a musical instrument (Берлянчик, 2000; Мильтонян, 2003; Сташевська, 2012, etc.). A quite thorough and versatile methodical system of learning to play different musical instruments (violin, piano, recorder, cello) was formed in institutions of primary music education. The problem of training for learning to play a musical instrument had been solved partially in the concepts of such teachers as Orff (see Frazee, 2006), Jacques-Dalcroze (Dalcroze, 2009), Kodaly (see Houlahan, 2008), Suzuki (Suzuki, 1973), Szilvay (Szilvay, 2002). Each of these educators focuses on a certain type of musical activity (singing, playing elementary musical instruments, listening to music, etc.) as the basis of music education of the child. At the same time, many issues regarding the organization of preschoolers' preparation to learning to play a musical instrument did not receive proper coverage in the scientific and methodological literature.

The object of the research: preschooler's readiness for learning to play a musical instrument.

The aim of the research: to determine the level of preschooler's readiness for learning to play a musical instrument.

Theoretical Basis of the Study

Preschool age is considered by L. Vygotsky (Выготский, 2004) not only as the restructuring of needs and motives, revaluation of values, which is fundamental in the transition from one age to another, but also as a period of intensive development of a person, capable for perception and understanding of one's own states and emotional manifestations of other people, which is considered as a condition for successful adaptation in society. According to Leontiev (Леонтьев, 1981), the whole mental life of

the child, his/her relation to the surrounding world, when he/she begins to define his/her own behavior, is restructured in preschool age, and mental development is not spontaneous but by education controlled process.

By revealing the mechanisms underlying the teaching of preschool children, Vygotsky (Выготский, 1991) formulates the thesis of the zone of proximal development (*зона ближайшего развития*), which determines the achievement of the child in direct collaboration and under the influence of an adult, and, in contrast, the set of already 'ripe' functions that provide an independent solving of a certain range of tasks by the child.

Teplov (Теплов, 1985) believes that preschool age is characterized by its own features: emotional sensitivity, interest in exciting creative tasks, intensity of thinking and creative activity. According to Naumenko (Науменко, 1982), preschool age is extremely important for mastering musical culture. The earlier music enters into human life, the deeper and more precisely this art will occupy a place in a human soul, because foundations of various qualities and properties of the person, his or her interests and abilities are being laid during the early period of life.

In our opinion, the preschool age is also favorable for the child's preparation for further learning to play a musical instrument. To this end, it is important to develop and implement a course of pre-instrumental training. Pre-instrumental training of preschoolers is a specially organized process for developing readiness for learning to play a musical instrument, which includes the development of motivation, musicality, physical and mental qualities, as well as the accumulation of musical knowledge. Pre-instrumental training should ensure the formation of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument.

The child's complete readiness for learning to play a musical instrument, on the one hand, serves as a unique indicator of achievements of his/her personal development in the preschool period, and on the other hand, it is the basic level for mastering playing a musical instrument, and an indicator of readiness to accept the position of a subject of educational activity. According to Elkonin (Эльконин, 2005), an important element of readiness for learning is the development of arbitrary behavior, transformation of an external rule into an internal position.

Considering the structure of preschooler's readiness for learning to play a musical instrument, we distinguish personal readiness, motivational readiness, physical readiness and emotional readiness.

The motivational readiness of a preschooler for learning to play a musical instrument consists of positive notions about learning and the desire for creative expression in music. For Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1990), the first step towards creative activity is the child's own initiative. It is necessary to observe after child, noting the moments of his/her own authorship, to help realize him/her own individuality, to learn to appreciate himself/herself as a creative person. The personality's need for musical activity is defined by Tarasov (Тарасов, 1979) as a mental state which creates preconditions for the perception of musical values, the specific feature of which is the focus not on the result of activity, but on the process itself.

Bozhovich (Божович, 1972) discovered that 6-7-year-old children have a desire to study. The desire to study of a child of the senior preschool age is the stage of development of his/her initial needs in external impressions. The new level of cognitive need of older preschool children is expressed in the fact that they have an interest in cognitive tasks. A significant moment in the formation of motivational readiness for learning is the emergence of arbitrary behavior and activity, that is, the emergence of child's needs and motives of such a structure in which he or she becomes able to conquer his/her immediate impulsive desire for consciously set goals.

In terms of expectancy-value motivational theory (Eccles et al., 1998; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), six facets underpinning children's personal beliefs seem particularly relevant for learning to play an instrument (McPherson & Davidson, 2006):

- Interest: the personal satisfaction gained when playing and practicing alone and with others, plus the love for the repertoire learned;
- Importance: the degree to which learning the instrument fits with personal goals about what the child hopes to be good at;
- Usefulness: whether learning the instruments is constructive and functional for what the child wishes to do, both now and in the future;
- Difficulty: whether the learning process creates obstacles or is perceived as being more difficult than other activities with which child is engaged;
- Competence: for which playing and performing become activities in which the child would like to succeed;
- Confidence: the empowerment felt for developing the skills necessary to master challenges associated with learning and performing on the instrument.

We agree with Ginzburg (Гинзбург, 1988) on determining the classification of motives of the senior preschool age children:

- Cognitive (educational), rising directly to cognitive needs;
- Broad social motives based on the understanding of the social need for education;
- Positional motive associated with the desire to take a new position in relations with others;
- External motives in relation to the training, for example, subordination to the requirements of adults;
- The game motive, inadequately transferred to the new - the educational environment;
- The motive of receiving a high grade.

The hierarchy of motives is a prerequisite for mastering the arbitrariness of behavior. The given classification is taken as the basis of motivational readiness of preschooler for learning to play a musical instrument.

The personal readiness of a preschooler for learning to play a musical instrument is expressed in the development of such personal substructures as musical abilities and the formation of attention. Musicality is an individual-psychological quality of a personality that provides productivity of any kind of musical activity (creation, performance, listening). It turns out in creative artistic playing and the deep feeling of musical images (Науменко, 1982). Teplov (Теплов, 2003) offers a concept of

musicality, the main indicator of which is the emotional sensitivity to music, but the main abilities include musical ear (sonority) and the sense of rhythm. At the same time, there are two components of the musical ear – perceptive component, associated with the perception of melodic motion (harmony sense) and reproductive component (the ability to auditory presentation of melody). According to Teplov, the ability to auditory presentation creates the core of the musical memory and musical imagination.

An important component of personal readiness for learning to play a musical instrument is the maturity of preschooler's attention. Under attention we mean orientation and concentration of psychic activity of the individual on a certain object in conditions of distraction from others. This mental process is a condition for the successful implementation of any activity, both external and internal, and its product is qualitative performance of activity. Attention has external and internal manifestations. External manifestations include tense posture, focused look; internal include changes in the body, for example, increased heart rate, breathing, the allocation of adrenaline in the blood, etc.

The level of preschooler's attention development is evidenced by the formation of its elements: concentration, stability, distribution and switching. Concentration is being determined by the extent to which the child is targeted at work. An indicator of stability is the time of focusing on the object and the amount of distractions from it. Switching is being manifested in the transition from one object or activity to another. Distribution occurs when the child performs several actions at the same time, for example, tells the poem, moving around the room.

Preschool childhood is a period when emotions - as special individual experiences, having a pleasant or unpleasant mental tinge and related to the satisfaction of important needs - dominate all aspects of the child's life, managing and regulating all of his/her mental functions. Mastering the ability to express emotions by older preschoolers, as defined by Zaporozhets (Запорожец, 1986), already testifies to the manifestation of certain emotions that have a significant influence on the motivation of their behavior and activities, adjusting their plans. Emotional readiness of a preschooler for learning to play a musical instrument is understood as the reduction of impulsive reactions and the ability to perform not very attractive task during long time. Vygotsky (Выготский, 1986) believes that the leading role in the development of the personality of preschooler, the regulation of his/her mental functions belongs to the emotional sphere. Emotional self-development is a series of interrelated areas, each of which has its own specific ways of influencing the emotional sphere and includes:

- development of emotional response,
- development of emotional expression,
- formation of ideas about the diversity of human emotions,
- formation of emotional vocabulary.

Development of children's physical qualities, especially strength and endurance, which largely depends on successful training, adaptation to the prevailing static position (especially when they hold instruments as violin, cello), raising the level of a mental activity becomes particularly relevant in the preparation for learning to play a musical instrument. Physical readiness of the child for learning to play a musical instrument consists of maturity of physical qualities (strength, endurance, agility, flexibility, speed)

and maturity of body coordination. Successful training of children to play a musical instrument requires the diagnostics and adjustment of their physical development (stiffness, excessive relaxation, poor coordination, etc.). Often along with muscle tension, there is an opposite state of the muscles – excessive relaxation, which does not allow you to make movements that require a specific muscle tone. In this case, it is necessary to strengthen the muscles and develop the flexibility of the joints, which will help the child in the development of a differentiated sensation of muscle condition.

The results of physiological studies (Дубогай, 2002) show that at least four hours of active motor activity per week have a training effect on the body of the child. Exercising below this threshold do not have any effect. The Dubogay recommends daily exercise in reflecting the ball from the wall, jumping on a rope, sitting down from the position on the back, increasing the number of repetitions every day by one time.

Coordination is the ability to adapt the movements of different parts of the body. Therefore, when playing a musical instrument, separate elements of movement must be connected to a single motor action, which is made economically, not tightly, plastically and clearly. Coordination of movements can be trained and it is exposed to the pedagogical process, specifically aimed at its development. The high degree of coordination of movements makes a positive impact on the mastering children with new motor skills, which are very much when playing on a musical instrument.

Method and sample

The research on readiness for learning to play a musical instrument involved 25 5-6-year-old children, who were taking part in a musical education program at the kindergartens of the *Family Art Club* (Kyiv city, Ukraine) and the *Montessori Family* (Cherkassy city, Ukraine). Appropriate techniques and tasks were selected for each component of readiness.

Motivational readiness for learning to play a musical instrument was being researched on the basis of an adapted method of motivation studying by M. Ginzburg (1988). The method allowed to reveal the relative expressiveness of the motives that lead children of the senior preschool age to the learning (cognitive motive, social motive, positional motive, external motives, game motive or motive for receiving a high grade). The characteristics of the levels of motivational readiness are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the levels of the maturity of motivational readiness of preschoolers for learning to play a musical instrument

LEVEL	POINTS	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEVEL
Low	1-2	The absence of personal meaning for learning to play a musical instrument or the presence of only external motives to it
Medium	3-4	A combination of positional, external, and game motives for learning to play a musical instrument
High	5	Expressed personal meaning of motivation for learning to play a musical instrument, the prevalence of cognitive and internal motives, desire to succeed

During the research on the personal component of the readiness for learning to play a musical instrument a comprehensive diagnostics of musical abilities was used (Сулейманов, 2012) and the method of studying musical and auditory attention (Миколінська, 2015).

The comprehensive diagnostics of musical abilities (Сулейманов, 2012) includes three tests: diagnostics of musical-rhythmic ability (the test *Rhythm*); diagnostics of melodic ear (test *Melody*); diagnostics of harmonic ear (test *Chords*). This diagnostics are based on the principle of comparing the rhythmic patterns, melodic patterns and chords with each other. Since preschoolers are not familiar with the musical notation, the tasks were based on the comparison of two rhythmic (melodic, harmonic) passages, which were repeated in one case, but differed in the other. Differences were built from the very sharp to less sharp, almost identical. The examinee had to answer the question: *Were the two passages repeated or different?* Each subtest had 20 tasks. Diagnostics was performed individually with each child.

Diagnostics of the maturity of musical-auditory attention was carrying out on the results of students' performance of musical tasks. Tasks were divided into two blocks, which were grouped by types of musical activities. The purpose of the tasks of the first block was to determine the level of maturity of the properties of musical-auditory attention during the perception of music; the second block included tasks related to the skills of creating rhythmic accompaniment, the reproduction of the rhythmic pattern of a famous song. Generalized characteristics of levels of personal readiness are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of the levels of the maturity of personal readiness of preschoolers for learning to play a musical instrument

LEVEL	POINTS	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEVEL
Low	1-2	melodic and harmonic ear, musical-rhythmic abilities are developed weakly; the child does not perform the ability to concentrate on musical sound, the ability to stability, selectivity, switching and distribution of auditory attention
Medium	3-4	melodic and harmonic ear, musical-rhythmic abilities are developed partially or unevenly; musical-auditory attention is characterized by a limited, fragmentary ability to concentrate on musical sound, by relative stability, selectivity, switching and distribution of auditory attention
High	5	melodic and harmonic ear, musical-rhythmic abilities are developed well; musical-auditory attention is characterized by a high degree of intensity of concentration on musical sound, ability to stability, selectivity, switching and distribution of auditory attention

The emotional readiness of preschoolers for learning to play a musical instrument was being researched on the basis of the method of *Study of the emotional manifestations of children during playing the plot scenes* (Урунтаева & Афонькина, 1995). There were selected situations from the child's life and the child was asked to portray the proposed situations. If the children did not express the feelings and emotions of the characters clearly or they were expressed incorrectly, the situations were being described once

more with storytelling of what each character is experiencing. The assessment was being carried out at three levels (see Table 3).

Table 3. Characteristics of the levels of the maturity of emotional readiness of preschoolers for learning to play a musical instrument

LEVEL	POINTS	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEVEL
Low	1-2	The child cannot identify and show emotional state independently, a set of expressive-mimic means is very small
Medium	3-4	The child determines and depicts the emotional state of another with the help of an adult, is able to empathize with another, but cannot express his or her own emotions objectively because of small amount of expressive-mimic means of communication
High	5	The child determines and depicts the emotional state of another independently and uses a large set of expressive-mimic means of communication

Physical readiness for learning to play a musical instrument was being determined by the quality of performing of physical exercises: standing on one leg with closed eyes; drawing a circle in the air with one hand and a line with the other; simultaneous stepping and clapping; the plasticity of performing movements for music. For these tasks we used the following songs: Tchaikovsky's *Waltz of Flowers*, Schumann's *Santa Claus*.

In addition, each child was offered to jump with a rope until getting tired. This activity characterizes not only the hopping ability of the child, but also the speed of its motor reaction, ability to perform combined actions with other subjects, and also determine the dexterity of the child. The correlation between coordination of movements during jumping and development and coordination of the movements of the muscles of the hand during writing, as well as during playing the musical instrument, was revealed.

Lifting the body in the seat from the position lying on the back reflects the readiness of the muscles of the back and abdomen for prolonged static loads while sitting behind the instrument (piano, cello), or holding a musical instrument (violin).

Generalized characteristics of the levels of the maturity of physical readiness of preschoolers for learning to play a musical instrument are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Characteristics of the levels of the maturity of physical readiness of preschoolers for learning to play a musical instrument

LEVEL	POINTS	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEVEL
Low	1-2	Muscle stiffness, excessive muscle relaxation, poor coordination of movements, up to 10 jumps on a rope, up to 10 times lifting the body
Medium	3-4	Partial muscle stiffness or muscle relaxation or coordination of movements, up to 20 jumps on a rope, up to 20 times lifting the body
High	5	Possession of relaxation and tension of muscles, coordination of multi-directional movements, more than 20 jumps on a rope, more than 20 times lifting the body

Results of the Research

To determine the real state of maturity of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument three levels were identified: low, medium and high. The level of readiness of the child to study was determined based on the number of points: 0-7 points – low level, 8-14 – medium level and 15-20 – high level. Summing up the results of the diagnostics of preschoolers' maturity of the formation of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument, three levels were identified (see Table 5).

Table 5. Distribution of preschoolers by levels of maturity of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument

COMPONENT OF READINESS	LEVEL OF READINESS					
	Low		*Medium*		*High*	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Personal readiness	12	48.0%	9	36.0%	4	16.0%
Motivational readiness	8	32.0%	13	52.0%	4	16.0%
Emotional readiness	10	40.0%	11	44.0%	4	16.0%
Physical readiness	6	24.0%	16	64.0%	3	12.0%
General level of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument	**7**	**28.0%**	**14**	**56.0%**	**4**	**16.0%**

Thus, 28.0% of preschoolers are characterized by the absence of personal meaning to learning to play a musical instrument or the presence of only external motives. They have poorly developed melodic and harmonic ear, musical-rhythmic ability; the ability to concentrate on musical sound and the ability to stability, selectivity, switching and distribution of auditory attention are not detected. They cannot identify and show emotional state independently and have a very small set of expressive-mimic means; their physical condition is characterized by muscle stiffness or excessive muscle relaxation, poor coordination of movements.

56.0% of preschoolers are characterized by a medium level of their readiness for learning to play a musical instrument. In particular, their motivation is characterized by a combination of positional, external and game motives for learning to play a musical instrument. They have partially developed or unevenly expressed melodic and harmonic ear, musical-rhythmic ability. Their musical-auditory attention is characterized by a limited, fragmentary ability to concentrate on musical sound, relative stability, selectivity, switching and distribution of auditory attention. They determine and depict the emotional state of another with the help of an adult, are able to empathize with another, but cannot express their emotions objectively because of small amount of expressive-mimic means of communication. Their physical condition is characterized by partial muscle stiffness or muscle relaxation, not sufficiently developed coordination of movements.

Only 16.0% of preschoolers have a high level of readiness for learning to play a musical instrument.

Conclusions

The diagnostics of preschoolers has shown insufficient level of maturity of their readiness for learning to play a musical instrument. At the same time, the relevance and results of the diagnostics allow to distinguish areas of work for the development of a course on pre-instrumental training of preschoolers, in particular:

- *Motivational training.* Formation of positive perceptions about learning music and the desire for creative self-expression, based on the cognitive (educational) motives of preschoolers, is a prerequisite for qualitative training.
- *Personal training.* Development of musical abilities, with emphasis on the development of the sense of rhythm, the combination of the development of melodic and harmonic ear, facilitates learning to play a musical instrument significantly. Formation of attention requires work on such elements as concentration, stability, distribution and switching.
- *Emotional training.* Working with the emotional sphere of preschoolers will reduce impulsive reactions and teach them to perform a not very attractive task, because learning to play a musical instrument requires the development of a variety of skills and the repetition of typical tasks.
- *Physical training.* Physical readiness should provide strengthening of muscles and development of joint flexibility as the basis of mastering the posture during playing any musical instrument. Work on coordination of movements will facilitate more rapid mastery of new playing movements.

Authors stress that the formation of preschoolers' readiness for learning to play a musical instrument can be carried out during musical lessons in kindergartens by using elements of pre-instrumental training.

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THE CLASSICAL GUITAR CURRICULUM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF JUNIOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S MUSICAL CULTURE

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Abstract
The development of musical culture is a necessary condition for a comprehensive development of human's personality, for the development of his/her creative, artistic and esthetic potential.
This paper deals with the junior school-age children's psychological-pedagogical peculiarities, as well as characterizes the authorial classical guitar curriculum in the context of the development of junior school-age children's musical culture. In the process of the study, several advantages of this curriculum were identified: its orientation towards the development of junior school-age children's musical culture, its short-term character, and diversity.
Key words: *personality's musical culture, classical guitar curriculum, junior school-age children*

Introduction

Musical culture of junior school-age child's personality, living at the beginning of the 21st century, is a new and yet insufficiently studied spiritual space that requires reconsidering a lot of musical, social and cultural phenomena in the framework of the approach of cultural studies (Balčytis, 2008).

At forming and developing personality's musical and esthetic culture, a number of important factors affecting this process should be taken into account. First of all, this is the age of a person, his/her social environment, as well as the state of the community within which the individual grows up and develops.

However, contemporary children (just like the rest of the humankind) are exposed to and display the tendencies towards unification, de-traditionalism, globalization and technocracy (Фельдштейн, 2004). Since the very birth, a contemporary child lives within an ever-growing flow of information, coming, at first, from his/her family and the nearest environment, and later – from his/her peers and teachers. However, constantly – from mass media, which devote more and more time to mass pop-culture, but less and less – to maintaining classical music heritage and the unique peculiarities of authentic folklore the more so. By the way, in a poetic way folklore reflects everyday life of peoples, their social activities, way of life, habits and rituals, their vital activity and knowledge about life, about natural phenomena and nature, their religious beliefs and cults and etc. The developing *socium* in time was reflected in the changing folklore.

We have to emphasize the fact that now the majority of developed countries have a system of purposeful music education which has a considerable pedagogical potential, but which is not fulfilled to a full extent in its potentialities (Brown, 2009). This gives rise to the emergence of problems and contradictions between the contemporary children's estrangement from traditional ethnic peculiarities of the culture of their own people (from the point of view of music as well) and possibilities of overcoming this problem with the help of music education.

This paper deals with the analysis of the authorial curriculum for teaching a classical guitar. This curriculum based on the analysis of the experience of the teaching activities of the contemporary and previous scientists and researchers in the field of music education (Adorno, 1958; Rinkevičius & Rinkevičiene, 2006; Balčytis, 2008; Brown, 2009; Baidak & Horvath, 2009; Кабалевский, 2014).

Research object: the curriculum for teaching junior school-age children to play a classical guitar, oriented towards the development of child's musical culture.

Research aim: to elaborate the authorial curriculum for teaching a classical guitar in the context of the development of junior school-age children's musical culture.

Methods and Sample

Research methodology includes the analysis of the authorial curriculum for teaching a classical guitar for junior school-age children according to such parameters:

A. Conformity of the designed curriculum with
   - the standard rules and regulations on the primary music education institutions in the Republic of Lithuania,
   - requirements for the classical guitar curricula for junior school-age children;
B. Structure of the curriculum;
C. Content of the curriculum;
D. Conformity of the curriculum content with
   - a primary level of music education in a guitar class;
   - world and national achievements and traditions in the field of music and folklore;
   - cultural-national peculiarities of the region;

- modern forms and methods of education;
- material-technical provision and possibilities of music education institutions;

E. Presence of the addressee in the curriculum;
F. The analysis of the fullness of possibility to implement the curriculum;
G. The analysis of the effectiveness of the curriculum;
H. Provision with organizational-pedagogical conditions for implementation of the curriculum;
I. Provision with the teaching staff and necessary conditions of educational environment.

The complex of methods applied in this research is as follows:

- the analysis of methodological literature, pedagogical technologies, and the advanced pedagogical experience on the problem under the research;
- the analysis of the authorial classical guitar curriculum made according to the stated parameters.

Junior School-Age Children's Psychological-Pedagogical Peculiarities

A junior school-age child grows up very rapidly: his/her height, weight and anthropometrical indices change, and the basic psychic processes are forming as well. D. Elkonin (Эльконин, 2014) singles out such new formations of junior school-age child's psyche as:

- final formation of one's own 'Ego';
- the development of the need for physical movements as well as for a psychic development: everything is interesting for a child, his/her cognitive interest reaches the peak of its development; junior pupils rely on their cognitive activity at whose account all processes of psyche develop, including memory and its characteristics;
- child's activity as well as his/her behavior becomes conscious and spontaneous; cognitive and communicative activities are basic kinds of child's activity;
- a child develops small motor functions of his/her hands and motor memory of hands and body on the whole, i.e. his/her movements become integrated, dexterous and flexible;
- a child is capable of a lasting physical and mental work;
- verbal-logical thinking is being shaped, and logical-conceptual apparatus starts to be forming as well; therefore a child is able to perform logical operations, to make analysis, generalization and other thinking operations;
- the formation of the general method of mental activity occurs, which consists in the skill of taking or setting a task, of selecting the ways of fulfilling it, and controlling and assessing the outcomes;
- a child's speech becomes connected, fluent, intelligent, and consequently he/she is able to form long combined phrases and texts;
- a child is capable not only of conscious comprehension and perception of art objects and things, but he himself/herself strives to become the subject of a creative activity also.

In this context, at studying the concepts of junior school-age children's musical abilities, musical giftedness and inclination for music making, whose musical feelings and initial notions about music are being formed, researchers (Adorno, 1958; Rinkevičius & Rinkevičiene, 2006; Balčytis, 2008; Brown, 2009; Baidak & Horvath, 2009; Kabalevsky, 2014) look at this problem from the viewpoint of different approaches, which testifies to their great interest in this side of personality's development.

The concept of musicality occurs in both pedagogical and psychological literature (Revesz, 1920; Seashore, 1930; Adorno, 1958; Готсдинер, 1999; Brown, 2009; Кабалевский, 2014) is interpreted from different aspects. G. Revesz (1920) thinks that musicality has to be looked upon as an integrated concept and, consequently, musicality cannot be divided into separate components: the understanding of this conception must be approached from the position of the integrity of this phenomenon; he also suggests that the analysis of musicality is impossible in general.

According to C. Seashore (1930), musicality is a systemic concept, and it incorporates no less than 25 different musical talents, i.e. separate independent musical abilities, all together forming the concept of personality's musicality. Such approach is abstracted and analytical, and describes the existence of some or other human's musical abilities (talents) in general. This approach can even define the parameters of their expression and degree of their development; however, the assessment of a common degree of musicality does not absolutely take into consideration the peculiarities of personality's development and psychological features of child's individuality, as well as does not see opportunities for their further development either.

Some research works discuss also the idea that if a person does not have inborn musical abilities (in our opinion, quite a controversial point), it is useless to apply methodologies of music education in respect of this person. For instance, T. Adorno (1958) considers that we need not develop musical abilities, if the individual does not have inborn qualities for music. Thus, a number of studies (Adorno, 1958; Brown, 2009) treat musicality as an elite quality, and think that it is not obligatory, but is even undesirable, to develop it in people whose musicality is not explicit.

Other studies (for example, Готсдинер, 1993), on the contrary, postulate the idea that any individual has inborn musical qualities, and with the help of a regular music practicing these qualities can be developed up to a definite level. Music pedagogy too, is based on the postulate that music education not so much develops individual's abilities and inborn qualities, as it contributes to a harmonious development of a human's spiritual side, to familiarizing people with world and ethnic values of musical culture, to the formation of a right system of values, as well as promotes the development of children's basic psychic processes (Выготский, 2014; Эльконин, 2014; Кабалевский, 2014).

Speaking about teaching to play a guitar as

a) a means for developing personality's musical culture and personality in principle,
b) a means for developing individual's psychic processes and raising the level of his/her culture,
c) a means for the formation of child's value system and spiritual growth,

authors have to mention the fact that it gives a child the opportunity for self-realization and for expressing oneself, and perfectly develops creative abilities as well. During music making, a child learns to play the guitar, and this enables the learners not only to independently learn different musical instruments which are analogous to a classical six-string guitar (electric guitar, banjo, ukulele, mandolin, bass guitar, different ancient string instruments), but also to enrich their musical experience on the basis of musical thesaurus of different epochs and cultures.

The Role of Musical Culture in the Formation and Development of Junior School-Age Child's Personality

The formation of imaginative thinking allows children learning to hear and understand the texture of a musical composition. Musical imaginative thinking, developed at music lessons in general and at guitar classes in particular, contributes not only to the personality's musical development proper, but first and foremost broadens general knowledge about reality, creates a new, unknown to a child, channel of receiving information, which enhances the formation and development of intellectual activity and creative activeness.

One of the basic tendencies of the contemporary education of junior learners (6 – 9 years old) is activating a musical-esthetic perception and educating through child's own creative activity, which depends on a number of objective factors:

- immense significance of creativity as a way of perceiving the world,
- need for a comprehensive and harmonious development of a personality,
- child's need for a creative activity (Выготский, 2014).

A creative activity stimulates the development of the principal psychic processes – memory, thinking, power of observation, cognitive activity and intellect. Participating in a creative activity in the sphere of music, a child relies, first, on emotionality, imaginative thinking, integration of logic and intuition, analytical abilities and esthetic education.

Observation of a creative musical activity gave the opportunity to identify the main stages of a creative process:

1) the stage of accumulating impressions;
2) the stage of a spontaneous creativity in a speech, sensory-motor, and visual direction;
3) the stage of improvisation – speech, motor, musical, illustrativeness in drawing (collective creativity with single cases of individual one);
4) the stage of personal creativity – producing one's own products of creative activity, resulting from the received artistic impressions – musical, literary, plastic, representational;
5) the stage of musical creativity proper – writing one's own music piece (Кабалевский, 2014).

As we know, music is filled with emotional intonations, nuances of feelings, and a whole range of emotional experiences. However, we have all these things in an emotionally colored speech as well. Music, just like speech, has emotional states and intonation

coloring, which are communicated through timber, pitch, force, tempo, accents, pauses, and dynamics (Фельдштейн, 2004).

According to the degree of expressiveness, music is comparable to speech; therefore, some researchers (Кабалевский, 2014; Эльконин, 2014) compare music with speech, even stating that music itself could have emerged from the emotional component of oral speech.

The perception of musical intonations as means of emotional expressiveness of music is a creative process. Creativity may manifest itself in any children's activity, if there are the necessary conditions for it. This depends on the perception, which can provide the development of those creative qualities that may later ensure child's participation in creative work. A junior school age is a fundamental basis of a creative activity, which is being manifested in the development of children's ability of generating and implementing ideas, in their skill to combine their knowledge and notions, and in the sincere expression of their feelings (Выготский, 2014).

During the process of music education, children can learn techniques of rhythm, pronunciation of isolated words, develop their perception of timbre, as well as learn sound pitch and dynamic characteristics of music. The stimulation of child's musical activity provokes him/her to communicate with his/her peers, to establish emotional and speech contact with teachers.

The contemporary music education envisages introducing children to musical art and its examples. The junior school age is just the optimal time for starting to teach music. If at this period a child is not provided with good conditions for his/her development, the intellectual maturation might be hindered, since regular music lessons promote the improvement of memory and stimulate children's intellectual development.

The Analysis of the Authorial Curriculum in the Context of the Development of Learner's Musical Culture

The goal of the authorial curriculum (author – M. Bendelston) is the development of personality's musical culture at the key stage of its formation - at the junior school age.

Authors carried out the analysis of the authorial curriculum according to the parameters mentioned above:

A. Conformity of the designed curriculum

This authorial curriculum has been designed in conformity with standard rules and regulations on primary music education institutions of Lithuania:

- Conception of cultural education of children and youth ("*Vaiku ir jaunimo kultūrinio ugdymo koncepcija"*) confirmed by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos švistimo ir mokslo 2008.01.09 ministro isakymu Nr ISAK – 43);*
- Regulations Nr V-733, 2016-08-31, on confirming the specialized direction of art education (primary, basic and secondary with art education curricula) *("Isakymas del specializuoto ugdymokrypties program (pradinio pagrindinia ir*

vidurinio ugdymo kartu su meniniu ugdymo program) meninio ugdymo dalies patvirtinimo" 2016-08-31. Nr V-733);

- National professional requirements for the content minimum and the level of learner's training in the speciality "guitar" in Lithuania and are based on the following curricula:

  a) a primary music education curriculum supplementing the formal education of Zarasi School of Arts (*Zarasu meno mokyklos pradinio muzikinto formaluij švietimo papildavičio ugdymo programma*);

  b) the curriculum of primary, basic, extended and amateur music education for a classical guitar class in Garliavo Music School (*Garliavos meno mokyklos pradinio, pagrindinio, išplestinio ir megeju muzikinio ugdymo styginiu instrument skyriaus (klasikine gitara) programa).*

B. Structure of the curriculum

This authorial curriculum complies with the following requirements set for the structure of an educational curriculum in Lithuania: the presence of a title page; explanatory notes; calendar- thematic plan; content of the training course; methodological provision of the training course; list of the basic and additional literature, and the list of music pieces for the learners to listen to and record individually, in small groups and in ensembles.

C. Content of the curriculum

The content of the curriculum corresponds to the following principles:

- Orientation towards creating conditions for the development of child's personality: the selected age group (6 – 9 years old) corresponds to the most intensive period of child's development, to the period of the formation of his/her personality and also the formation and development of personality's musical and esthetic culture in all of its diversity. Consequently, focusing on the principal components of personality's musical culture at this age contributes to the harmonization of child's development;
- Orientation towards generating personality's motivation for a cognitive activeness and creative activity: in the process of teaching, the development of creative initiative has especial importance, it promotes emotional attitude to music, reveals learners' individual potentialities, and stimulates interest in the subject. All this is a vital prerequisite for successful learning and is envisaged by the content of the curriculum;
- Creation of emotionally positive environment, health-preserving conditions of learning, and taking into consideration personality's individuality;
- Creation of conditions for the development of children's musical giftedness, familiarizing children with world and national cultural values, encouraging personality's self-realization, personality's spiritual and intellectual development: learners are offered a wide choice of musical material (songs from animated cartoons and feature films, folk songs, old and contemporary ballads, pop and rock music, popular pieces of classical music).

The content of the curriculum complies with

- A primary level of music education of the guitar class: compared to the traditional school curricula, this curriculum comprises a three-year training course, which will enable the learners to deeply immerse in the world of music, develop their creative abilities, acquire skills of playing the guitar, study music theory and the heritage of world music culture during a shorter period of time;
- world and national achievements in the field of music and folklore: learners are offered a wide choice of music material (songs from animated cartoons and feature films, folk songs, old and contemporary ballads, pop and rock music, popular pieces of classical music);
- Cultural-national peculiarities of the region: learners acquire skills of playing the guitar on the basis of Lithuanian folk songs ("Jurgeli meistrel", "Ganiau palšus jautelius", "Oi ieva, ieva", "Tykiai tykiai", "Žemaičiu muge" etc.);
- Contemporary forms and methods of teaching: while implementing the curriculum such methods as verbal (explanation, conversation, narration); visual (demonstration, observation, demonstration of work techniques); practical (mastering the techniques of playing on the instrument); and emotional methods (choice of associations, images, artistic impressions) are employed;
- Material-technical provision and possibilities of music education institutions: every learner is provided the access to library holdings and to the collection of audio and video recordings in the school library; the library holdings include printed and electronic publications, teaching-methodological and music literature. The learners are provided with music materials during their classes at school as well as at home, which contributes to the efficiency of the educational process. During their classes learners use music equipment and thus are introduced to the sphere of modern music industry. When doing their independent work, learners can use internet for the collection of the material on the theme under study.

D. The presence of the addressee in the curriculum

In the context of this parameter

- the curriculum is designed for children having minimal training in music and an average level in the development of musical culture (gifted children and children with a well-developed musical culture are recommended a traditional course);
- within the framework of this curriculum, a) requirements and recommendations to the learners, to the level of their preparedness for learning are produced and b) principles for work in small groups and ensembles have been formulated, taking into account the age differences between children of various years of training:
  - the first year of training – the stage of primary education: during this time a learner is taught to adopt a correct posture at the instrument, he/she masters the basics of playing the guitar, acquires elementary practical and theoretical knowledge and skills. At this stage, it is essential to develop child's need for music and desire to make music;

- the second and the third year of training – the basic stage of education, during which learners deepen their knowledge, develop the received skills and acquire new ones, participate in concert activities, build up their repertoire.

During studies, learners can play in different ensembles and participate in festivals and competitions.

E. The analysis of the fullness of possibility to implement the curriculum

The curriculum has a sufficient number of hours for

- theory, which is shown in the calendar-thematic plan – 210 hours for classroom lessons;
- practice, which is shown in the calendar-thematic plan – 210 hours for classroom lessons;
- performing activities in every half-year, which is reflected in the calendar-thematic plan;
- independent creative activity, which is shown in the calendar-thematic plan – 210 hours for independent work;
- didactic material of different level for the implementation the principle of individualization and differentiation of education.

Lessons are given individually, however individual lessons may alternate with those in small groups (from two persons), and this enables a teacher to build up the teaching process in compliance with the principles of the differentiating and individual approach.

The curriculum ensures continuity in the distribution of the number of hours and content of the taught themes in different years of training.

This authorial curriculum envisages

- in the first year of training - to diagnose child's musical abilities and creative bents, to develop interest in music and music making;
- in the second year of training - to specialize the received knowledge, to deepen and accumulate it, to develop the acquired skills and pick up new ones, to broaden musical experience through perceiving music, and also through individual and ensemble music making;
- in the third year of training – to systematize the accumulated knowledge and skills, and also to demonstrate the development of musical culture of learner's personality not only at concerts, festivals and competitions, but also by promoting one's own musical creativity.

The curriculum envisages using a socio-cultural space of the music education institution and interaction with the institutions of professional education, with institutions of additional education, inter-school training-centers, educational establishments etc., as well as the participation in thematic parties, class concerts, in cultural-educational activities, creative activity of the school and other institutions.

F. F. Analysis of the assessment of training results

The curriculum provides criteria for assessing the quality of training. The curriculum envisages a current control, as well as intermediate and final attestations. Current and intermediate control forms are a control lesson, participation in thematic evening parties, class concerts, cultural-educational activities, and in creative activities of school. For the final attestation, a control form may be the examination. The content of the examination involves performing a solo program and/or participation in the ensemble.

When assessing learner's achievements at acquiring this curriculum, the following aspects should be taken into account:

- development of a stable interest in music art, in music lessons;
- presence of performing culture, development of musical thinking;
- possession of skills and abilities in different kind of musical-performing activities (solo, performing in ensemble, providing the accompaniment);
- the degree of learner's progress, successfulness in personal achievements.

The anticipated results of child's personal development are shown in the curriculum:

- familiarizing the junior school-age children with the instrument – guitar, discovering performing possibilities and diversity of techniques of playing;
- developing skills of playing a musical instrument;
- acquiring knowledge in music reading and writing;
- acquiring knowledge in history of musical culture;
- developing the understanding about music styles and genres;
- acquiring the system of knowledge, skills and ways of musical activity which provide the basis for a further independent communication with music, for self-training and self-education in music;
- feeling love for music;
- junior school-age children's industry, diligence, patience, discipline;
- aspiration for practical use of knowledge and skills acquired at the lessons and in practical activity.

Within the framework of this curriculum, the criteria for diagnosing the level of the participants' (learners', their parents' (guardians') and teachers') satisfaction with the teaching process have also been worked out.

G. The Provision of Organizational-Pedagogical Conditions for the Implementation of the Authorial Curriculum

This curriculum a) corresponds to learners' age peculiarities, b) envisages the provision of conditions for observing maximally permissible load for the learners and complying with the requirements for the regime of training.

H. Provision with staff and necessary conditions of educational environment

This curriculum envisages

- a fully staffed pedagogical collective which is able to implement the declared curriculum (provided for by the structure of the staff and training received in music schools);
- observing systematism in increasing the efficiency of pedagogical staff;
- sufficient number of instruments and music literature for performing activities, a library supplied with recommended music pieces and literature in print and/or electronic – planned for supplying music schools;
- premises equipped in accordance with the requirements of the curriculum under implementation;
- conditions for the material-technical provision of the educational process;
- use of different forms of informing the participants of the educational process about the results of its implementation.

In accordance with a) the discussed aspects of the junior school-age psychological-pedagogic peculiarities, b) the role of music in the formation and development of child's personality in general, the given curriculum focuses on child's interests and his/her musical culture based on creative freedom of learner's personality.

Conclusions

1. The junior school age (comprising the period from 6 to 9 years of age) is a key age for the formation of the fundamentals of music perception, as well as basic components of personality's musical culture, among which are
    - the need for music, emotional attitude to it,
    - gaining socio-cultural experience of one's ethnos via music,
    - the development of creative abilities, and imagery thinking,
    - the development of love for music and its understanding,
    - accumulation of knowledge about music etc.
2. In the process of the analysis of the authorial curriculum several advantages of the curriculum were identified:
    - Orientation towards the development of junior school age children's musical culture;
    - Taking into consideration the psychological peculiarities of junior school-age, the peculiarities of the development and the formation of personality's musical culture;
    - A short term (at the peak of personality's sensitive development and activeness of child's cognitive interest, the express-course allows forming his/her musical culture most intensively and effectively in quite a short time);
    - Diversity, i.e. the possibility to use in such a course the samples of not only classical, but also folklore music, as well as examples of world musical culture, including well-known pieces from animated cartoons, from feature films, pop and rock music.

    These important factors stimulate growth of child's motivation for music making and studying music, that allows harmoniously and fully affect the development of all components of his/her personality's musical culture.

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DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S STEADINESS OF ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS OF PLAYING PERCUSSSION INSTRUMENTS

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Abstract
When playing percussion instruments, the main activity is done with the help of motion or motorics, and, in order to perform the movements, developed steadiness of attention and focusing are necessary.
The aim of the research is to study and test the development of steadiness of attention and ability to concentrate when learning to play percussion instruments.
During a final COG testing (Vienna test system) the differences identified between the experimental group and control group are of statistical significance with a probability of 99%, t=4.13, p<0.01, therefore it can be concluded that the results of steadiness of attention and focusing abilities have improved statistically significantly for the members of the experimental group.
Lasting and regular playing of percussion instruments as well as doing coordination exercises for playing percussion instruments devised by the authors for 6 months efficiently develops young people's steadiness of attention and ability to concentrate.
Key words: *focused and steady attention, playing percussion instruments, young people*

Introduction

When playing music, not only such specific musical abilities as an ear for music, imagination, memory and sense of rhythm, are used and developed, but the process also enhances such general abilities as the volume of thinking, originality, flexibility, focusing of attention, switching, separation, memory and psycho-physiological movement abilities like prowess, stamina, movement coordination, reaction speed, agility of arms, legs, and fingers.

Musical performances involve thinking, feeling and acting. The idea expressed by Gieseking (1964, p. 92) was *"...technical abilities must be developed in the head, not fingers"* can be applied to playing percussion instruments.

Klöppel (2003) has discovered that the process of learning to play music means learning on three levels, that is, learning to think, feel and act or, in other words, learning on a cognitive, affective and motoric level. Kinaesthetic factors (for instance, speed, force, agility, stamina and coordination) cannot be separated from the mind that gives directions to the movements.

Every intellectual activity fosters the development of intellectual abilities. Scientific research encourages conducting classes in which intellectual abilities are unbound and developed through self-expression and creative activities. While doing movement exercises, it is possible to not only loosen up, feel and get to know one's body, gain aesthetic experiences and develop abilities, but also to activate psychic processes and stimulate specific activities of the brain hemispheres. Thus, the brain is more activated and learning in general reaches a higher quality (Geiger, 1998; Wiemeyer, 2000; Klöppel, 2003; Schachl, 2005).

Altenmüller, Gruhn and Parlitz (1999) have discovered that learning to play music efficiently improves the activity of both brain hemispheres and develops abilities. In his research work, Jank (2005) has confirmed that the following types of musical activities – singing and playing of an instrument – are the most efficient means for developing abilities.

While making music, many areas of the brain work simultaneously including those of perception, attention, movement, sense of rhythm, coordination, hearing, thinking, memory, simultaneous activity of emotions. The previous scientific research results prove that musicians in comparison with non-musicians have different levels of domination of the brain hemispheres. Musicians have a significant *Planum temporale* asymmetry that is oriented to the left hand side. It is connected with an increased communication between the brain hemispheres that are created by fast motoric movements of both hands (Schlaug & Gaab, 2003).

Contrary to the traditional viewpoint stating that the primary function of the cerebellum is to ensure movement coordination, the latest research has shown that its activities influence both linguistic and cognitive functions, and this encourages us to think that the improvement in movement coordination might result in improvement of cognitive functions (Vicari & Menghini, 2008). This is a highly significant conclusion of the research, which allows assuming that a teacher may not only help to develop young people's sensorimotor coordination, but also their overall abilities (attention, perception, memory and thinking) through purposeful learning to play percussion instruments.

The Nature of Attention and Its Specifics in Music Pedagogy

In pedagogy, researchers define attention as an ability to concentrate awareness; the activity of cognition operative orienting in changing environmental conditions and achieving of purposeful aims depends upon it. In psychology, attention is seen as a universal psychic phenomenon, a psychic function for concentrating awareness. Attention fosters perception; it can be intentional and purposefully directed towards an object or unintentional, spontaneous or post-intentional. Depending on the personal qualities, age, general and special abilities and other factors different people have different levels of steadiness of attention as well as different capacities of the number

of objects that they can keep in the focus of their attention. There is no specific or predefined product to be analysed as a separate subject that is produced as a result of concentrating attention as is the case with such processes as motivation - willingness, mnemic process – remembering. Attention only influences the results of the very process to which it is added. Attention is not a simple regulatory process of the psyche; it is like a mediator participating in other processes. Its various states can be felt as a tension, strain, interest, surprise, activity, etc. (Нуркова & Березанская, 2007).

In order to understand the nature of attention, it is important to establish its neurobiological foundation. Hearing is a very important constituent of the learning process as it helps to perceive information. Sound waves are first and foremost air pressure waves that create vibrations of the ear drum and ossicles. Then the vibrations are transmitted through the oval window and add pressure to perilymph and endolymph. In the place where the vibrations are at their maximum, a nervous impulse is generated. The basic principles of the impulse perception and transmission processes are similar to all organs of sense: receptors transform external impulses into electric signals, which are then transmitted through several stations to processing centres in the brain. It is important to add that we are not speaking about one-way movement – the higher centres are also involved in the reception and selection of information. The switching place (*thalamus*) and reticular formation (*formatio reticularis*) ensuring attention and emotionality have been accentuated. Overall alertness, readiness to perceive and learn (tonic activity) is first transmitted in the lower parts of the reticular formation. Based on that, thalamus takes care of the selective attention that can only be achieved by cooperating with the areas it is responsible for, especially the prefrontal cortex that is the 'decision taker' receiving the results of the comparison from the remaining parts of the brain. Simultaneously, it receives feedback about the emotional meanings from the limbic system. The parts of the limbic system, for example, a specific nucleus – *hippocampus* – perform important tasks in storing the perceived information. Attention depends on the body condition – alertness, expectations, experience and context. Feelings play an important role. The reticular formation gives an important biological base, and it closely cooperates with the thalamus and prefrontal cortex. Being interconnected with the thalamus, prefrontal cortex and the entire limbic system display the cooperation between perception, attention and emotions throughout any intellectual processes (Schachl, 2005).

Shadrikov (Шадриков, 2004) has discovered the essence and structure of the human abilities and has analysed their development through the actions. The scientist thinks that every psychic process – senses, perception, memory, conception, imagination, thinking, attention – may be seen as ability. He sets the following criteria for the productivity of the attention:

- Speed of the attention switching: the minimum time necessary to switch attention from one object to another or from one action to another;
- Broadness of the attention disposition: the number of object or action types that are within the focus zone at a singular time;
- Attention quality criteria:
    - placement errors;
    - switching errors;
    - intensity;
- Attention steadiness criteria:

- length of the attention focusing on one object;
- steadiness of attention (Шадриков, 2004).

Steadiness of attention and focusing are important preconditions for fast and efficient learning processes of playing percussion instruments, and they are necessary for gaining faster achievements working with difficult tasks.

"Focusing is an especially intense form of attention, and it is a critical condition for success. Focusing is an active, purposeful psychic process that is led by the willpower and awareness and that is not relaxed during a certain period of time" (Bastian, 2000, 345).

Focusing means thinking *here and now*. To focus means to pay attention to one particular thing. The aim of attention in every situation is to keep the thinking processes within the framework of here and now: *"The ability to purposefully focus attention to information essential for understanding and performing a task is very important, and it influences the individual level of attainments significantly"* (Klöppel, 2003, 54).

The musicians' attention is special for the selective nature of perception. When performing, musicians need to choose the part of the environment to which the attention shoud be paid; at the same time, musicians must ignore anything that might encourage them to do something in a wrong way. The focusing of attention on visible and audible things is one of the most important abilities that musicians must develop in order to learn a piece of music or read music sheets (Reed, 1988).

The limited possibilities to focus attention while listening and performing music and the use of only one channel of attention in one unit of time gives birth too many questions:

- How can one follow a polyphonic piece of music?
- Does the impression of sound totality form first and is later divided into separate lines of music or does attention jump from one line of music to another at a speed of lightning and later unifying them into a complete line with the help of some short-term thinking?

The capacity of music perception is connected with various musical elements – the pitch, chords, rhythm – that first need to be separated from one another by focusing attention to each of them separately. The preciseness of the perception of polyphonic music depends on the musical knowledge and listener's experience. Klöppel (2003) recommends starting the attention training with the help of two musical voices: the trainee must quickly switch focus from one voice to the other; later, a piece of music with three voices should be chosen, and beginning with four voices one should take harmony as the basis.

When playing percussion instruments, attention problems may often occur if several different rhythms are listened to or played together; the said is especially true when the processes of playing requires coordination of arms and legs on a drum set that consists of a bass drum, a floor tom, several toms of various sizes and cymbals. Therefore, it is advisable to learn or to listen to only one rhythm at first, then follow with the next one and only then combine them together by playing with both arms and legs simultaneously.

A clear perception of polyphonic music and several rhythms as well as various elements of music largely depends on listening experiences and musical knowledge. Attention as such does not ensure perception which is why people without musical education will perceive few mistakes in intonation, rhythm, harmony, etc. while listening to music even if they concentrate really hard; still, they will not be able to make comparisons. Attention is not only linked to perception but also thinking (Klöppel, 2003).

This is why the learning process needs to be comprehensive. When information is perceived, all incoming data are analysed and compared to the existing knowledge. People depend on their prior experience; therefore, they become subjective when evaluating something new. Attention depends not only on our prior information and attitude, but also on the state of the brain largely directed by the reticular information (Schachl, 2005).

The Role of Attention in Playing Percussion Instruments

According to Dahl (2006), it is important to meet the following goals when learning to play percussion instruments:

- Achieve freedom when playing music in various tempi and dynamics;
- Produce an even sound simultaneously with both hands on one and the same instrument when giving musical performances;
- Master the peculiarities of acoustics in order to anticipate the sound from the instrument and adjust a stroke before the stroke is placed;
- Place the strokes on the instrument in the right time and place;
- Plan movements ahead in order to place emphasis;
- Be physically relaxed in order to have free movements and not to feel exhausted during musical performances.

In order to produce the necessary sounds, a person learns to harmonize largely a multitude of many separate movements that in most cases require the movements of both hands, several fingers and both feet at the same time; these are irregular movements and therefore set high cognitive requirements as well as crave focused and undivided attention. The organisation of the movements mostly depends on the impulses coming from the central nervous system ensuring conscious coordination of the skeletal muscles (Klöppel, 2003).

Musicians must keep attention on the necessary objects and sounds, yet they must feel truly free at the same time. *"When practicing, one and the same musical material is being repeated for several times until the rhythmic figure is no longer paid attention to. This way attention may be focused on other means of musical expression though attention remains the musical basis of which the person is partly aware and which has been partly fixed in the sub-consciousness"* (Clynes & Walker, 1982, 212). The drummer feels music by using both the inner and outer focus and thus does not pay attention to the rhythm only: the rhythm becomes a partially natural element.

The higher level of attention the musician has during the learning process, the more elements are going to be perceived: separate voices, various rhythms, dynamics, quality of commonly made music, form of the musical piece, and musical interpretation. While

learning to play percussion instruments, it is important to pay attention to the feeling of correct performance of hand and leg movements, bodily postures and breathing.

During the process of learning to play musical instruments, it is necessary to have a focused and steady attention in order to master a number of technical elements; however, when making the moves, musicians must gradually reach the level at which the movements become automatic and do not need to be paid direct attention. These way musicians will be able to pay more attention to the interpretation of music.

The Method and Sample

In order to be able to assess the level of development of young people's reaction speed during the learning processes, S11 test form of the *COG Test* (Cognitron, COG) from the Vienna Test System was used (S11 form includes 60 tasks that are divided into 6 groups with different levels of difficulty; there is no time limit).

The *COG Test* was used to assess young people's ability to concentrate direct attention and keep it steady. The test consists of tasks requiring respondents to compare various abstract figures of different complexity made up of lines and decide if they are identical. The respondents are required to do the task as fast and precise as possible. The speed and accuracy are being assessed while the tasks are done.

27 young people aged 15–27 of both sexes took part in the study; the average age of the respondents was 20 years. Prior to the commencement of the study, all participants were informed about the aim of the study, procedure and content; their participation was voluntary.

In the initial stage of the pedagogical experiment, the skill assessment was done in three respondent groups:

1) participants of the experimental group: people with basic musical education who started to learn to play percussion instruments under the guidance of the author of the research on top of their education (n=9);
2) 'benchmark' control group: people who have been playing percussion instruments for five or more years (n=9);
3) control group: people who have never been learning to play any musical instruments (n=9).

Results

A. The initial assessment of young people's skills

After analysing the results that were obtained during the initial testing and that cover all results from the COG test in the three respondent groups (shown in Table 1), it becomes evident that the indicators showing the ability to focus attention and the ability to keep it steady do not differ significantly in either of the groups. Thus, for example, the average indicator of the basic variable of the COG test "The average length of the correct rejective reactions in seconds" in the experimental group equals $M_{experim.gr.=}2.39\pm0.20$ sec. and in the benchmark group – $M_{benchm.\ gr.}=2.69\pm0.53$ sec., whereas in the control group – $M_{contr.gr.=}2.14\pm0.44$ sec. No statistically significant

difference between the average group indicators was identified in other test variables (see Table). This shows that during the initial or first testing the members of the three groups had similar abilities in focusing attention and keeping it steady.

Table 1. Results of initial testing with the COG test in three respondent groups: descriptive statistics

Parameters	*Statistical data*	*Group of respondents*		
		Experimental group (n=9)	*Benchmark group (n=9)*	*Control group (n=9)*
Average time (in seconds) of correct rejective reactions in the COG test (I)	Average	2.39	2.69	2.14
	Standard deviation	0.20	0.53	0.44
	Min value	2.02	2.05	1.57
	Max value	2.69	3.7	2.84
The number of correct affirmative reactions in the COG test (I)	Average	23.00	23.33	22.33
	Standard deviation	0.87	1.12	1.00
	Min value	22	21	21
	Max value	24	24	24
The number of correct rejective reactions in the COG test (I)	Average	34.78	34.78	34.11
	Standard deviation	1.30	0.97	1.05
	Min value	33	33	33
	Max value	36	36	36

To enhance the processes of mastering the playing of percussion instruments, seven coordination exercises with a growing level of difficulty were devised. The aim of the exercises was to develop young people's general and specific skills in an integrated way. The content of exercises:

a) development of focusing, steadying, dividing, and switching attention;
b) development of thinking speed, logics, and flexibility;
c) development of speed reaction;
d) development of successive and simultaneous perception; memory trainings;
e) development of anticipation skills – intellectual prognosis; improvement of sensorimotor coordination;
f) development of hand and leg movements, mimics, fine movement precision, control, independence;
g) development of the sense of rhythm, pulse, pace, polymetre;
h) improvement of techniques for playing percussion instruments;
i) development of self-discipline, willpower, and perseverance.

B. Repeated assessment of young people's skills

Respondents from only two groups were involved in the repeated assessment of skills. The members of the experimental group were

- nine people with basic musical education, who were learning to play percussion instruments under the supervision of the authors of the

research for six months (once a week for 45 minutes and doing the exercises that were devised by the authors);
- nine members of the control group that had never learned to play any musical instrument.

The results of the repeated testing were analysed in several stages and from several aspects. To assess the dynamics of changes in the young people's skill levels, the results from the initial and the repeated tests were compared by using the T-test (T-test: *Paired Samples Test*). The average arithmetic indicators of paired samples were compared. The results of both groups were analysed in order to assess the dynamics of the skill development when the exercises devised by the authors were regularly used in the learning processes and practice of playing percussion instruments.

To draw valid conclusions, it was important not only to identify whether there are statistically significant differences between the initial and repeated results within each group, but also whether there are statistically significant differences between the group assessments. That is, it was crucial to find out whether the difference between the group results after the initial and repeated testing were statistically significant. Thus, the difference for every variable and every respondent in the repeated and initial testing was calculated (the result of Testing II – the result of Testing I); afterwards, the calculated differences were summed up and indicators of the descriptive statistics were obtained for both groups. Only the basic variable indicators of the tests were included into the analysis. To identify the differences between the results of the initial and repeated testing in the experimental and control group, the analysis of parametrical statistics was used: the T-test was applied to compare the average arithmetic indicators of independent samples (T-test: *Independent Samples Test*). The calculation was performed using the statistical analysis software SPSS.

Comparison of the Results from the Initial and Repeated Testing

At first, the differences in the experimental group were analysed by comparing the average results of the initial and repeated testing in the sample. It may be seen that during the repeated testing the members of the experimental group have improved the result of the basic variable in the COG test for an average of 0.31 sec, meaning that the ability to take a decision has improved in comparison with the initial testing. The differences found are of statistical significance with a probability of 99%, $t=4.13$, $p<0.01$, therefore it can be concluded that for the members of the experimental group the results of steadiness of attention and focussing abilities have statistically significantly improved. The changes are explicitly shown in Figure 1.

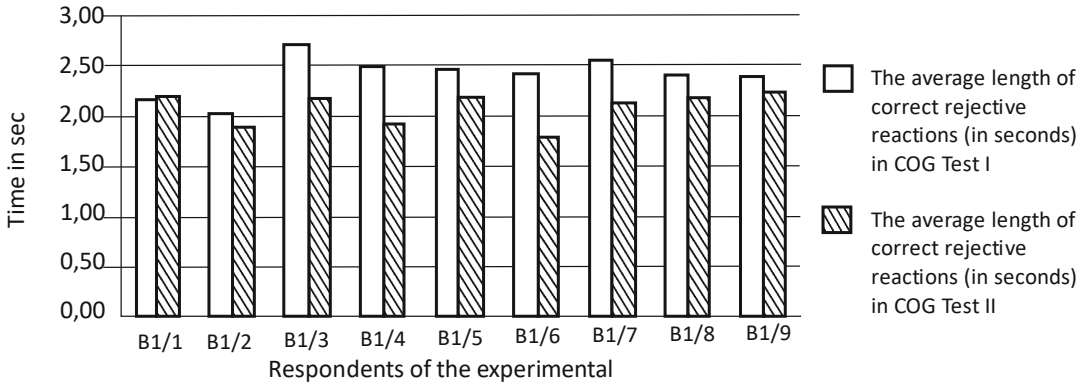

Figure 1. Comparison of the results from the COG test in the initial and repeated testing in the experimental group

As it may be seen, the basic variable has improved for eight out of nine respondents in the experimental group, and in five out of eight cases the changes are considerable.

When the differences in the results obtained during the initial and repeated testing in both groups were compared, it was established that there are statistically significant differences in the COG test. "The average length of correct rejective reactions (in seconds)": in the experimental group the difference between the repeated and initial testing (II-I) equals 0.31 sec, whereas in the control group – 0.04 sec; the difference is statistically significant ($t=-2.08$, $p<0.05$). This proves that the attention concentrating ability has statistically significantly improved in the experimental group with a probability of 95% in comparison with the control group. The differences between the average indicators in the experimental and control group obtained in the initial and repeated testing are shown in Figure 2.

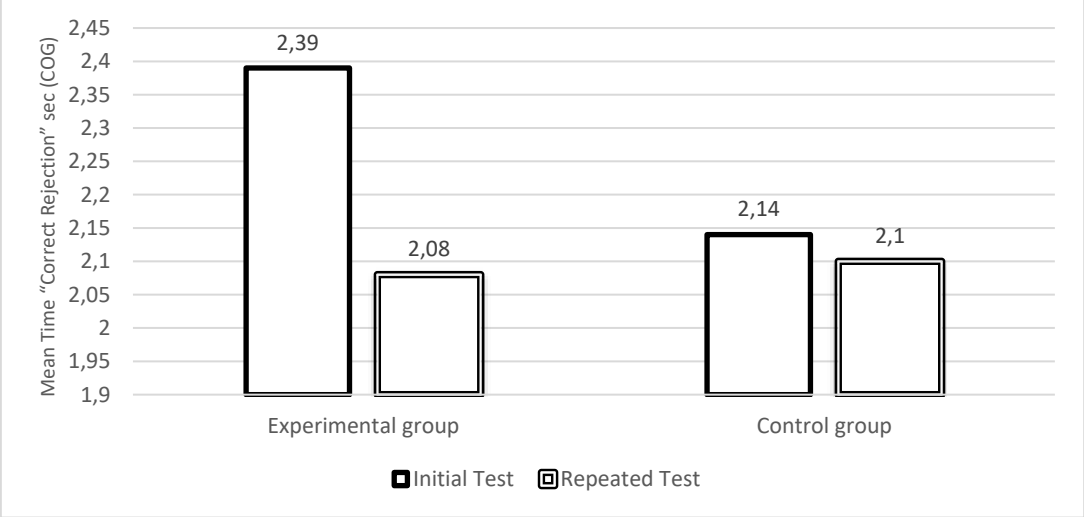

Figure 2. Average results of the basic variable in the COG test 'The average length of correct rejective reactions in seconds' in the initial and repeated testing in the experimental and control group

Conclusions and Discussion

1. After studying scientific literature, the essence of the concept of attention, the role of the steadiness of attention and the ability to concentrate in the learning process have been clarified. Important conclusions for learning to play percussion instruments were drawn:
    - Concentration helps to draw attention purposefully to specific musical elements and aspects during musical performances;
    - When playing an instrument, the desired level to achieve is automatic movements not requiring direct attention so that it can be focused on the artistic aspects;
    - While learning to play percussion instruments, perception is not only connected with attention but thinking as well, and they are influenced by musical knowledge and experience.
2. After summarising the results of the research, we may conclude that the indicators of the attention focusing ability and the ability to keep attention steady have statistically significantly improved for the members of the experimental group.
3. When comparing the changes in the results in the experimental and control group, we concluded that in comparison with the control group the ability to focus attention has improved to a greater extent (probability – 95%) in the experimental group which proves that regular practice and application of percussion instrument coordination exercises devised by the authors efficiently develop young people's attention.
4. When teaching to play percussion instruments, the teacher should take into account young musicians' individual features as well as their abilities and musical experience so that the development of speed reaction would proceed more successfully; these are pre-conditions for expressing the young person's personality and musical abilities.

The aim of the future research work is to apply the system of the coordination exercises, that has been developed by the authors to see whether regular practice improves the operation of cognitive and psychic functions and can be used efficiently for improving the learning skills and academic achievements of those pupils, who do not learn to play percussion instruments, or play other instruments, or sing.

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THE EXPERIENCE OF CHORAL SINGING AMONGST ELDERLY PARTICIPANTS

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Abstract
The purpose of the present study was to explore the experience of elderly adults who sing on a regular basis with a community choir. A research design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methods was developed with data collected through the use of questionnaires, observations and interviews. As the findings of this case study suggest, the main factors that attract singers to join a choir appear to be the aesthetic experience and the social joys to be experienced from taking part in a joint activity. Despite their age, the participants agreed that developing their skills and knowledge and making music to a high standard were desirable elements in their membership of a choir; however, absolute technical precision was regarded as a positive and desirable element but not as a necessity. Findings from the study also suggest that whilst singers were willing to accept the conductor's authority when it related directly to musical issues, they also preferred their own individual opinions to be heard with regard to issues such as repertoire selection. For most participants, it appeared to be most important to have a conductor who was encouraging and inspiring, who transmitted his/her passion for the music and had a good, clear conducting technique. Finally, findings suggested that public performances were regarded by choir members as an important and very rewarding part of choral singing.
Keywords: *Community choirs, older singers, choral participation*

Introduction

For a wide range of very different reasons, the human voice changes with age (Lortie et al., 2017). Sataloff et al. (1997), for example, listed becoming breathless, losing vocal range, changes in the characteristics of vibrato, reduced ability to control breathing,

vocal fatigue and pitch inaccuracies, being amongst the most commonly reported issues affecting the ageing voice. Following a longitudinal study of males aged between 50 and 81 years of age, Verdonck-de Leeuw & Mahieu (2004), reported measureable deterioration in vocal ability over a period as short as five years, whilst Smith & Sataloff (2012), reported significant differences between male and female voices in both the rate and the extent of change which took place with aging. Similarly, studies exploring the differences in the voices of singers and non-singers have suggested that along with general, overall good physical health, singing appears to reduce the degree of changes and characteristics, which cause the voice to sound 'old' (Boone, 1997); a factor supported by Smith & Sataloff (2012), who argued that as our understanding of the aging process improves, it is becoming more and more apparent that many of these changes can be forestalled or even corrected.

Accordingly, Meredith (2007) has argued that many of the so-called 'signs of aging', which can become apparent in the human voice, are in reality, frequently signs of disuse; just as with the rest of our bodies, much of what seems like degeneration is simply due to the lack of use of the vocal mechanism. Additionally, Sinard & Hall (1998) found poor respiratory and abdominal muscle condition whilst further studies (see for example Brown et al., 1993) reported limited aerobic exercise as being the root cause of vocal complaints. Further work by Ramig & Ringer (1983) noted that elderly individuals in good health tended to maintain more stable frequency levels ('jitter') than individuals of the same age who were in poor health leading them to conclude that frequency and amplitude stability were related far more to physical condition that to chronological age.

As Welch & Thurman (2000) point out, research has shown that vocal training and experience can counteract expected age changes. Prakup (2012), for example, found significant differences in a range of age-related characteristics between singers and non-singers. For example, singers were perceived to be younger than non-singers and individuals who were significantly younger in age; singers demonstrated far greater levels of vocal intensity than non-singers and overall, singers were found to display significantly reduced level of vocal characteristics which are typically associated with the aging voice, for example, frequency and amplitude stability. However, the potential health benefits in terms of increased levels of wellbeing to be gained from singing, and in particular choral singing, go well beyond simply reducing the characteristics normally associated with the aging voice. Mueller (1991) points out the importance of voice quality in reflecting the individual personality, whilst Prakup (2012) considers the way in which voice quality can affect the social, emotional and vocational functions of older adults. In short, with an expanding elderly population, knowledge of those features, which occur as a natural process of aging and those, which can counteract changes in physiology through disuse can be seen as important as knowledge of changes that come about through misuse. As Teater & Baldwin (2014) further point out, older people constitute the main user group of the health and social care services in most countries and therefore any community intervention which promotes increased levels of wellbeing must be considered to be a valuable activity.

The social aspects of choral singing contribute in a significant way towards its popularity as a community activity (Kirsch et al., 2013), and there are numerous studies reporting on the positive benefits to be gained for partaking in such choral activities (Hillman, 2002; Sanal & Gorsev, 2014; Joseph & Southcott, 2015). For example, using

questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, Teater & Baldwin (2014) found that participants self rated their individual levels of wellbeing as increasing following weekly one-hour singing sessions. Improvements included a reduction in feelings of social isolation, making positive changes to life style and reduced levels of depression. However, how can we reconcile the increased need for and the benefits obtainable from choral community singing with the voice changes, which occur in older people?

According to Kontogeorgiou (2011), when a singer's voice 'bears the burden' of its age, then the singer becomes a burden for the choir. In such cases, the conductor has the *"painful but necessary"* duty to dismiss this person from the choir *"for the sake of the ensemble"* (p. 41). It is interesting to see, how easily in some instances, singers are sacrificed for the sake of the ensemble rather than an approach where the ensemble is created and exists for the sake of the singers. Using contrasting arguments, O'Toole (1994) adopted a critical, feminist perspective along with Foucault's theories of power and argued that in the 'choral world' singers were subject to a discourse that is more interested in the production of music than in the singers themselves. In contrast, Meredith (2017) suggests that senior adult singers can bring a lifetime experience to the choir which can be beneficial for the younger singers both musically and socially. For example, Durrant (1993) reported on the case of an 83-years-old contralto asked him if she should leave the choir. Having sung for a number of famous conductors when she was younger, the lady in question was still a very good sight-reader and her voice was in a very good condition. Given her experience, as Durrant points out, she was the last alto he wanted to leave. In addition, Smith & Satalloff (2013) agree with this perspective and suggest that senior adult singers' experience can be invaluable for the choir, especially when they are assigned duties concerning administration and or fundraising, for example.

Therefore this paper explores the experience of elderly adults who sing on a regular basis with a community choir.

Methods

The London Welsh Male Voice Choir is a choir for men only, and it has both a long history and a great tradition within the London area. Currently, the choir consists of approximately 100 members, most of which have Welsh roots, or a familial connection with Wales. During an initial visit to one of their choir rehearsals, the first impressions of the group suggested a well-organized choir. For example, the choir nominated and elected representatives who took responsibility for making decisions on a variety of issues ranging from the way the choir operated, the policy on accepting new members and the selection of the repertoire. All members behaved in a very welcoming and hospitably way towards the researchers, and were very positive with regard to both the research and its results. Overall, three observations were carried out of three rehearsals of the choir. One interview was held with the conductor before the second rehearsal that was observed. During the third rehearsal observation, a questionnaire was distributed and completed by all singers.

Over the course of three consecutive rehearsals, non-participant observations were carried out. As it is the custom of this choir to frequently host visitors, a particular row of seats was provided especially for visitors and in this respect, the impact of the

researcher was not considered to be significant. An average of 90 singers attended the three rehearsals, which lasted for approximately two hours. Despite the large size of the choir the rehearsals ran without interruptions. The choir had a rule concerning late arrivals, which were required to wait until the conductor had asked them to take their seats. This tends to be common practice amongst professional ensembles where passing in front of the conductor while he/she is conducting is regarded as a cause of distraction and very often as sign of disrespect. A professional pianist who assisted the conductor and was present during all the rehearsals observed accompanied the choir. There was a short break during the rehearsal during which time one member of the Board made announcements.

During his interview, the choir conductor provided background information about his personal background and about the choir. The London Welsh Male Voice Choir aimed to promote Welsh culture through the Welsh male voice choral tradition and secondly to give the Welsh language a presence. The choir is open to all on condition they agree to support Welsh culture and are prepared to learn certain items in the Welsh language. That having been said, the repertoire of the choir is varied and not limited to Welsh choral music. The main factor that attracts singers to the choir is the opportunity to participate in a very successful organization in addition to the aesthetic and social joys of participating in a male voice choir.

In total, 38 members of the choir completed and returned the questionnaire. 92% of the members were older than 55 and were very experienced in choral singing as the average number of years singing in choirs was 35.72 years (only 18% have not participated in other choirs). 42% answered that they had formal training in music before joining the choir. The most frequent response given for previous experience of singing was vocal training during their time. In response to the question *What country is the major part of your identity?* 39% responded with Wales, 26% responded with England and 33% gave more than one answer for example, Wales and England, Wales and Scotland, United Kingdom or Great Britain.

Results

A. "Enjoying making music with others"

According to participants' responses, it seems that the prime motivation for most of them to become members of the choir was *"enjoying making music with others"* (74% of the responses). Furthermore, when asked about the positive and distinctive elements of their choir, 46% of the respondents referred to social elements beyond the actual singing, with words such as 'comradeship', 'friendliness', 'fun', 'enjoyment' and 'outings', factors frequently appearing in their responses. Field notes made during the observations confirmed each of these elements. For example, it appeared that many members of the choir arrived at the London Welsh Centre early and remained later beyond the end of the rehearsal. Visiting the pub in the London Welsh Centre and meeting friends from the choir seemed important for many of the singers and Thursday evenings had an important place in their weekly agenda, not only because of the choir but also because of the ability to socialize with friends.

The important role that social activities have for the participants in this research was evidenced further by their responses to the open-ended question, which required them to describe a very important personal experience in the choir. A number of singers referred to more specific instances, in which they had performed at the funeral of old friends and colleagues and other moving moments that remained in their memory. As one singer described:

> *"One of our young choristers was tragically killed in a car accident whilst on holiday. We sang at his funeral. When the hearse left the church we lined in the street and gently sang 'Speed your journey'. As the cortege passed in front of us and we could see the face of the widow, everyone was too choked up to sing…"*

It seems that members of LWMVC are familiar with such events. In the middle of each rehearsal, there was always a short break, during which a member of the Board made announcements. These announcements were mainly about details relating to the choir but also, it frequently included news about ex members. As the choir is an organization with a long history, there is a significant number of ex members, most of whom are elderly. In all of the rehearsals that were observed, some of the announcements were about ex members (or their relatives) that had passed away. In these cases, the member of the Board provided information about the place and the time of the funeral for those who wanted to attend. In one case, there was an announcement about the death of an ex member's wife. It could be deduced from the singers' reaction that this lady and her husband were very much respected. The member of the Board informed the choir when and where her funeral was going to be held and then all choir members were asked to stand and sing a Welsh hymn; that one of the lady's favorite pieces. This event indicates how strong the feeling of community and comradeship amongst the choir members but also how important choral singing is for them, as a means through which they express their emotions and feelings.

42% of participants also included memories of public performances in their responses when asked to describe a very important personal experience involving the choir. For these participants, singing in famous venues like the Royal Albert Hall or in the Cardiff Sport Stadium at the 1999 Rugby World Cup seemed to be important factors that made these moments unforgettable. Some singers also referred to the importance of singing in Cathedrals or in venues with good acoustics. However, most singers view public performances as an opportunity to meet new people or to have fun with their colleagues. Thus, tours were seen as one of the most important activities of the choir, and were therefore regarded as more of a social activity rather than an opportunity for the choir to perform.

One interesting response provided by a member, described a concert in his home town. This reference indicates the importance of making his singing activities known to the members of his local community as he wanted his friends to know and to understand the value of his activities with the choir. Perhaps, this need for approval could be seen as a factor that strengthens his self-confidence:

"Singing at a concert in my home town... Therefore, showing friends and local community what I do as a hobby and enjoy this activity".

B. Choir as a learning environment

According to Durrant (1993), choirs are learning environments. As a result, many people joining choirs want to develop skills and knowledge and make music to as high a standard as they can. In short, people who join choirs would like to get better at singing. Taking into consideration this view, the authors decided to test the validity of this stance - as expressed by Durrant - among older singers, by exploring the extent to which the participants of the present research wished to improve their individual level of skill. In other words, were they concerned about the musical standards of their choir?

In order to further examine this question, participants were asked to rate their agreement/disagreement with two specific statements namely:

- In choral groups, I want to develop my skills and knowledge;
- In choral groups, I want to make music to as a high standard as possible.

The percentage of agreement with these two statements was high and surprisingly, was identical for both statements, with 94.7%. However, when asked to rate the importance of technical precision for a choir, only 58% of the participants rated this as an important issue. The contrast between the percentage of singers' acceptance of the statement regarding making a high standard of music and their perception about the importance of technical precision is interesting, as they seem to have similar meaning. In addition, when singers were asked to rate the importance of member's ability to read music, only 25% rated it as important, which seems to contradict their wish to develop their skills and knowledge. However, this does not mean that singers are not concerned, at least in some respect, with the overall musical standard of their choir. When asked what they liked and what differentiated it from other choirs, a significant number of responses actually referred to musical elements such as the high musical standard of the choir and the skills of their conductor.

These seemingly contradictory opinions concerning the musical standards, present an interesting issue with participants expressing a degree of pride in the high standard of the choir, but at the same time not seeming to regard high standards as being important. There are a number of possible interpretations of this. First, the findings could suggest that although singers wish to develop their personal skills and want to make music of high standards, they do not want to feel that they are obliged to. More specifically, it is the authors' view that the singers wished to perform music really well. However, it appears that they believed that 'chasing technical precision and perfection' was a constricting factor which could easily generate, anxiety and stress instead of pleasure. In sum, technical precision is significant but appears to come at a price. As O'Toole (1994), pointed out and is noted previously, in a choir it can be the case that singers become subject to a discourse that is more interested in the production of music than in the labourers.

Secondly, the finding could be interpreted as meaning that individuals wish to improve, learn and take part in high quality performances. However, they also have the belief that 'quality' can be achieved in ways other than through a narrow focus on technical

precision; for example, through conveying a sense of enjoyment. Certainly, a narrow and strict focus on precision can ultimately produce a performance that is rigid and mechanical, and lacking in any form of emotional message.

This belief becomes apparent in the repertoire that the choir usually performs, which also seems to be very diverse. A typical concert consists of Welsh hymns, operatic choruses, spirituals, pieces from musicals and pop songs. According to the conductor, singing pop songs (for example, songs by Freddie Mercury, the Beatles or the Everly brothers) is an innovation of the LWMVC which was followed by other Welsh choirs, something that also indicates the status and the ability of the choir to influence and form 'trends' in choral music. Above all, the conductor holds the belief that the pieces that the choir sings must be enjoyable for both members and audience:

> *"I believe that I have an obligation to find music that the choir enjoys singing and the audience enjoys listening to. So, you won't find Stockhausen, Stravinsky and so in my repertoire because that's not the type of thing that I personally enjoy".*

The participants in the present study supported and valued the importance of commitment to the choir, as the statement "*The importance of members' enthusiasm and dedication*" was rated as the most important characteristic of a good choir (89%). The significant point here was that dedication was regarded as the result of members' enthusiasm and not as an obligation. Furthermore, it could be argued that when commitment to the choir (and therefore desire for self-improvement and contribution) is presented as an obligation to the entire group, non-professional singers react in a negative way probably because they regard it as a constriction related more, to professional musical settings. Therefore, these particular singers regarded technical precision as a positive and desirable element but not as a necessity. A clearer view on this subject was provided by responses to another question in which singers were asked about the reason that prompted them to join their choir. More specifically, singers' responses suggest that their most important motivation was "enjoying making music with others" (74% of the responses), while only 13% responded with "to develop musical skills (sight reading / singing)". This highlights how important it was for these participants to sing and make music with others; something that adds support to the idea of choral music having a significant social dimension as outlined in previous studies (Durrant & Himonides, 1998; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Kennedy, 2002; Durrant, 1993).

In terms of the singers' perceptions of the role of the conductor, 84% of the participants, when asked to rate the characteristics of an 'ideal conductor', agreed that it was important for a conductor "*to have confidence and presence of authority*". It was interesting to note that more positive answers (92%) were given when singers were asked about the extent to which they agreed with the statement "*The conductor must be a music authority*". This indicates that singers more easily accept the conductor's musical authority rather than the situation reported by O'Toole (1994), who argued that conductors possessed significant power over singers. However, even if singers seemed to more readily accept the statement about conductor's music authority they did not appear to believe that "*musical decisions are best made by one person*", as 79% of participants disagreed with this statement. This suggests that singers prefer to be

conducted by a person who is a music authority; perhaps because this makes them feel more secure. However, choir members in this particular study still appeared to be able to express their individual opinions on issues that concerned the choir. For example, 74% of participants agreed that they preferred their opinion to be heard when selecting the repertoire.

The results from this research suggest that some common perceptions regarding the conductor's role do exist. For example, having a conductor who is encouraging and inspiring was a characteristic, which the majority of participants (95%) rated as important along with the importance of having a good conducting technique (97%). Another factor seen as being important was the conductor's skill in transmitting his/her passion for music (89%). These findings echo those reported in Durrant & Himonides' case study (1998) which found that choral participants regarded their conductor as a source of inspiration, encouragement and trust. Finally, despite the contrasting views on the importance of the conductor's authority, during the observations, the members of LWMVC did demonstrate respect towards their conductor.

Conclusion

1. The purpose of the present study was to explore the experience of elderly adults who sing on a regular basis with a community choir. As the findings of this case study suggest, the main factor that attracts singers to the choir is the opportunity to participate in a successful organization in addition to the aesthetic and social joys that offers. Furthermore, the participants, despite their age, agreed that they want to develop their skills and knowledge through belonging to the choir and make music to as a high standard as possible. However, it seems that technical precision is regarded as a positive and desirable element but not as a need. A possible explanation is that the attainment of technical perfection demands from singers to sacrifice the joys of singing. These findings suggest, that a conductor of a choir with elder singers should maintain a balance between activities that bring joy to the singers but also give the opportunity for a further improvement.
2. According to the singers, the most important factor for a good choir is to have members that are enthusiastic and dedicated. Conductor was regarded always as a very respectable person and as this study suggests, it seems that singers can accept easier his/her authority when it is limited to musical issues. However, they like their opinion to be heard about issues that concern the choir (for example selection of the repertoire). It is important according to the participants of the study to have a conductor who is encouraging, inspiring, transmits his/her passion for music and has a good conducting technique. Finally, public performances were regarded as important by most of the singers and were regarded as a very rewarding part of choral singing. Some performances are more significant than others due to factors associated to the venues where they performed, emotional reasons or the strengthening of self-confidence.

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Notes for contributors

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Manuscripts, ideally between 5000 and 8000 words (including abstract, diagrams, references and tables), should be sent as an attachment in original format or Word document format (DOC). Manuscript should be submitted in English and only for *Problems in Music Pedagogy* in accordance with the publication manual of the American Psychological Association (APA).

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Key Word Index should follow, including a maximum of 5 Keywords.

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Tables, drawing, diagrams and charts with a clear title should be numbered by Arabic numerals. The approximate position of these materials should be indicated in the manuscript.

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