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FOR TEACHERS OF CHAMBER ENSEMBLES



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PROLOGUE



Gunta Melbārde –

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Dear colleagues!

This is our fifth magazine, which has been put together as a New school year's present for young chamber musicians and their teachers. We thank sincerely all the authors who are sharing their experience generously and selflessly! We are looking forward to receive your letters with reviews, thoughts and suggestions. Our e-mail is the same: weplay@inbox.lv .

Sometimes there can be moments, when doubt and disbelief are taking over, during our daily routine and stress, and then it may be worth listening to words, said by Rainer Schmidt (*Hagen Quartett*): “I wish that in the field of chamber music there would be more work with children. I am sure that there is nothing better than chamber music for children – everyone is important and no one is less significant.”

I could address just said to composers – our contemporaries, to parents as well, but most of all – to us, teachers. First prize in some contest is not the most important for keeping and spreading love to music. It is the creation of appropriate environment, providing “musical circumstances.” I would like to encourage my colleagues and ask them: play music! Play music together with your students! I am sure – it will be so inspiring for them that your creative cooperation will get new level, and it's quality will be much higher. Use every common lesson! Then many of these great advices, read in this magazine, will get clearer, bigger meaning and sense.

We will make it – together with friends!

REVIEW, IDEAS, COMMENTS



Dear friends,

Once again, I leave Riga with regret, and yet my heart is truly filled with joy and inspiration after seeing the festival/competition create so much positive energy, so much enthusiasm, so much happiness. The absolute success of this weekend could easily be seen in the bright eyes and smiles of the children, in the deep inner love radiating in the faces of their parents and friends, in the comfortable and friendly relations between the teachers. Everywhere the simple pleasure of listening to each other and helping each other to play better was victorious, in the evening church concert, in the days' competition, in the botanical garden concert, in the

hallways of the school as children prepared to play or ran to get back into the hall to listen to friends. And most delightful of all, in the final concert, cleverly organized before the announcement of the results, it was clear that a new threshold had been crossed, that the children had indeed achieved a higher level of ease and comfort on stage. One could see that the ultimate lesson of how to be with music and share it with others had really been learned.

Of course, if this happens so well, it is not just the fact of organizing the weekend that makes it possible. It works because you have thought and prepared everything so carefully and well for so long, and that you have the gift of bringing so many good people together to collaborate, to contribute, to facilitate. I am filled with wonder and admiration, and only hope that your efforts will continue for as long as you wish. In this way, in spite of all difficulties, the world slowly becomes a better place.

With deepest gratitude for your kindness and generosity,

Evan Rothstein, ECMTA, Paris, France

Thank you again for a wonderful weekend in Riga! The festival and competition was a complete success for you. We were also satisfied with our stay at Hotel *Jurnieks*. The girls liked being in Riga and hopefully we can be back next year for the 10th anniversary of the festival.

I would like to send you a CD made by me and me pianist Anne Rosenlund a couple of years ago. Could you please send me your address?

I wish you a restful summer and hope to hear from you soon. You can answer in German if you wish. As you noticed I understand German, but have unfortunately forgotten how to speak. I promise to improve my language skills for next year!



My son Kasper sends his best regards to!

Love,
Åsa Gustavsson, Musikinstitutet Kungsvägen, Espoo, Finland

Dear Gunta,

On behalf of my colleagues and myself I want to thank you for the well-organized competition and kind words to us. We are excited about your school and on your hospitality. I think that your competition has a great future and is very useful for teachers and students – have something to learn from you. If we have a decent student, always look forward to your invitation.

I wish you a good summer and more success in the future.

Yours,

Paulius Bernardas Konce, Music School B. Dvarionas, Vilnius, Lithuania



Daiva Stulgyte, pianist,

graduated Kaunas J.Naujalis Music Gymnasium and Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. She is currently accompanist – assistant at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, head of the chamber ensemble department in Kaunas J.Naujalis Music Gymnasium. Performs publicly on a regular basis, mostly as a member of various chamber ensembles.

How to solve communication problems in a chamber ensemble

For me chamber music is the most interesting type of music. For many years have I been playing in different ensembles and also trying to teach others.

I would not really like to discuss pedagogic issues in general, as my pedagogic experience is closely connected with the school in which I work as a chamber ensemble teacher - Kaunas J.Naujalis Music Gymnasium. In this school children are prepared to become professional musicians. That does not mean, however, that every student eventually becomes one, but almost everyone having finished the gymnasium continues their studies at different higher music education institutions. Therefore the selected specialty is taught and studied with a very serious approach and the expectations from the students are high. Starting with form 9, extra subjects are introduced, such as orchestra, concertmaster class for pianists and chamber ensemble. But before reaching form 9, children are taught merely as soloists. Of course, some students play in chamber ensembles with friends, especially if they participate in contests, but that does not occur frequently. String instrumentalists also have a string ensemble, where they also acquire skills of joint play. But it is the pianists that always have to work alone. That is why many of them find chamber music a completely new area and impinge upon some difficulties.

The first problem is the formation of an ensemble. Undoubtedly, first of all we have to make sure that the professional abilities of its participants are close to equal, so that they are able to participate in contests and concerts together. Members of chamber ensembles come and go from time to time for children desire to play together with their friends or at least acceptable partners. Sometimes that becomes an obstacle too, because not always a good friend is a good musician. What is the correct

solution? Sometimes the ensemble will break up if the children just do not want to play together. However, along with music skills communication skills may also be taught.

What is a chamber ensemble? It is a group of people who have the same goal, in this case it is to learn and perform a piece of music. For an inexperienced student this is a long and complicated process. Not only must he or she learn to listen to him- or herself, but also he or she has to pay attention to the partner, listen to the jointly created intonations, rhythm, dynamics and so on. Thus, in order to achieve desirable results the ensemble members have to work long and dreary hours together. This is when we impinge on not only professional, but also communication problems. The first one is to listen to the partner, not only to oneself. It is not really that easy as it sounds. For example, I explain to the pianist that in a certain fragment he does not have the lead and only has to accompany the soloist and listen to what the partner is trying to say to him. He is startled: "Why am I not the leader?" He just wants to be the same what he has been for years - the stone cold soloist. But the basis of communication is the ability to listen to each other. This is what we imperceptibly learn during chamber ensemble classes. Students often are reluctant to make concessions to each other. They think that their play is rhythmically and dynamically correct and instead of trying to make an agreement start filling with dissatisfaction. It is very important to teach kids HOW to work together, for the work on a piece of music is a continuous creative process, during which everyone is able and has to express his or her opinion. To my students I suggest this method: we try out all the variants suggested and only then decide which one is the best. It is possible to make an agreement on which is the best way by taking the author's wish into account. Another way is to react to the situation immediately, to adjust to the partner. It is very important to do such things during classes in order to prepare one selves to any unexpected occurrences on stage, where one has to react quickly, help and adjust to one's friend in case if something does not go as planned. For children this is a rather complicated task, but also a very developing one.

I have noticed, that students often are aware of their mistakes, but do not correct them. Here we impinge on psychological problems. Children, especially teenagers, often want to express their personality, to be in the centre, to dominate over their friends. Making music in a chamber ensemble, on the contrary, teaches to be WITH the others, not do dominate, but sometimes even to concede. In an ensemble everyone has equal rights and is equally valuable. Everyone has the ability to express him- or herself while others have to help to accomplish that. When children learn "the rules of the game" they start to like it.

Another important aspect is the creation of a legit ensemble from students with completely different characters and temperaments. To be honest, I love trios. I think three is the perfect number of

players for studying. Here is an example: an ensemble of three totally different students has been formed: an active and technically well-prepared female pianist full of vigor and energy, a musical, sensitive but somewhat insecure male violinist, and a calm and collected female cellist. I must note that they are all 12-graders who soon have to pass their chamber ensemble exam.

At first, the work stays on square one because the violinist is constantly absent; the girls have to rehearse on their own. It turns later out that the violinist does not feel satisfied about the atmosphere in the ensemble; it seems to him that the girls keep traumatizing him. Now music classes turn into psychology classes. Gradually it becomes clear, what the violinist wants and hopes for. Naturally, among girls with strong characters he feels inferiority, insufficient strength both as a professional and as a human. The pianist is dissatisfied because of his inability to keep his word to attend the rehearsals. After long conversations the tension decreases a bit. Eventually they all understand that everyone is unique and they are no exception and that it is even good that they are so different. Our world consists of many completely varied people, who supplement each other. It came out that the work on the piece started only after all three of them had overcome the discomfort caused by their diversity. In addition, I must mention that not only did this particular ensemble splendidly pass their exam, but also they took down the first price at a chamber ensemble competition in Panevezhis. It was with great sadness that they stopped their joint creative activity.

Until now I have focused on active, courageous children, who are not afraid to express their opinion and freely communicate with the teacher. However, there are also ones that simply do not have their own opinion or are afraid to express it. A silent, introverted student listens to whatever the teacher says and does what he or she is told to, but never shows initiative. Chamber music can also help persons of such type to discover themselves, for chamber music is a non-verbal means of communication.



We cannot express in words the things we try to say in music. It is important that for a timid student a suitable partner is selected so that they can establish a good relationship later on. Making music jointly on stage, when the participants share the same tasks and goals, unites them. After a contest somewhere abroad or just in another city children feel as if they were one team that has just come back from an outing or a summer camp.

They have lived through some adventures together - inconveniences during the trip, anxiety before the performance, the joy of success. Even if the students are not strong enough to participate in a contest,

they can learn to love chamber music if the teacher can select for them not difficult, but interesting pieces that awakes their imagination, for instance, if the piece implies literary content. There are some pupils that try to "dissolve", to "hide themselves" in the ensemble. In these cases, the teacher must explain, that all members are equal, that everyone's opinion and everyone's part are equally important. That is great, if such an ensemble has an opportunity of performing live. It is obvious that mostly the best ones are invited to various events and those who are not that strong do not have that many opportunities to perform on stage. That is why it is very useful to organize concerts for parents, in which everybody could take part. When playing in an ensemble, children do not feel that much fear as they would playing alone, and they do not have to learn their parts by heart. And the most important thing is to make the children feel the pleasure of playing and being together. If they make music with joy, then I consider my goal achieved.

I pay a lot of attention to communication and to its importance in an ensemble. I think that it is not only the basis for a good ensemble, but also one of the human values, particularly important nowadays. The communication century, strange though it may seem, alienates us. *Facebook*, *Skype*, *SMS* are not real communication, but only its imitation. We can chat with numerous Internet friends all day long, but become helpless having met them live. Making chamber music is at the same easy and difficult means of communication. On the one hand, that does not cause any problems - a group of people just has to sit down and start playing. On the other hand, if we look deeper, music is one of the most intimate means of communication. As I have already mentioned, one can say a lot more with music than with words. Thus we find ourselves in an undefined and unstable sphere, where we become more vulnerable. Most probably children are not aware of that and are busy solving other problems, but year after year, as they become more mature, technical tasks are not of that difficulty.

That is when we start approaching the feeling of real micro-society. In a real ensemble partners have to feel emotional unity, simultaneous breath, become one organism united by one beautiful goal. That is why I teach my younger students to find a goal to share, to breathe simultaneously. It is only a physical action at first, but it may become really useful. By the way, it is great, if there is a wind instrument player in the ensemble. Breathing is an indispensable part of his or her play and I suggest that the other participants breathe along the wind instrument player, for pianists and string instrumentalists often do not fully realize where the end of the



phrase is, it is not connected with their physical breath. The example of the wind instrumentalists can help them.

It is vital to make sure that children enjoy making chamber music. Students industriously work during specialty classes - play endless scales and studies, sometimes forgetting why they are doing that. I try to remind them that this toil is necessary so that later they can perform wonderful pieces and enjoy the music. In order to substantiate my words I need to select an appropriate repertoire and that is not an easy task. As there is almost no new music in our libraries, I have to use the Internet. Most of the time, I use Internet libraries (IMSLP, ScorSer) and select pieces for pedagogic purposes. I also listen to different recordings and then try to find the scores of the pieces I like. I avoid giving baroque and classicism music to students of the first few grades, as they do not have the required skills yet, as a rule. Articulation, touch, sense of style - all this takes extra time to be worked on, which is just too much for beginners. I start with simple romantic pieces, for example, piano trios of Hans Sitt, Hermann Berens, compositions of Karl Reinecke, Joachim Raff and Josef Suk. For more advanced students, especially when preparing for competitions, I look for something more interesting, like Trio for flute, oboe and piano by Madeleine Dring, "Invierno porteno" by Astor Piazzolla, Three Cheerful Pieces for piano trio by Rodion Shchedrin. Sometimes it is difficult to find opuses for an unusual, non-traditional combination of instruments. In such cases one has to arrange a piece, which requires a lot of time, but undoubtedly always pays off.

To sum up, a chamber ensemble teacher has to solve a lot of problems. In my view, he or she can get lucky only if he or she is on the side of the students – if the teacher is empathic, is able to understand the students' problems, regards them as his or her friends, but not as obstinate and disobedient teenagers. We are only separated by a couple of decades of life and professional experience. If a student trusts me and tells me about his or her problems, I tell him or her about the ones I impinged on in my teens. Then a real firm bond appears between us. Mutual trust and understanding, friendly relationship between the teacher and the student can make miracles. Children attend chamber ensemble classes with pleasure, feel comfortably and freely, make music with joy. This is the ultimate reward for our sincere, devoted work.

(Translated by Aleksey Pegushev)

Dr Evan Rothstein

is currently Deputy Head of Strings, Guildhall School and Instructor of Chamber Music at the Summer String Academy, Indiana University since 1997. From 2004 to 2010 he served as a pedagogical consultant to *ProQuartet – Centre européen de musique de chambre*. Also recognized as a specialist in American music, he has taught music history and analysis at the *University of Paris 8 – Saint Denis* since 2001, and has collaborated with the *Théâtre de Châtelet* and the *Cité de la musique* for program notes, conferences, and video projects. Since November 2009 he is Chairman of the European Chamber Music Teachers' Association, and writes a bimonthly column on chamber music activities for *Ensemble Magazine*.



Teaching chamber music to children: string quartets at the Indiana University Summer String Academy

<http://www.music.indiana.edu/precollege/summer/string/index.shtml>

<http://music.indiana.edu/precollege/year-round/strings/index.shtml>

Basic challenges

The pedagogical approach described in the following pages has been developed through practice and observation in many different contexts and thanks to contact with many wonderful teachers and artists both in the United States and in Europe. More specifically, this approach arose in part as a response to the needs of the adolescent students of the four-week Summer String Academy in Bloomington, which has provided a special laboratory for reflecting on the nature and process of chamber music learning. Some of its elements are borrowed from non-musical practices as well, from concepts quite current in theater and modern dance. Much of this will be already quite familiar to many of our colleagues, and I do not pretend to have invented or discovered techniques or methods not already in use. But in many ways, as I was preparing this paper, I became even more aware of the extent to which the philosophy of the Summer String Academy and its founder Mimi Zweig have been crucial to the development of this program of training in chamber music. The structure and mission of chamber music within this academy were not my invention, and I am responsible for only a small part of the overall program: I have simply tried to contribute to its development. Every summer for the past 14 years I have had the privilege of teaching chamber music in this academy in especially favorable conditions, and this has made it possible to develop strategies and work methods which may present some interest to colleagues, even if their own circumstances may differ. For this reason it seems useful to include below a brief description of the specific environment in which this instruction takes place. Some aspects may be usable in other contexts, others perhaps less so.

The basic challenge may be resumed in this way: how can one create in a very short time - in the context of a summer academy focusing on intensive individual development and with young people of sometimes very different levels of experience - the necessary conditions for coherent and confident awareness in rehearsal and performance of chamber music? Further, how might one make room in this context for establishing a structured foundation of chamber music skills that goes beyond the simple fact of playing together and producing a more or less satisfactory performance? Two principle objectives - *building confidence and providing transposable skills that can be integrated into the student's basic work vocabulary* - are often, and unfortunately, considered as secondary or accessory,

sacrificed to the need to produce good performances quickly by any means. All of us are familiar with this challenge – and not only in the context of a summer academy. Young people must of course devote a great deal of time and energy to individual performance skills, and the role of collective activities in a training program is often either overwhelming and unreasonable (as in the case of some overly ambitious orchestral programs) or is treated in an unstructured way.

By “unstructured way” I mean that whereas individual training is usually organized as the progressive development and exploitation of fundamental skills, collective practice in summer academies tends to be simply performance - or result-oriented: a certain program must simply be performed in a certain time. This is true as much in orchestral playing as in chamber music. This has certain advantages and interest, of course, but the students’ acquisition and accumulation of retainable and transposable chamber music skills remains fairly aleatory¹. These skills might be resumed, non-exhaustively, as the following:

- multiple levels of communication (telegraphing one’s own and interpreting other’s intentions);
- multiple levels of listening (that is, the ability to listen to oneself, to others, and to all in relation to each other);
- reflexive action (that is, being aware of what one is doing, what others are doing and all in relation to each other);
- tuning and harmonic listening;
- planned rehearsing and score study;
- decision-making (for oneself and in collaboration with others);
- informed interpretation (historically, stylistically, technically).

These are rarely addressed as foundational aspects of training – they are usually simply dealt with incidentally as problems arise. Most coachings in a summer academy are devoted only to realizing the performance of the assigned piece, making it sound good as quickly as possible, and so the idea of spending time establishing and developing fundamental skills seems superfluous. Some might think that this is inevitable because of the limits of time: if one spends 20 minutes teaching a quartet to play scales or doing communication exercises in every lesson, perhaps they will not have time to learn their performance piece. My own experience leads me to believe that, just as in individual instruction, one *must* make time for the establishment of good rehearsal technique, and this investment leads to significant long-term benefits, and greatly facilitates all related aspects of ensemble practice and performance.

It should be clear that when I speak of foundational or fundamental skills, I am speaking primarily of *rehearsal technique*. This is drawn from a pedagogical principle used by all teachers working in Professor Zweig’s circle: *lessons should be used to show students how to practice*. Chamber music rehearsing presents special problems however, since good rehearsal technique often requires some serious analytical skills, which few adolescents possess. Noticing that something can be improved is often difficult, since the mistakes usually arise not from individual parts – although this of course happens - but from the incorrect interaction between parts, which students either do not hear or do not recognize as part of their shared responsibility (“No, *you* played out of tune”). They may know how to improve their own intonation or passage-work, but they are often at a loss as to how to improve collectively.

Another difficulty is that solfège, counterpoint, figured bass, and harmony are rarely taught in pre-college music programs in the United States, so many students do not know – except intuitively – about

¹ By „transposable skills”, I mean those which are not specific to the piece at hand, and which can be employed to allow students to work independently in the future.

chords, harmonic progressions, cadences, motives, ornaments, classical form, and such. Quite surprisingly, many very talented students do not even hear harmonically unless trained to do so, and more often than not they do not even notice if the notes they are playing are consonant or dissonant with regard to the harmony of a given passage. It is not that they are indifferent to harmony, they simply do not notice its details. In most cases they can learn to become sensitive to the expressive implications of the play of tension and resolution which underlies most musical expression in tonal music, but achieving this also takes time away from giving direct advice about interpretation. This means that in order to facilitate and accelerate work, certain very simple rules of thumb must be established quickly in order allow the student ensembles to acquire enough analytical and practical skills to rehearse well on their own, and to lay the solid foundations of reliable performance. This should be done, however, without turning a chamber music lesson into a musicology lecture!

It is evident that this work with adolescents – which I believe can also be done in some version with younger students, and which is still beneficial for university-level students – relies on the ability to draw pertinent, interpretive conclusions from analytical and historical information. For want of space, I will address only a few of these issues here, focusing primarily on practice techniques. But first it seems necessary to describe the context in which this instruction takes place.

The context

The Summer String Academy of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music was founded over 25 years ago by its present director Mimi Zweig, professor of violin and viola and director during the school year of the University's pre-college String Academy. This pre-college program was a reaction to the conditions of music instruction for children in the region, in which no structured, long-term, conservatory-style instruction in musical performance was available before the university level. The creation of this program was also Ms Zweig's personal response to the inspiration she experienced encountering the work of such pedagogues as Paul Rolland or S. Suzuki, and her desire to engage in a holistic, positively based form of talent education. Some of the basic principles guiding this work, which have guided my chamber music instruction, include:

- the creation of a non-judgmental environment, in which the neutral observation of errors only serves to inform improvement;
- the function of lessons as a place to learn how to practice;
- the focus on progressive acquisition of skills which can be cumulative and which anticipate difficulties in the repertoire;
- the belief that teaching must allow the student's voice to be liberated, with the recognition that liberty comes through competency and discipline.

With the help of colleagues who now direct similar projects across the United States, Ms. Zweig developed a program that allows children to begin instruction in violin and cello at age 5 and continue through to college, and this program was embedded in the university music school. Thus it was possible to develop simultaneously the pedagogy training of university students, recruited for teaching apprenticeships within the program, and to make intelligent use of the faculty of the university school of music, whose work and students provided inspiration for the younger students. In the absence of all orchestral instruments in pre-college, ensemble playing has been mostly limited to the group playing of solo repertoire, a kind of training in precision and team spirit for which they are justly celebrated (the "Violin Virtuosi" regularly tours across the country and in foreign countries, playing most recently at the ESTA congress in Sweden in 2011). Although much of this group playing is in unison, the conviction that individual development is acquired through collective practice is considered from the beginning a fundamental aspect of the program.

Originally, the summer academy was intended to prolong and complement the instruction provided during the school year, but it grew rapidly into an international program, now enrolling about 100 young violinists, violists, and cellists from every part of the United States, and including students from Canada, Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia. The Summer String Academy (SSA) lasts for 4 weeks, takes place on the university campus and within the buildings of the university music school, which makes it possible to make use of all human and material resources of the institution: logistical and administrative support, photocopying resources, individual studios for teaching, student assistants to oversee practice (including chamber music assistants), pianists to collaborate with the studio classes, individual practice rooms for every student, concert halls, lecture halls for masterclasses, a magnificent music library, and computer technology support. The academy provides intensive training to students aged 12 to 18: two individual lessons a week with a master teacher, numerous support lessons with teacher assistants and professional piano coaches, one performance masterclass each week with the principle teacher, numerous group masterclasses with invited professors, and 4 ½ hours of individual practice each day (divided between morning and evening, always with 10 minutes breaks every hour). In the evenings there are concerts of the University Summer Festival.

The structure of chamber music instruction

Considering the intensity of this program of study, it might seem surprising that chamber music occupies an important place in the daily schedule. But since collective music making is part of the pre-college program since its beginnings, its role in the summer academy springs directly from the same pedagogical conception. Development of the chamber music skills mentioned in my introduction has *always* been considered an indispensable, integrated part of the development of individual skills, and not as accessory. The schedule and type of chamber music activity however are extremely flexible, according to the age, level of competence and experience of the students. Whatever the specific project might be, two hours of chamber music rehearsal time is firmly scheduled at least four days a week, with coachings and masterclasses in addition to this.

Younger students will generally divide their week between larger chamber ensembles (such as a violin ensemble, or a “baroque ensemble” of up to 12 students), string quartets and participation in a string chamber orchestra, with the chamber ensembles meeting twice weekly for two hours and the chamber orchestra as well twice weekly for two hours. While the chamber orchestra is a conducted ensemble, in the baroque ensemble, which I have overseen for many years, students are rehearsed in such a way that they may perform fairly complex contrapuntal music without conductor, and in which basic skills of autonomous chamber



music performance – and rehearsal – are introduced progressively. Since this ensemble is usually made of the youngest students of the academy, it goes without saying that even where their individual skills are impressive, they possess very little experience in the autonomous performance of chamber music. Repertoire is thus chosen whose tempi, characters, and textures are varied, and whose different instrumental lines dialogue in a fairly evenly distributed way, so that the responsibilities for entrances and the interpretive abilities of the young students will be exploited fully and equitably. The work with this ensemble is in many ways similar to the work with the quartets, and the differences, while

interesting, would require too much space, so I have chosen to leave further description for another time.

More experienced students will devote all of their chamber music time to a single ensemble, playing in a string quartet or piano quintet with a staff pianist/coach, and they will rehearse two hours, 4 days a week. Each ensemble receives two one-hour lessons with a principle teacher, the rehearsal times being additionally supervised by university student apprentices. A few of these projects will be particularly ambitious, including the preparation of complete works (Mendelssohn Octet, Brahms Sextets, or others) and will meet almost every day with a master coach. The majority of the chamber groups will, however, be organized into string quartets – this past summer there were 19 – and, whatever their level, most of these groups will be playing music of Haydn. Although I work almost every year with the baroque ensemble, and occasionally coach the ensembles with piano, my primary work has been with these Haydn string quartets.

Making quartets

Here again, I cannot claim any particular initiative. In the first years of the academy, chamber music repertoire was organized as in many other academies, that is, according to a principle of variety as a function of the instruments available, but it was Professor Zweig who introduced progressively the idea that the playing of string quartets should form the absolute backbone of the program, and that the basic repertoire should be the works of Haydn. I myself wondered at first if this would provide sufficient variety and interest for teenagers, but now I would not want to proceed otherwise. And so it has been for many years that even as some groups explore repertoire from Mozart to Shostakovich, most of the quartets play Haydn, or at least begin with Haydn, and that among the final concerts there has always been one devoted almost entirely to Haydn quartets in the form of a concert/competition, whose winner will perform a second time in a gala concert.

As with many summer academies and schools, the greatest impediment to string quartet playing has always been the relative scarcity of violists, and this difficulty has been solved for many years in the simplest way. It must be said, once again, that it was Professor Zweig's personal experience - as a violinist switching to viola to obtain her first professional orchestra engagement – that served as an example (other examples, such as the story of the creation of the Guarneri Quartet, are also inspiring for the students). It was thus decided that the stock of university violas be made available to violinists, and that students should be encouraged to play viola in chamber music and orchestra for the summer, as a means of artistic and professional development. Being able to play viola thus becomes an added value, a special skill which, on occasion, also leads to a wholly new artistic path, since some young people discover that they actually prefer to play viola and decide to switch permanently.

To facilitate the transition, one of the viola professors, James Przygocki, devised a remarkably effective introductory session for viola-playing violinists which is always presented collectively on the first day of the academy. The session includes notions of technique and progressively difficult alto-clef reading. Participation in the session immediately creates a kind of social bond between viola-playing violinists, and helps to avoid feelings of individual frustration. Further support in learning the parts is then offered both by viola and violin teachers.

At first it was decided by the teachers which of the violinists in each quartet would play viola, but in recent years this has been left to each group to decide, normally without much difficulty (most teenagers would rather play string quartet repertoire than baroque music for three violins and

continuo!). The fact that students *choose* to play viola in order to build a string quartet in turn creates a more positive energy than if the task had been imposed by the teachers.

Defining the repertoire and establishing short and long-term goals

It must be remembered that almost all of the ensembles are made of young people who have not worked together before, and many have never played string quartets intensively. Teachers form the groups after listening to audition videos, and according to considerations of age, maturity, and experience. Those who have had good chamber music experience are nevertheless accustomed to having a longer time to prepare music than they will in the course of the SSA. Thus, in order to achieve the goals listed above in this context, it is extremely important proceed in a systematic way, so that skills can be acquired, a real quartet identity established, and a quality performance assured. This means that a certain structure must be clear in the teacher's mind and communicated to the students:

- work will consist of short- and long-term goals marked by performance for peers in weekly masterclasses (students will play whatever they are ready to play, be it a single phrase or an entire piece);
- learned repertoire will be repeated as much as possible in the weekly masterclasses, even as new material is added;
- there are only three masterclasses (every Friday) before the final concerts, so there can be no exceptions: everyone must play each week;
- good principles of observation and critical listening will be encouraged by making the masterclasses interactive, assigning small groups of students to follow the score and make suggestions to each performing ensemble;
- suggestions by students must be constructive, subjective appraisals discouraged (positive comments are acceptable);
- basic exercises for communication skills, intonation, and sound will be introduced progressively in every lesson and practiced in every rehearsal; scales in unison, octaves, and in chords in various voicings will be used as a basis for all other exercises;
- students will be reminded every week of the number of rehearsals and lessons remaining before performance and instructed during lessons in the method of organizing their rehearsals;
- each group will learn a Bach choral in the key of the piece they are playing;
- it will be made clear that each group will begin with a movement of Haydn, and by the second week will either be able to continue with that movement, add another movement of the same piece, or choose to play a different repertoire;
- each group will be provided with a score and introductory texts concerning the repertoire

and most importantly

- in preparing the performance repertoire, emphasis will be placed on “guided discovery”: all parts will be unmarked (part of their task must consist of paying attention to each other's parts and working out bowings and fingerings) and time will be left to allow students to make mistakes about tempo, bow strokes, articulation, and fingering *so that solutions respond directly to experienced problems and difficulties.*

As mentioned above, the quartets of Haydn provide all necessary materials for this work, but I have found it indispensable to begin work not with first movements – as is generally the case – but with the minuets. These movements are among the shortest, most characteristic, and most technically accessible, and provide the first short-term goal of the summer: all of the quartets must perform for

each other in a performance workshop whatever they have prepared of these menuets at the end of the first week. In fact, most students will start out thinking that this first task is much too easy: only when confronted with the necessity of playing for classmates after four rehearsals do they realize that playing well together is so demanding that it is indeed better to start with “easier” repertoire. But the process of creating a sense of shared identity begins here: as Professor Zweig has often said, the first performance is only the beginning of the learning of the piece. And for a quartet, it is the first necessary step in the creation of a quartet sound. Work on other movements or other repertoire begun afterwards usually goes much more quickly and productively.

In terms of interpretation, starting with menuets presents other advantages, in the sense that they are filled with contrast and variety, and are easily heard in relation to the different types of dances being referenced: some menuets are clearly of a more courtly nature, others are closer to the *ländler* style or have other folk characteristics (a *musette* effect, for example). Some are clearly dramatic, others comic. Reference to dance types is of course much more concrete as a visual, rhythmic, and stylistic image, and this gives many opportunities for stimulating the imagination of the students. This compact form thus allows the groups to experiment and gain skill at collective expression in a very short time, and the ability to create a sense of *character* and *style* should be encouraged from the first lessons.

Guided discovery: taking risks to achieve higher goals

I am each year accorded a class of six or seven quartets in addition to the baroque ensemble, and we are thus able to work on an entire opus of Haydn each year: this project has been going on for some time. Originally, a small set of pedagogically solid Haydn quartets were used each summer, but since students come back year after year, and most of Haydn quartets can be readily used in this context, I decided that exploring an entire opus with the class would be more instructive than always playing the same famous quartets. Why so? Because each opus really is a marvelous snap-shot representing Haydn’s preoccupations at a particular moment in his career, whether it be the exploitation of some technical aspect (the fugues in Opus 20), the response to the influence of performance opportunities (the Opus 71 and 74 composed for London), the presence of a particular performer (Opus 64 for Toth), and so on. The stylistic diversity is really extraordinary, and immersing the class in a particular opus allows the students to become concretely familiar with its stylistic particularities (rather than simply thinking of Haydn’s music as possessing a simple, homogenous style). The circumstances surrounding the writing, performing, and publishing of each opus allows students to appreciate more deeply the fact that music springs not only from the inspired genius of the composer, but also arises from encounters, developments, opportunities, trends, inventions, and changes in society, technology, and the other arts. Knowing, for example, at what moment Haydn consciously writes for public performance and for what reasons is not without consequence for performers, and for many young students this will be their first encounter with this level of contextualization. Nevertheless, this kind of ‘living-in-the-moment’ of a particular composer is a great opportunity only if the works are accompanied by *pertinent* historical and stylistic information.

In this we are very fortunate to have not only the remarkable work of Robbins-Landon, of which excerpts are always read to the students, but also the new editions of Haydn quartets from Peters, edited expertly by Simon Rowland-Jones. Each volume contains score and parts, as well as a detailed introduction explaining notions of sources and historical context for each opus, as well as extremely useful information about the interpretation of the score’s bowings, articulations, tempi, and dynamics. Students are provided with scores and copies of these texts, and the information is constantly referred to in practical discussions of interpretation.

The practical questions will arise immediately: why are bowings different for similar music in each instrumental part? Why is there no dynamic marking at the beginning of the movement, and what dynamic is implied? Why is a melody written with slurs the first time and not the second? Do dots and slashes above the notes always indicate *staccato* or *martelé*? What is the meaning of the tempo indications? Does the absence of bowings mean that all notes should be played *détaché*? These are all textual and stylistic issues which raise the question of Haydn's relationship with musicians, of conventions of the time, of interpretive freedom, of compositional short-hand, and they all give the teacher the opportunity to pass on a relative freedom to the students to choose what makes sense and what sounds good to and for them. It is for this reason a very good idea to allow students to play passages with a baroque or transitional bow as an experiment, so that they can understand better the kind of articulation and sound ideal that Haydn most probably was working with.

Getting a historical perspective is indispensable for working on this music, and the use of a well-edited urtext provides the opportunity for guiding students to make informed artistic choices. More importantly, it also allows them to understand that the score is not – as many of us learned – a “bible” reflecting fixed and immutable composer's intention, but rather a blueprint to be realized according to both conventions and imagination, combining information and creativity. The teacher who is willing to enter this process *guided discovery* is of course taking a risk: it would be much easier and more predictable to simply tell the students what to do in order to make everything sound good immediately. But learning about the role of the interpreter in Haydn's time means taking individual and collective responsibility, and this goal is pedagogically superior, in spite of its risks. Nevertheless, it is my experience that if students “own” their interpretation, their playing will have more conviction and be ultimately more satisfying, even if it is very different from what the teacher might have preferred. What is at issue is fundamental if we are indeed searching to provide transposable skills: *we are trying to build the confidence of the students in autonomous performance, not building a particular interpretation preconceived by the teacher.* The use of a repertoire characterized by a certain interpretive freedom, in unmarked parts, provides excellent material for dealing with these issues.

Learning to rehearse: listening and communicating



No exercise is too simple in form to provide useful skills and insights: all is a question of the quality of listening to which the students may aspire. This is why every quartet is instructed to begin with careful tuning, without haste, according to the principles of slightly tempered fifths, particularly in the lower strings: this will be the students' first appreciation of the fact that playing in tune in a quartet requires harmonic and not purely melodic listening. Cellists and violists may have already encountered this issue if their teachers have instructed them to check G and C strings with the piano even before playing sonatas

and concertos, but most students are not aware of tempered tuning in pianos, and are certainly not aware of the various compromises used between tempered and other tunings used in chamber music. Each group must proceed with unison and octave scales, preferably corresponding to the key of their designated repertoire, played without any tempo whatsoever, without any vibrato, with note changes lead in rotation by one student at a time. If it is not possible to tune and blend the sounds of the instruments within a few seconds, the students are instructed to build the sound one by one starting from the cello. Since most groups are not able to do this exercise easily, we are content to limit the scale to a single octave, since time will always remain a preoccupation. It must be made clear to the

students that this simple exercise in scale playing is not an end in itself: it is to show how to practice intonation in all passages. Once it becomes possible to play the ascending and descending scale in this manner, it is essential to replay it in a tempo with a clear pulse, matching bow speed and timbre. I suggest again that this be led by each student in rotation using half notes, so that there is time to show and feel the pulse and the bow changes, and all students are encouraged to participate in the establishment of the pulse. In this way, what was an exercise of intonation becomes an exercise for cueing, bow changes, rhythmic and timbral unity. Although some groups find that they have an immediate, intuitive unity, in most cases it is not reasonable to expect that students of such different backgrounds will feel and communicate a pulse in a unified way, and it is even less reasonable to expect that they will do this while learning a difficult piece of music. Preparing this feeling of unity in scales is thus a way to facilitate the acquisition of more complicated skills.

Once this can be done easily, the leader is asked to practice accelerating and decelerating; then making crescendo and diminuendo; then varying articulations, bow speeds, vibrato, timbres (*ponticello*, *flautando*, *pizzicato*, *tremolo*, *son écrasé*). In every case, whoever is leading must make his intentions clear, and the others must participate actively in this intention (and not simply follow passively). The students discover in this way that different articulations, tempi, dynamics, etc require different kinds of cues. In some ways this resembles the famous “Exercises du style” of Raymond Queneau, in which a text is presented over and over in different styles, and it remains entirely possible to simply ask students to try to produce different characters while playing scales (for example, “like a rough and rustic truck-driver” or “like smooth and sweet chocolate mousse”). Eventually, these warm-up exercises become rather complex sessions of improvisation, in which a great variety of bow techniques, timbres, articulations, and dynamics provide the opportunity for students to practice the relation between what they are and what others understand them to be preparing to do, what they actually do and what others are doing, and, most importantly, the relation between gesture and sound.

Of course, all of these must not be done in one session, but be introduced progressively during the first three weeks of rehearsal so that no more than 15-20 minutes is spent working on them in each session. But whatever the group is able to do must be used as a warm-up at the beginning of every rehearsal, and will be reintroduced if it happens that a particular skill is lacking in the preparation of the chosen repertoire.

These exercises must be completed with scale-playing in chords. This can be done in the simplest way, by explaining that the same scale should be played without *vibrato* or tempo, but that the viola and 2nd violin must start on different notes (the 3rd and 5th of the triad). This produces beautiful diatonic harmonies (in minor keys I prefer to use natural minor, so that there will be no accidentals), and students will discover quickly that notes that they believe to be in tune on their own instrument must be slightly modified in order to be in tune with the root. When all are playing together they may notice that intonation is bad, but will not necessarily hear which part is responsible: in this case the chord must be carefully built one voice at a time. This kind of listening is fundamental, and it is perfectly useless to simply tell a student quartet that they play out of tune if they have not been through at least this most primary stage of harmonic training. If students are very good at all of these basic exercises, they may also try different inversions and spacings of the triads. If they are very advanced, they may also use more complex four-note chords.

Simple as they are, these warm-ups provide not only good listening and communication skills; they provide models for practice of the repertoire without which progress will otherwise be slow and incomplete. We will see in the following section ways in which these skills can be applied.

Rules of thumb: harmony practice as a key to intonation, phrasing, and tempo

As mentioned in my introduction, many very talented students do not really notice the tension and release of dissonance and consonance in the music they are playing. I have been properly astonished sometimes by their apparent indifference to this fundamental aspect of tonal music, but reassured at how quickly they begin to understand it once their attention is drawn to it. And it has been fascinating, even breathtaking, to observe how this growing consciousness leads directly to the resolution of other aspects of interpretation, primarily that of phrasing and tempo, but also that of character and articulation. Once students can hear, for example, the building up of harmonic tension in a phrase, they resist naturally the temptation to place false accents, to slow down, to use inappropriate articulations or bow strokes, or to make contradictory use of dynamics.

The bridge from the scale exercises in chords to having harmonic listening in the repertoire is, of course, the playing of Bach chorales. Many colleagues use them as warm-up pieces for themselves and for their students, and it is true that they are so finely made that the simple playing of them will almost always have a beneficial effect on students. But it will be seen here that one of the keys to tuning and capturing the essence of the phrasing, emotion, and articulation of passages of more complex classical repertoire is in fact the reduction of these passages to their “chorale form.” In this case, it is much easier to understand that practicing a Bach chorale is more than the playing of a simple warm-up piece: it is in fact a mini-laboratory for learning how to practice all tonal music. Further, since there are no dynamics, no articulations, and no overtly descriptive writing, each chorale is open to tremendous interpretive possibilities, and the students should be guided to try many versions, both in practice and in masterclass.

In order to direct their attention without giving them a detailed harmony lesson requires some simplification and reduction, using what I refer to as “rules of thumb.” In most of Haydn’s quartets, it is usually enough to follow the bass line, take into consideration the speed of apparent change of harmonies indicated by changing bass notes, and ask the other players to focus on those notes of their parts which fall on the corresponding beats: if the note they play sounds “wrong,” then they should simply play the following note... and if not that one, the next (it is usually the resolution of a dissonance). In passages where there is rhythmic displacement, it is extremely helpful to “correct” the displacement, by eliminating rests and synchronizing parts which have been set apart. Notes which are short need to be prolonged, so that their tonal relation to other notes can be heard. Notes which change underneath a slur can be simplified as single, held notes, and virtuosic passages may be reduced to consonant pitches which fall on strong beats. Those with a penchant for music theory may find some hints of schenkerian procedures in the following examples, but I am here only interested in what is pertinent to performance, and will leave more theoretical considerations for another time.

The most direct application of these exercises would concern a passage in octaves or unison, which must be practiced slowly and in which harmonic thinking will help avoid wasteful arguments about melodic pitch. The opening of Opus 74, no. 2 provides an excellent example of how intonation practice can morph naturally into an exercise of rhythmic unity which in turn makes it easier for students to capture the flowing élan of the alla breve phrasing. It also underlines, in passing, the importance of conceiving slow practice moving from background to foreground as part of a continuity and not as a separate, disconnected activity. Slow practicing is nothing more than practicing quickly in slow motion, as with a video: the coordination, particularly the use of the bow, must lead in a continuous line from slowed down to speeded up execution.

I must insist that none of the examples which follow are presented to students in written form: *they must work from their parts or the score and use their ears*. But once a pattern has been understood, they must retain it and use it repeatedly in practice in order to build confidence and fluidity.

Opus 74, no. 2 opens in octaves and unison, and from the beginning the following exercise should be used to learn to listen and tune (violin 2 may participate or be added later):

Example 1, mm 1-4

Very slowly, progressively faster
molto tenuto

Violin I
Viola
Cello

The situation in the first statement of the theme after this introduction, since the melody is accompanied by flowing eighth-notes which muddy ones perception of the pulse and intonation: for this reason students will usually play measures 9-12 much slower than the introduction. This can be avoided by proceeding as follows:

Example 2, mm 9-12

Very slow, progressively faster

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello

Once this version can be well-played, the rhythmic aspect of the parts is restored, slowly at first and progressively faster, directing the students' attention to the need to unify pulse, articulation, bow speed and placement, as well as a sense of direction in the phrase towards the end of the phrase:

Example 3, mm 9-10

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello

Once this preliminary work is done on the entire first phrase, and it is both clear what the direction of the phrase needs to be and how the parts may be coordinated, it is then usually possible to restore all of the details. Violin 2 and Viola should be reminded to use their bows in the same way as when playing the quarter-notes in the version in Example 3, so that the pulse and articulation remain steady and

unified. Generally, many other aspects of the playing improve dramatically in quality without it being necessary to work on them. The students simply hear better and are more conscious of what they are doing and where they are going.

Example 4, Haydn Op 74, no. 2, 1st movement, mm 9-12.

Another excellent example is found in the opening theme from the first movement of Opus 74, no 3, known as “The Rider”. Because of the staggered, imitative entries, the theme has a fragmentary nature that makes it challenging for students to maintain the pulse and achieve continuity; the tortured and incomplete nature of the harmony usually leads them to give exaggerated weight to each apparent arrival point. This can be avoided by evening out and prolonging the harmonic pitches, so that it can be heard as a choral with a single long line leading to an inconclusive cadence:

Example 5, mm 11-20

Once this line has been mastered, it is really much easier for students to return to the surface details and maintain connections between their entries. Students who had a tendency to slow down, to play quarter notes in a staccato and non-melodic way, or to accent notes incorrectly, understand much more quickly the direction, character, and articulation necessary to preserve the integrity of the phrase. And it goes without saying that it is extremely important that they hear and feel that the arrival in measure 20 is not conclusive, so that the 2nd violin will not be tempted to give too much importance to his entry. Finding the phrase’s ultimate destination would be the next step (it is in fact the arrival on the second key theme group).

Example 6, Opus 74, no. 3, first movement, mm 11-20

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

p

p'

A similar situation can be found in the development section of Opus 71, no. 2, where the octave leaps and unsynchronized entries risk preventing students from hearing the gradual increase in harmonic tension. As in the preceding examples, the slow practice must also include constant attention to the relation between harmony, phrasing, bow placement, bow speed and articulation, and the relationship between the parts. But it is clear that in this case, all of these elements will greatly suffer if undirected by sensitivity to harmonic events:

Example 7, mm 75-82

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Very slowly

Example 8, Opus 71, no. 2, first movement, mm 75-82

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

sf

sf

sf

sf

p

p

p

p

Two concluding examples will underscore the fact that practicing only the parts as they are written is not the most efficient method of working, and that it is relatively easy to explain to adolescents in a non-theoretical way how to invent practical methods for improving collectively. The end of the first movement of Opus 64, no. 6 presents a variant on the first theme which poses a considerable challenge for young players in terms of intonation, rhythm, ensemble playing, and phrasing, in large part because of rhythmic displacement, rapid off-beats, and a series of suspenseful harmonies. The first five measures give an indication of the practice solution, which can be applied to the whole passage.

Example 9, mm 123-128

molto tenuto

Practicing this version progressively faster lead quite naturally to the restored details of the original, which becomes much easier to play:

Example 10, Opus 64, no. 6, first movement, mm 123-128

A last example is with regard to the virtuosic passages, which are often practiced slowly independently of the accompanying parts. This is a grave mistake: the solo line not only benefits from the reduction of his part, but needs these reference points to be reinforced through constant repetition with the patient collaboration of his colleagues. Whereas a professional player could hope to practice alone and still maintain a consciousness of the harmonic underpinnings of his part to guide him, a teenage student can rarely distinguish by himself which of the notes is a harmonic tone, a passing tone, or an arpeggiation. If the underlying melodic and harmonic structure become evident to him, however, and workable fingerings are found, all of the notes fall into place, and the bow-strokes, the dynamics, and the relationship between the parts become equally evident and organic. Otherwise, many hours of solitary practice risk being crowned with disappointment, and even a very well-executed passage may sound directionless and out of tune. Such difficult passages as the following, from Opus 71, no. 1, require much careful attention:

Example 11, mm 101-108

Very slow, molto tenuto

Example 12, Opus 71, no. 1, first movement, mm 101-108

Conclusion

I hope that it is clear that in all of the examples given in the preceding section, the methods of practice to be applied are those introduced in the warm-up exercises. In other words, if a passage is being practiced harmonically, and it is not possible to get a chord in tune quickly, then the sequence of harmonies must be played without tempo, and each chord built by adding voices one by one. The passage then must be repeated with a tempo, and repeated again with increasing fast tempi. The cueing exercises are preparation for the kind of observation necessary to maintain or improve unity in execution throughout the rehearsal.

By proceeding in this manner, it is hoped that in every case, and no matter what the level of competence or natural ability of the students may be, students will finish the four weeks of the Summer String Academy with tools, with repertoire, with a feeling of having constructed a true, shared chamber music identity by having acquired performing and critical abilities that provide a foundation for further growth. We believe that in this way, the chamber music experience goes beyond a pleasant and amusing occupation to contribute in a profound and indispensable way to the development of the autonomous, artistic self in each young musician.

AN ARTISTIC PORTRAIT. INTERVIEW

Gundega Šmite, composer,

Chairman of the board of the Latvian Composers' Union. She studied at the Jāzeps Mediņš College of Music (1992–1998), in 1998 she began studies at the Vītols Latvian Academy of Music in the composition department with *Pēteris Plakidis*, under whose direction she received her Bachelor's degree in 2005 and Master's degree in 2007. She worked as a music theory and piano teacher in Music schools in Latvia and as organist, also a teacher at the St. John's Congregation in Philadelphia, USA (2001–02)

For her work *Transformations* she won first prize at the Latvian Academy of Music competition (1999) and gained a World Federation of Free Latvians Cultural Foundation recognition certificate for her works *Homecoming* and *Arriving*, 2001. She gained 6th place at the 2005 *International Rostrum for Composers* competition for composers younger than 30, 2nd place (no first place was awarded) at the festival *Culturescapes* international young composers' competition (for the work



Isochasma, 2006), and received the Tāļivaldis Ķeniņš Award (2006). She took part in the 5th and 6th International Latvian Music Camp at Ogre and Sigulda and also the *Academic d'Villecroze* in France. She supplemented her education with studies at the J. Sibelius Academy of Music Her works have been performed in Latvia, Lithuania, Switzerland, Austria, France, Germany, Japan, the U.S.A. and New Zealand. She is a member (as of 2006), (as of 2009). More <http://www.lmic.lv/core.php?pageId=747&id=2584&>

Is it easy to write chamber music for children?

***Gunta Melbārde*, editor by e-journal:** We became acquainted with you when you were 6 years and your mother brought you into my classroom to learn piano. I've been following for your growth in the coming years and I am proud and happy with all my heart. Especially for your courage to seek and find yourself. So I would like to speak to you as one of ours. And not just because you come from Jāzeps Mediņš' School, but also because you have been one of the first Latvian composers who stood at the cradle of the children's chamber music tradition. Do you remember when and how did you start to write a children's chamber music?

Gundega Šmite: I guess, it often happens that the bond with teachers who gave you the basics breaks at one moment, life goes on – new people and new teachers comes into our lives. That's why I am very pleased that with my first piano teacher (and also music teacher in wider meaning) – with you, Gunta, this bond continues and gets even more, vary facets. Yes, I remember how I started to write music for children. I was still student of music academy composition class when you spoke to me and convinced about beautiful aim – to create chamber ensemble tradition in Latvia – and it was not difficult to convince me. I took it like interesting creative challenge and that's how my first compositions for children arose.

GM: And all your family has been and is still actively involved in this process. Does it have any particular reasons?

Gundega Šmite: My family has always been deeply into music processes both Professional (grandfather – composer and conductor Alexander Saliņš, sister Ieva Šmite – pianist and

accompanist), and amateur level like my parents – passionate choir singers. [She's mother - Editor Anna Šmite encouraged and facilitated the publication of four notebooks in the collection "Let's play music with friends", published by *Rasa ABC*. Ed. GM]. Music was just always around us. As a natural state, without which life is hard to imagine.

GM: How much space in your works play tracks of chamber music directly to children and young people's?

Gundega Šmite: It would not be appropriate to call it big – I want to continue to write more and more for children – but it is very important though.

GM: Whether and why you think this area as essential?

Gundega Šmite: This scope is extremely important and there are many reasons for that. First, the basics – chance to play in chamber ensemble from very beginning – childhood, in my opinion, creates not only joy about music, deepest understanding about music (which is so very important), but, together with chamber music culture – development of interplay and mutual tolerance children's personality definitely forms in the most positive way! Second – repertoire. In chamber music playing there must be equal amount of modern music next to classical values. Sometimes even Professional musicians shields from today's music like exotic language which is not worthy to learn. But it is worthy! It is important for music which is written today to be played and understood now not after 100 years. But there is very small amount of music which would be composed especially for children chamber ensembles. Not simple and primitive but serious and meaningful. We only think that kids are small and can't understand something deeper. Of course, there are some specifics with children's perception, but I am sure that it is important to start introducing young musicians with new, modern music language from very childhood. By the way, they seem to be very open-minded to everything new and different. It is much difficult to accept the difference later.

GM: Your current position - whether it promotes the joy of composing, or conversely - it interferes? But maybe you see something like the substance of chamber music - to be "one of the", desire to hear others, with the joy of giving and taking, when your "game" helps each other to play better to achieve the common goal - to make this world a better place ...

Gundega Šmite: I guess it will not be easy to answer this question clearly. One thing is, you must be alone in composers' profession, you need to have your own mental space which starts to split and break when we involve ourselves into outward activities. With this I mean my work in Composers Union chair. It is egocentric, if looking from the position of me – composer, my creativity suffers from that because it is extremely difficult to switch from active organizing to creative activity. But another thing is – I am very pleased that I can create something different while being in this chair – I can organize festivals, concerts, seminars. I am conceived very nice

program in next year's „Latvia's New music days" festival – it will be made from premieres only and children chamber music only! About 20 composers will be asked to compose especially for them!

GM: Tell me how you write! Do you choose instruments for composition at first or even specific artists first? What determines the musical content of the piece, the image system, characters and action?

Gundega Šmite: It has been in a lot of vary, but mostly I compose to particular musicians, particular ensembles. It must be the social side of my character – I can get very strong inspiration from some musician and I start to cooperate with him at the very beginning of composition. As my music is based on exploring the varieties of timbres, also using widen play techniques, this cooperation is necessary. Apart from that there are many sources of inspiration – painting, poetry, sound phenomena, nature processes...

GM: Do you have specific orders and cooperation in this field?

Gundega Šmite: Yes, I work like this for 10 years already, and here I can mention a lot of musicians and ensembles, but first of all I would like to mention ensemble „*Altera veritas*" and Latvia's Radio choir.

GM: A few of your compositions were selected for the obligatory pieces of the IX International festival competition of chamber ensembles for young performers "We Play Music with Friends". They were able to listen to both live and on CD. Would you be willing to continue this collaboration?

Gundega Šmite: Definitely! In last few years I've composed mostly for Professional musicians and I feel that something new for children chamber ensembles could arise! By the way, I think that it is special responsibility – to write for children. Even bigger than when writing to Professional choir of orchestra. Message that we include in piece written for children and means we use to reveal it in sound language must be searched with special sense. And another thing, maybe to some children my composition will be the first communication with modern music language.

GM: We believe that the composers are our good friends who care about the fact that we have to play. What do you wish them?

Gundega Šmite: Find a way to turn his work to composing music for young performers. This is just casually watching it may seem that writing music for children means to some extent or limit yourself to simplify his musical thinking. The inner world of a child is extremely rich. Going into it, maybe even ourselves – professional composers, and be able to discover the essence of a some things. Because, really anyone who, but to children to lie is impossible, especially in music.

GM: Do you want something to wish for the same young musicians and for teachers and parents?

Gundega Šmite: Open soul and wish to learn, to feel, to discover new theories in which sounds can lead us! It is enormous wealth.

GM: Thank you for your time which you gave us, and we are looking forward to further meetings in music!

(Translated by Lauris Melbārdis)



My name is **Juta Bērziņa**. I worked as a teacher of cello and chamber ensemble in the Music School Pāvuls Jurjāns of Riga and am the head of the string department.

In spring 2011, received a bachelor's degree in composition at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music by Professor Selga Mence.

For already 12 years I'm interested in orchestration and arrangements for various chamber ensembles.

For those who wish to arrange popular music

We all have faced the situation when student wants to play something from *The Beatles*, *Madonna* or something else from the enormous variety of popular music. We can ignore these wishes saying that the study process is very busy. But we can also cheer the student a bit and fulfill his wish. The question is – how to manage that? It is much if we have the melody and chords of the song written somewhere. What's next?

There are some rules which must be remembered if we make the arrangement of popular music. What are these rules?

First, the form of composition. It doesn't matter, if you want simply to play some popular song on piano or to make long paraphrase from its theme – the form must be clear. Longer or shorter – it's not the question, but you as well as student who will perform it and listeners should have some idea about what will come next, where is the beginning of the composition, where is the culmination and where – the ending.

Second, the harmonic structure of composition. Absolute freedom with and without dissonant sounds is acceptable in melody, and that is why there must be clear harmonies in background. It is the same with co-voices and second voices – you can make very nice second voice but you have to remember that it can not be too dissonant with basic melody (if they goes at the same time).

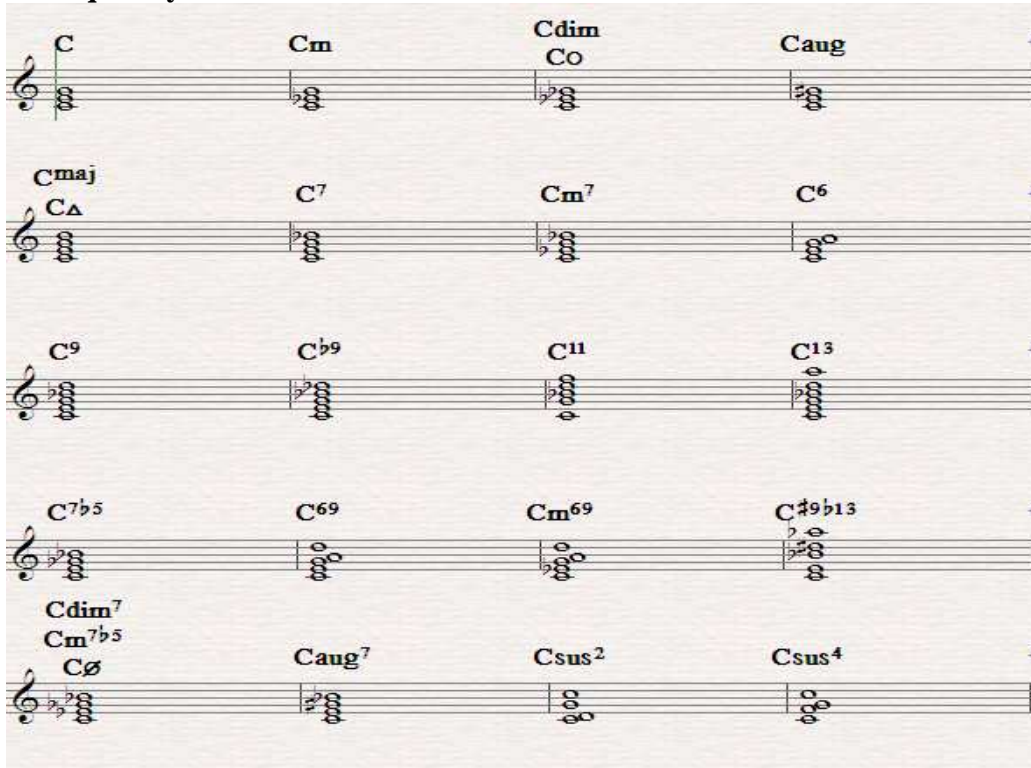
Third, the style of composition: how do we want to interpret the composition and what are the peculiarities of chosen style. Jazz, rock, pop, latino – these are just words which provides some idea about how this all should sound like. But they will stay only empty words if we will not know at least the main characteristics of the particular style and also – how to bring them into life or imitate them.

We know that almost every composition contains of melody, bass line and harmonic background. We can change some of these elements or all of them when arranging – it depends on what effect we want to achieve. There are two main parameters which we can change – rhythm or harmonies (and bass line with it). Yes, we can change also pitches if changing the melody, but they will, however, enclose in the chord and harmony. It is the rhythm which determines the style of our improvisation. It is the harmony which determines the creativity of making it.

Let's start with basics. The base is always melody with particular harmonies – chords. Notation is fixed very approximate in popular music. The main kind of notation is this – melody and it's chords written near. We know the letter system (C, D, E etc.). Often these letters are written together with some sign/number/letter combinations. The easiest way is – to ignore it all, leaving only the basic

harmony. In case if two letters are divided with slash, we look only to first and do not think about the other one (about bass).

It is useful if you need to react quickly. But it is not very professional. That's why here is the legend of frequently used chords.



In brief:

- m - minor
 - maj - great Major seventh
 - number - an appropriate interval from the original sound
 - dim - diminished seventh chord or triad
 - aug - increased triad or seventh
 - negative sign - decrease (also flat)
 - plus - increase (and sharp)
 - sus - a delayed third in the interval marked Nr.
 - C / G - Up to C major chord, but G in bass
- (information from www.soundroom.ru)

Speaking of chords, we definitely must speak about the **12-bar blues** progression which is the base of all modern popular music. It is the structure, 12 bars in length – four bars with particular, constant harmonies repeats three times. There are two kinds of the **12-bar blues**:

| Archaic 12-bar blues | | | | 2.A typical <i>Jam session</i> 12-bar blues | | | |
|----------------------|----|---|---|---|--------|------|-------|
| I | I | I | I | I | IV | I | Vm I |
| IV | IV | I | I | IV | bIVdim | I | VI |
| V | IV | I | V | IIm | V | I VI | IIm V |
| Mainly used triads | | | | Mainly used seventh chord, not triads | | | |

The transcript in notes:

Arhaiskais džezā kvadrāts

The first system shows chords: Treble (I, I, I, I), Bass (e, e, e, e).
 The second system shows chords: Treble (IV, IV, I, I), Bass (e, e, e, e).
 The third system shows chords: Treble (V, IV, I, V), Bass (e, e, e, e).

"Jam Session" kvadrāts

The first system shows chords: Treble (I, IV, I, Vm, I), Bass (e, e, e, e, e).
 The second system shows chords: Treble (IV, bVdim, I, VI), Bass (e, e, e, e).
 The third system shows chords: Treble (IIm, V, I, VI, IIm, V), Bass (e, e, e, e, e, e).

Common to both progressions – there is obligatory tonic in the 3rd bar; 4th bar is the bar of transition (there are pauses in melody). It is the best to write blues in 12/8 meter, accenting the weak beat. Free rhythm is characteristic: in some parts solo player can imitate delay, in other – rush.

When blues became faster Swing was born – now it is simply one of the names for jazz. In the 1930's with the word *swing* dance music for large wind brass with rhythm section (drums, piano, contrabass and guitar) was meant.

Making the tempo even faster and joining electric guitar *rhythm'and'blues* was born – afro American music style which got the name *rock'n'roll* among the white Americans. Basically it has the same harmony as archaic blues only with different tempo and rhythm.

(Info from www.soundroom.ru)

Strict following to all the harmony changes and all the delicacies can be rather hard, complicated, and not always it's necessary. There are two easy ways how to imitate jazz – attach to triads a seventh, or sixths. And then you can play anything, the effect of jazz will be achieved.

We will return to harmonies, but now a little about rhythm. We know that many music genres have their specific rhythmic design – the “calling card” the the genre. It is the same in popular music.

Jazz music is based on swing. It is the type of pulsation with constant deflection from strong beats and avoiding them in rhythmic design as well as in accenting. Two equal length notes will never be played equally – one will be played longer, other – shorter.

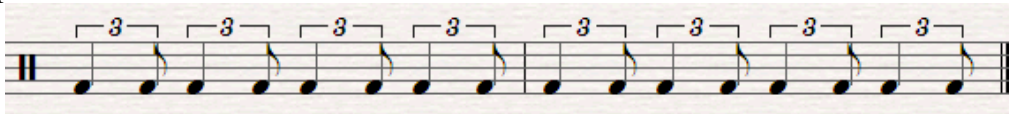
So, this kind of notation:



As well as this:



Will be performed as follows:



Next important thing is accenting; traditionally – on the second and the fourth beat.



Sometimes it is not necessary to stick with it, then the rhythm becomes more gentle. The main thing is to combine rhythm so that at least one accent would not be on the strong beat. As it is mentioned before, swing is also a dance. Besides that this term is also used as name for pulsating feeling of rhythm which forms between musicians during the performance (it is also called *groove* or *drive*).

It is told that Louis Armstrong introduced everybody with his own version of swing history in Bing Crosby's radio show. When Crosby introduced him as the real master of swing who may tell what is swing, Armstrong said: “Oh, swing? Well, ok... We called it ragtime earlier, then blues, then jazz. Now it is swing. White men – they always brings chaos.”

It means, if we stick to pulsing rhythm – it doesn't matter, triols or punctuated – and will join some syncope to avoid strong beat, we can imitate jazz and following styles, even without knowing which is which.

Such genres as *boogie-woogie* and *rock'n'roll* developed from swing.

Boogie-woogie is the style of jazz, originally it is piano music style, but these piano compositions are performed by orchestras and instrumental ensembles as well. The style developed in the beginning of 20th century. Financial considerations didn't let cafeterias to hire orchestras and they were forced to go with pianists only. Pianists started to create special playing techniques to imitate orchestra. At the time popular genre ragtime was already using technique when with left hand pianist jumps from bass to chord – so called *stride piano*. The pianists who were not so technical or were not professional pianists continued playing blues. But as the clients of cafe's wanted to dance, they played it faster and with outspoken rhythm (so called *barrel-house piano*). In this style they tried to imitate three guitars which plays – one chords, other bass and the third melody, and not the whole orchestra. It

all together made characteristics and coloring of boogie-woogie. Most of the boogie-woogie compositions are based on the same 12 bar progression. Left hand stands practically on the same spot all the time, the main task is to create continuous rhythm movement. Right hand has absolute freedom – simple but rhythmically outspoken melodic structures. The style got its name when the record Pine Top's Boogie-Woogie was released in 1928.

One of the variants for boogie-woogie rhythm and sound is this:



If we make arrangement in boogie-woogie style, we must invent one bar long bass line in punctuated rhythm and repeat it in 12 bar progression. Figurations for left hand can be in different pitches as well (for example, including some chromatic), the important thing is that left hand remained “on the spot”. For right hand there could be vary of improvisations from the pitches of chord, , with or without chromatics, with such rhythmical diversity pianist is capable for.

Rock'n'roll started in 1950's and with its traditions it is rooted in blues. Rock'n'roll's rhythmical design is similar only the performance is different, and also instrumentation is wider (electric guitar, saxophone, sometimes trumpet etc.):



I already mentioned the possibilities of imitation. We can even not define precisely the style: if we take the 12-bar blue and play it slowly, on triplets movement, we can achieve a impression of blues:



But if we fasten the tempo, we can make something close to rock'n'roll:



Right hand party can be improved with punctuated rhythm, different parallel chords and intervals, tremolos etc. - as virtuous as it is possible. Here is one more rhythmical formula of dance:



The main thing is to provide constant movement in eight-notes and syncopate bass. This is the main rule if we want to imitate popular music. Given formula in fastest or slowest tempos can create the impression of rock music (especially with fifths in bass) as well as *latino* style imitation. Let's continue with this. *Latino* is common name for South American dances and rhythms. We must admit though, that each dance has it's own specifics, but they are all very similar in accenting. The common

thing is – accented are not only the strong beats but also some other beat. And all the difference between the dances is – what is accented and at which moment.

Let's start with the most well-known – **tango**.

The characteristic is – 2/4 meter, but it sounds like 4/4, basically it is 4/8 meter. Tango has many different variants. Common in all of them is accent on fourth beat.

Classical:



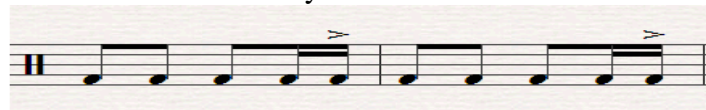
Tango Argentina:



Tango habanera:



But mostly tango associates with this rhythm:



Outstanding tango master *Astor Piazzolla* uses completely different formula (for example, in his *Libertango*):



All these formulas can be used to make arrangements in tango style, it is only necessary to stress the fourth beat. It is ideal if you combine several varies during the composition.

Next dance is **Samba**.

It was born in Brasilia in early 20th century, influencing from African music tradition. It is written in 2/4 meter, but it can also be in 4/4. It's characteristic – 2 bar structure. In first bar 3 first beats are accented, in the second syncope is made:



Another option rhythmic pattern:



Bossa-nova

This dance was formed in the 50's of the twentieth century based on samba. A characteristic feature – a continuous pulse on the eighth, with the typical accent (this is usually done on drums). Another noticeable feature – the party is full of the altered guitar chords and accents that are not duplicated and often do not coincide with the major rhythmic accents:



Another option:



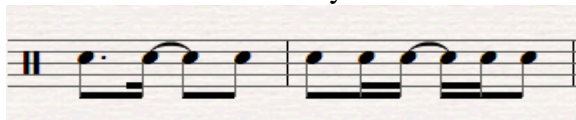
There are three dances more that must be mentioned.

Rumba: Cuban dance, in which significantly impact the African and Spanish musical culture. Rumba gained popularity since the 30's of the twentieth century. Its formula is not changed: the emphasis on the 1st, 4th and 7th eighth in 4 / 4.

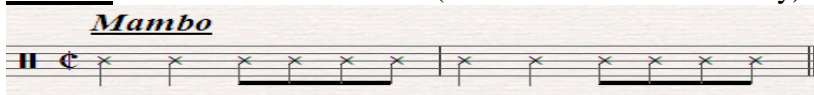
One option:



Another version of the rhythmic formula:



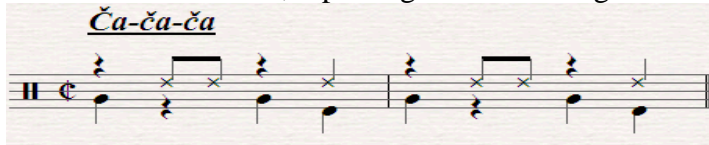
Mambo - the other Cuban dance (also 30's of the last century):



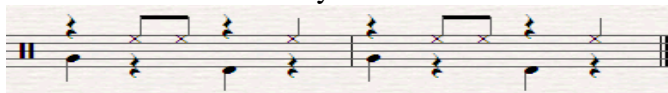
And as an option:



Cha-cha-cha is the third popular Cuban dance (50s of the twentieth century): feature - missing the second beat in a bass line, replacing it with two eighth notes in the texture:



All the above mentioned told to get acquainted with different styles and features they provide. But in reality, to create the impression of Latin American flavor, it is sufficient to use two formulas. One of them for the basis the rhythm-formula cha-cha-cha:



and the other is similar to the rumba:

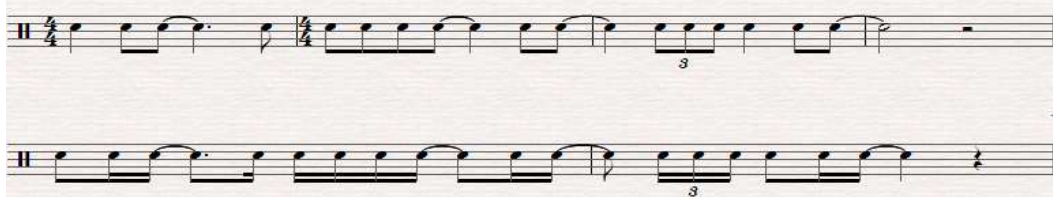


What is written in all of the above? Because it's better if you, creating arrangements, are at least minimally guided in styles and in their diversity. But if we have no way or time to really dig and thoroughly, we can achieve the desired effect by more simple means.

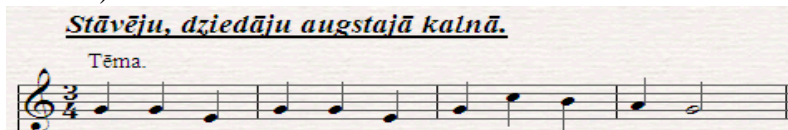
And a little more on rhythmical figures of popular music. Almost all styles and genres of popular music is rooted in the musical culture of Africa, which is inherent in a wide variety of rhythmic patterns and the simultaneous sounding of several rhythmic formulas. Thus, in this case allowed all sorts of variations and changes. For example, the metric changes at any certain unit of length, at least one-eighth, rhythm-formula all the time remains the same, but each time it comes with a delay of one-eighth:



It is also possible to double the rhythmic pattern by shortening to half length of note – then a 4-beat longitudinal bar get the feeling as the 8-beat bar (this is commonly used in slow pieces):



By developing a melodic line, each bar can not begin with a 1st beat of bar, and beat her, engaging in one-eighth the past (as an example, we chose a Latvian folk song *Stāvēju, dziedāju augstajā kalnā*):



And it's version, more syncopation as:



(from website www.corpuscul.net)

It's all about the short marks, chords and rhythmic patterns.

Now, in more detail about the possibilities of arrangements. Any work (as already mentioned) consists of a melody, bass line and harmonic filling between melody and bass. The easiest way how to make an arrangement – just write the melody and bass line (the basic chord sound or just a chord in the harmony). Continue to use the example of *Stāvēju, dziedāju*.

If we have the following melody,



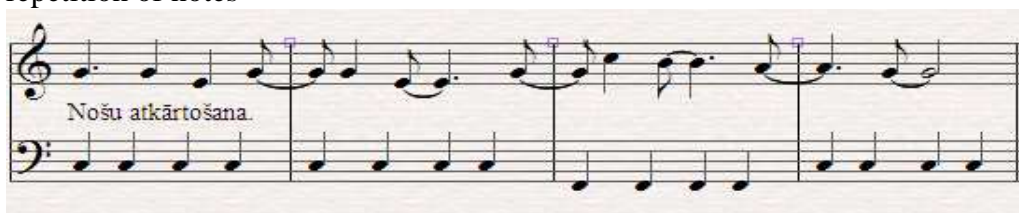
we can harmonize its proposed options on chords (each of which gives its color):



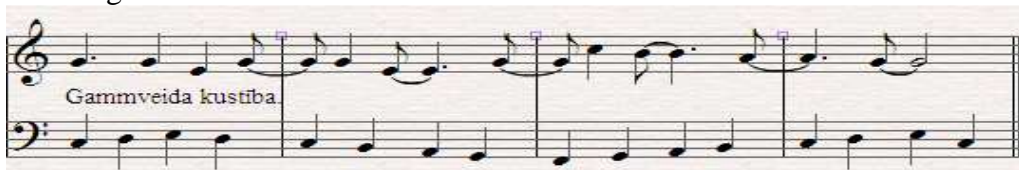
A few words on the harmonization of itself and its potential variation. There are a variety of opportunities to change the harmony, if you wish – it is not prohibited. For the harmony - this is paint, which can be used at times to emphasize some interesting episode in the novel. It also allows you to lengthen the product instead of allowing the final chord by placing the harmony that requires further development. In fact, there is only one principle that should be observed by changing the harmony, or searching for new opportunities to - they should not be discordant with the melody. At least one sound in the chord must be shared with the melody.

Continuing on the bass line - and it may have different options:

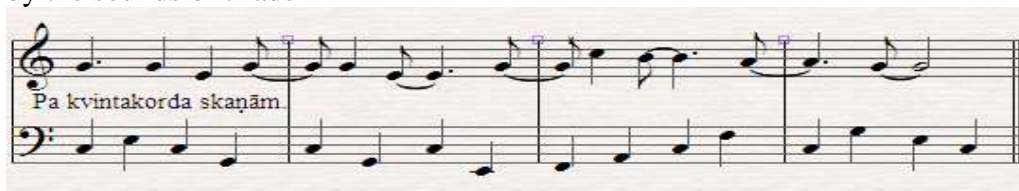
repetition of notes –



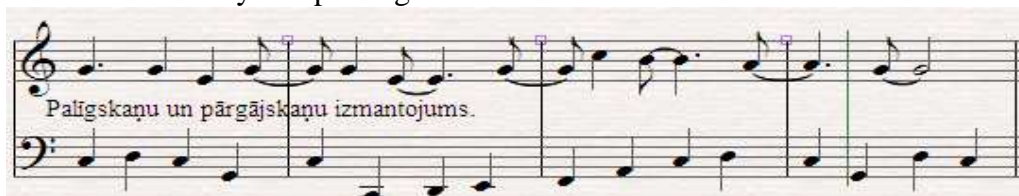
scalaric figure –



by the sounds of triads –



the use of auxiliary and passing notes –



This is the simplest version, which can also be combined together – for a change, or stick to just one, if the situation requires. If you do not have to play the melody, you can choose any of the above formulas proposed by the rhythm-and play the appropriate harmonies (in the left-hand – the bass note or a fifth, and in the right-hand – complete the desired chord.) Thus it is possible to "catch two birds with one stone" – we no longer need to invent any new types of textures (the scheme is ready) and we'll automatically find ourselves in an appropriate style.

However, if these riffs sound too complicated (or – if not as important to make an arrangement in a particular style), then you can stick to simple types of textures. The main thing is that in the left-hand pulse was continuous, or come static. If your right hand plays the melody, the left can play the following:

- arpeggio sounds of triads (creating a romantic impression);
- divide the chord on bass, and third, or skip the third and play bass and a quart (creating the impression of polka or march);

- play only an octave or a fifth (interval or figuration) in the eighth movement (like rock).

If your left hand plays bass (better to take a sound or an octave and avoid triad in a narrow location, or skip third sound, replacing it with fifth), then the right hand can play the following figuration:

- by the sounds of triads (for best results keep the pulse of 3 audio in 4 / 4 size) up or down;
- by the sounds of triads in the volume of an octave up or down;
- divide the chord on third and main sound in a downward direction (in the right hand, unlike the left, follow the movement of third);
- chordal movement eighths.

It is also possible to unify the movement arpeggio triads up the sounds from the left-hand to his right; the right in free moments takes proper chord of harmony, and the left - bass. With regard to changes in tone, the easiest way (as mentioned) – is the use of syncopation and rhythmic shifts.

You can also tune to play third or sixth doubling and chords. You can add a second or a third voice, but they (in order to avoid dissonance) should be based on a combination of thirds or other consonance intervals. Sometimes you can use the polyphony - various short second voices or canons. The melody may emphasize attaching toady in the form of a static chord.

These simple tools, we can simulate different styles pop, and thus creatively to enrich the learning process and expand the repertoire students. Besides – who would have banned for popular music arrangements to include also some specific elements of piano technique for the student which has long been tired from Etudes by C. Czerny?

(Translated by Lauris Melbārdis)



Pille Taniloo, Pianistin,
Lehrerin in Heino Eller Musikschule (Klavier-Klasse
und Klavierbegleitung). Musikerziehung hat in die
Tallinn Music School und der Estnischen Musik-und
Theaterakademie bekommen. Master-Abschluss in
Musikbegleitung. Sie leitet das Kammermusik-Abteilung
in H. Eller Musikschule. Oft nimmt in die Arbeit der
Jury des Festivals Otepää (Otepää) in Estland teil. Aktiv
musiziert zusammen mit Kammermusiker aus Tartu.
Mehr: <http://www.tmk.ee/>

Aktivitäten der Abteilung Kammerensemble in H. Eller Musikschule Tartu

In Estland gibt es drei Musikschulen, die ihren Schülern eine musikalische Mittelschulbildung geben. Zwei von ihnen – die Musikoberschule Tallinn und die Georg-Ots-Musikschule – befinden sich in Tallinn, unsere, die Heino-Eller- Musikschule liegt in Tartu. Tartu ist der Einwohnerzahl nach die zweitgrösste Stadt Estlands. Die Tartuer Musikschule hat eine 90-jährige Geschichte. Seit 1971 trägt unsere Schule den Namen des Komponisten Heino Eller. H. Eller ist ein hervorragender estnischer Komponist gewesen, der in der Tartuer Musikschule 20 Jahre lang gearbeitet hat. Er hat hier die sogenannte Tartuer Richtung gegründet – er und seine Kompositionsschüler (Ed. Tubin, Ed. Oja und A. Karindi) waren für alles Neue und Zeitgenössische offen. Alle Komponisten dieser Richtung haben auch Kammermusik geschaffen. In die Schatzkammer der estnischen Kammermusik gehören solche Werke wie 5 Streichquartette und 2 Violinsonaten von H. Eller, das Klavierquintett von Ed. Oja, das Klavierquartett und 4 Kammersonaten von Ed. Tubin.

Heute studieren an der H.-Eller-Musikschule in der Mittelstufe etwa 130 Schüler. Mit dem Fach Kammerensemble beschäftigen sie sich im dritten und im vierten Studienjahr – insgesamt vier Semester. Es ist für sie verbindlich, Musik von verschiedenen Stilepochen zu spielen. Zur Wahl der Werke werden keine strengen Anforderungen gestellt, es soll aber das Repertoire für Kammerensembles (eine Sonate, ein Zyklus von Stücken) gespielt werden. Jeder Lehrer geht bei der Wahl des Repertoires von dem Niveau der Spieler und dem Bestand des Ensembles aus, ebenso wird die Initiative der Schüler gern gesehen. Meistens wird im Laufe von zwei Jahren eine Sonate im alten Stil (Bach, Händel), ein klassisches oder romantisches Werk oder ein Teil von diesem, ein zeitgenössisches Werk und etwas auch von estnischen Autoren durchgenommen. Im Wintersemester

wird im Fach eine Vorprüfung, im Frühlingsemester eine Prüfung abgelegt. Das Fach wird im IV. Studienjahr mit einer Staatsprüfung beendet, die alle Fächer umfasst.

Zur Zeit wird bei der Jugend-Abteilung der Musikschule das Fach Kammerensemble nicht unterrichtet. Viele Pädagogen arbeiten projektweise mit den von ihnen selbst gegründeten Ensembles, die sich meistens aus ihren Schülern zusammensetzen. Es wird an Konzerten, Festivals und Wettbewerben teilgenommen. So war es zum Beispiel jungen Kammermusikern möglich, in Põltsamaa oder Otepää aufzutreten, wo die entsprechenden Wettbewerbe stattfanden. Gunta Melbarde, unsere gute Kollegin aus Lettland, hat unsere Schüler eingeladen, am Festival-Wettbewerb "We Play Music With Friends" teilzunehmen, der in Lettland stattfindet. Heutzutage sind in unserer Schule zwei Ensembles ständig tätig: das Ensemble für Blechblasinstrumente "Eller Brass" (unter Leitung des Lehrers Priit Sonn) und das Flötenensemble "Ellerino" (die Lehrerin Anneli Kuusk). In den beiden Ensembles spielen sowohl Schüler aus Jugend- als auch aus der Mittelstufe.

Kontakte

Unsere Kammermusikabteilung hat reguläre Kontakte mit den beiden Musikschulen in Tallinn. Über zehn Jahre haben wir unsere Tradition fortgesetzt, einmal im Jahr zusammenzukommen und ein gemeinsames Konzert zu geben. Dieses Konzert ist bis heutzutage unter Schülern sehr populär. Internationale Kontakte haben wir mit der Jazeps-Medins-Musikschule in Riga und mit der Musikschule in Espoo. Mit diesen Schulen zusammen haben wir im Jahre 2005 das Kammermusikfestival "Festari" gegründet. Jede Schule organisiert in ihrem Land mehrere Konzerte. Dazu gehören auch Meisterkurse unter der Leitung bekannter Musiker-Pädagogen

Repertoire, Ereignisse.

Das vergangene Studienjahr ist arbeits- und abwechslungsreich gewesen und hat viele Musikereignisse geboten. Im Kammerensemble haben 43 Schüler unter der Leitung von 12 Lehrern oder Lehrerinnen gespielt. Es wurden viele mit der Abteilung verbundene interessante Ereignisse veranstaltet. Wir haben an dem am 17. Februar stattgefundenen gemeinsamen Konzert von drei Schulen (Musikoberschule Tallinn, G.-Ots-Musikschule, H.-Eller-Musikschule Tartu) teilgenommen.



Wir sind durch 2 Ensembles vertreten gewesen: Helena Kisand und Tiina Tomingas haben „Thema und Variationen für Violine und Klavier“ von O. Messiaen und Karina Ülper, Karel Vähi, Brita Reinmann und Liina Nigu das Werk von M. Vihmand "Atacca!" für zwei Klaviere, Schlaginstrumente und

Klarinette vorgetragen. Die beiden Ensembles wurden von der Lehrerin Monika Mattiesen angeleitet. Am 4. März haben wir erstmalig an dem internationalen Festival "IN CORPORE" in Tallinn angenommen. Dort wurden zwei Kammerensembles von M. Mattiesen hervorgehoben: Janari Jorro und Joonatan Jürgenson mit dem Werk von A. Pärt "Vater unser" und Karina Ülper, Karel Vähi, Brita Reinmann und Liina Nigu mit dem Werk „Attaca“ von M. Vihmand".

Vom 1. bis zum 3. April sind die Direktorin der H.-Eller-Musikschule Tartu Kadri Leivategija und die Lehrerin derselben Schule Pille Taniloo auf dem 5. Kongress der ECMTA in Rom gewesen, auf dem die Musikschule Tartu der Gesellschaft europäischer Kammermusik-Lehrer als Mitglied beigetreten ist. Das ist für uns eine dankenswerte Möglichkeit gewesen, Kollegen aus anderen Staaten kennenzulernen und auf dem Gebiet Kammermusik neue Informationen zu bekommen.



Am 19. Mai hat in der Aula der Universität Tartu ein Kammerkonzert aus der Serie "Musiker der Zukunft" stattgefunden, auf dem ein großer Teil unserer Kammerensembles, darunter auch Vokalensembles, aufgetreten sind. Es wurde sowohl zeitgenössische estnische Vokalmusik (Lieder von Tõnu Kõrvits, Lepo Sumera, Arvo Pärt und Kuldar Sink) als auch klassische Kammerwerke (Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann) vorgetragen. Ebenso ist das bei der Musikschule ständig tätiges Ensemble für Blechblasinstrumente Eller Brass aufgetreten, das drei Teile einer mittelalterlichen Tanzsuite von T. Susato vorgetragen hat. Dieses vor allem auf Kammermusik orientierte Konzert am Ende des Frühlingsemesters ist in der Eller-Schule ein sehr erwartetes Ereignis geworden und stellt eine schöne Zusammenfassung des ganzen Jahres dar.

Am 31. Mai hat das Staatsprüfung-Konzert der Absolventen der Musikschule stattgefunden. Die Prüfung ist sehr umfassend gewesen: es haben daran 17 Ensembles mit insgesamt 27 Schülern teilgenommen. Die Vorsitzende des Prüfungsausschusses war Dozentin Natalia Sakkos aus der Estnischen Musik- und Theaterakademie, die eine sehr gute Vorbereitung der Ensembles hervorgehoben hat, die das großartige Gelingen und die hohe Qualität der ganzen Prüfung garantierte. Jedes Ensemble konnte sich nach seinem Geschmack ein Programm auswählen, nur die Dauer des Programms – 20 Minuten – war reglementiert. Es klangen klassische Kammersonaten (Mozart,

Beethoven) und Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts (Debussy, Tubin, Piazzolla, Vasks). Man konnte sich für zwei Violinen und zwei liegende Harfen arrangierte Kammermusik anhören (Vivaldi, Pärt, Piazzolla).



Auf einer sehr hohen Ebene sind Vokalensembles (7) unter der Leitung der Lehrerin Jaanika Rand-Sirp vertreten gewesen. Es wurden sowohl Opernduette als auch Kammermusik vorgetragen. Den Publikumserfolg haben zum Beispiel "Blaue Augen hat das Mädchen" von R. Schumann, das Quartett "Caro mio Druck und Schluck" von W. A. Mozart, das Duett von Malatesta und Don Pasquale aus der Oper "Don Pasquale" u.v.a. verdient. Fünf Schüler aus der Abteilung Blechblasinstrumente sind zusammen mit dem Eller Brass aufgetreten, es wurden Werke von A. Vivaldi und T. Susato vorgetragen.

Am 4. Juni sind Schüler unserer Schule auf dem in Riga stattgefundenen IX. internationalen Festival-Wettbewerb für Kammermusik "We play Music With Friends" erfolgreich aufgetreten. In der Kategorie C haben die Flötistin Kersti Perandi und der Pianist Ragnar Kriiska den I. Platz gewonnen. Sie haben den I. Teil der Grande Sonate concertante op. 85 von Fr. Kuhlau, das Stück „Auf dem Fluß“ (*estnisch*: "Jõel") von H. Eller und die Pastorale von D. Aperane vorgetragen. Das Ensemble wurde von der Lehrerin Ruth Ernstson angeleitet. In der Kategorie A haben Helena Saks, die Schülerin der Jugend-Abteilung der Eller-Schule (Flöte) und Gregori Landrat, der Schüler derselben Abteilung (Gitarre), den III. Platz verdient. Das Ensemble wurde von der Lehrerin Anneli Kuusk und dem Lehrer Peep Peterson angeleitet. An der Arbeit der Jury hat sich auch Anneli Kuusk, die Flöten- und Ensemblelehrerin der Eller-Schule, beteiligt.

Der Sommer hat für uns eine Zeit sowohl für Erholung als auch für Machen neuer Pläne bedeutet. Wir wollen diesen aktiven und schöpferischen Kurs auch in Zukunft einhalten.



Alexander Kulikov, violinist.

He graduated from the Leningrad State Conservatory of Rimsky-Korsakov. Worked in the orchestra of ancient and modern music, in the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra and string quartet, and taught. In 1990 he moved to Finland, where he worked in the orchestra of the Finnish National Opera, and since 1995 is a teacher of violin and chamber music at the Musical Institute Kungsvägen in the city of Espoo. Concertmaster of the Chamber Orchestra Society, a member of *Alexander-String Quartet*, as well as various chamber ensembles. Since 2010 - Member of the Jury of the International Competition of Chamber Ensembles *We play music with friends*. Led the *Winter masterclasses-2011 for teachers of chamber ensembles* in Riga.

How did we play with friends

IX International festival – competition of chamber ensembles for young performers took place in Riga, the capital of Latvia from June the 3rd to June the 5th, 2011. I was blessed with the opportunity to participate in judging for the second time, and besides that, as some of my students participated in the contest, I was also among those excited teachers who had prepared their students for performing.

After the first experience working for this competition I returned home overjoyed. Every time I thought something about that trip to Riga, the feeling of celebration returned. And now, after a whole year filled with daily routine, success and failures, I asked myself, thinking of forthcoming trip to competition – will it be the same marvelous atmosphere, will everything be the same as a year before, or maybe all the impression was only delusion?

Together with my colleague flutist Åsa Gustavsson we arrived with two chamber ensembles from our school (Music Institute Kungsvägen, Espoo, Finland) this year. Riga met us with sunny summer day and friendly smiles. Inevitable anxiety of journey soon calm down. Concert in Old St. Gertrude church had planned, which was perfectly organized by Juta Bērziņa. Here we felt the spirit of chamber music which was present among participants all of the festival's time. The idea of this concert was ideal by itself – young musicians participate as well as teachers and members of jury, bringing in life the motto of the festival – to play with friends. Concert in Old St. Gertrude church sounded like wonderful prelude, becoming informal opening of the competition.



45 ensembles participated in this year's competition – it's more than one hundred young musicians from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland. This is the geography of competition at the moment. In my opinion, the structure of competition is very well organized – participants are divided in five groups by their age which lets them to compete with the musicians at their own level of background. Definitely a positive thing is that not only very gifted children participate but also everyone who likes to play chamber music. And even if sometimes not all goes as teachers had planned, the main goal – step to creative development – is achieved. At the same time, it was very nice that the readiness of ensembles in general was equally high, sometimes it was even difficult to choose favorites in each group, and there were practically no unsuccessful performances. All approved excellent professional readiness, but I will repeat – we are dealing with regular children only with desire to play together, not some prodigies who are training for star career. However, contest is contest, and someone always will be the best!

Speaking of this, I can't say anything about jury's work. It is always difficult to value children's creation, especially if we speak about creative competition. For me the friendly atmosphere between the members of our small team was a great help as member of jury, as well as help and support from colleagues. I want to thank for it and also for the great work organization to the head of jury – Gunta Sproģe and the secretary of jury – Evija Šukeviča.

And now back to the contest – I want to remark the great variety of repertoire, performed by participants. A lot of compositions were new to me. Besides, for this year's competition every participant had to perform one modern Latvian music composition as obligatory. I think that this is very good innovation. First, it is stimulating contemporary composers to write music for the children which, as we know, is not so easy – you must know a lot of things, for example, the technical level of next performer, imagery, what will (or will not) carry away young musicians and so on. And this kind

of compositions is very necessary, because there are still only few bright original compositions, written particularly for children ensemble. I loved compositions of Andris Balodis, Gundega Šmite and Ēriks Ešenvalds. Second, it is important for the children to get into modern music, to listen to new harmonies, to find and understand it's logic as soon as possible, otherwise music which is mirror of our time will stay like foreign language for them. And third, it is tribute to the country which welcomes participants so sincerely, but for those who live in Latvia, it shows the love to their motherland and its culture.

From the pedagogic point of view, festival – competition has two ways of influence. The importance of this event can not be overvalued. When you see in the long preparing process how their attitude to performed music and their tasks becomes more and more serious, you start to realize how important it is for children's motivation to have such creative competition. And the first question from the students after competition is – what will we play in the next season? It expresses so much. Besides, the opportunity to watch and listen to performances of children from different countries expands their point of view and allows to valuate objective their own performance. After all – international festival – competition is event which can possibly give such an impression that children's interest about chamber music will take the lead for long time. Teachers, listening and valuating the work of colleagues and making contacts, receive new experience, ideas and sees the work in different countries as well as new repertoire. After all, is it possible to have better opportunity to meet foreign colleagues than such international festival?

I would like to say a couple of words about seminar taking place the next day, when the members of jury could express their opinion about contest, pedagogical problems and situation in the field of musical education. The head of jury – Professor Gunta Sproģe gave very instructive speech about stage culture, one thing that many teachers forget or are not able to tell their students. Prof. Jonas Kazlauskas (Kaunas, Lithuania) gave interesting and detailed overview about the situation in music education in Lithuania. Dr. Evan Rothstein (ECMTA) told about his organization and about the place of chamber music in Europe. I have memorized one of his sentences: “Today education and culture are in danger.” It is hard not to agree with him. The commercialization of culture, entertainment spirit, desire to shock, which do not require intellectual effort and emotional return – this is what we see in today's mass art in place of spiritual understanding about this world, which is the real assignment of artist. In the time when request dictates offer, adolescents and later also adults are forced to satisfy with samples of pop culture, consumption of which does not require any effort. You can't listen to Beethoven or watch to the paintings of Cranach without understanding – you need to learn it!

Few years ago in some town of Finland an experiment with surprising results took place. It all

begun when people started to show dissatisfaction about bunch of youngsters gathering in shopping center, drinking beer, swearing and doing other “golden youth” types of activities. Someone (history is silent about his name) offered extraordinary solution: instead of police and other strict measurements they played records of classical music in this place. Organizers were surprised when youngsters started to disperse after 10-15 minutes, and surroundings, filled with silent music, became deserted. Those ears and heads, accustomed to deafening rhythms and melodies without musical thought did not stand classical music with its “deepness, courage and harmony,” as said by Pushkin (A. Pushkin: *Mozart and Salieri*).

Events like international festivals – contests as well as enthusiasts like the artistic director of this festival Gunta Melbārde together with her colleagues and assistants – organizers of the event, are extremely necessary to maintain traditions and involve as many people as possible in the field of culture. I want to wish for the next year, which will be anniversary (because it will be 10th International festival – contest), not some special success, but as creative atmosphere and as large inspiration as I saw in Riga again.

(Translated by Lauris Melbārdis)



CARSTEN DÜRER

(1963), freier Journalist, gründete und leitet **STACCATO-Verlag** (Düsseldorf/Deutschland); Herausgeber und Chefredakteur **PIANONews – Das Magazin für Klavier und Flügel** und **ENSEMBLE – Magazin für Kammermusik**. Neben diesen verlegt Carsten Dürer das Unternehmen auch Biografien, Reprints und wertvolle pädagogische Bücher im Bereich Klavier. Neben seiner journalistischen Tätigkeit hält er auch Vorträge für Studenten und Konzerteinführungen und sitzt immer wieder in Jurys von internationalen Klavier- und Kammermusikwettbewerben. Zudem ist Carsten Dürer Vorstandsmitglied der *European Chamber Music Teachers Association (ECMTA)*, der *Anton Rubinstein Akademie*, sowie Vorsitzender des Vereins *Musical Bridges* und gehört zur Jury des *ECHO Klassik*, des deutschen Schallplattenpreises für die Klassik. (Information aus <http://www.toepfer-fvs.de/1251.html>)

Wir danken herzlich Herrn *Carsten Dürer* für die freundliche Erlaubnis seine Einführung zum spannenden Buch *Leben zu viert: 35 Streichquartette in Interviews und Porträts* in unserem e-Journal zu veröffentlichen. Wir empfehlen jemand, die in das Streichquartett interessiert sind, dieses wertvolle Buch zu bestellen und lesen. Adresse des Verlags: www.staccato-verlag.de

LEBEN ZU VIERT

Zum Geleit

35 Streichquartette – eine beeindruckende Zahl an Porträts und Interviews, die in nur einigen Jahren redaktioneller Arbeit für „ENSEMBLE – Magazin für Kammermusik“ entstanden sind (neben zahllosen anderen Porträts von Ensembles und Künstlern, die sich der Kammermusik widmen). In diesem Band sind die besten und wichtigsten Interviews und Porträts von Streichquartetten aus den vergangenen Jahren des Magazins zusammengefasst.

Streichquartett, die Königsdisziplin. Das ist ein Begriff, der eigentlich für die Komponisten selbst gilt, die Streichquartette verfasst haben. Seit der Vorgaben *Luigi Boccherini* und *Joseph Haydn* waren die Komponisten schwer beeindruckt davon, wie geschickt man für vier gleichartige Instrumente schreiben kann. Doch es ist auch eine Königsdisziplin für die ausübenden Interpreten, für die Streicher, die sich entschieden haben, sich ganz dem Zusammenspiel und dem – teilweise sehr intensiven – Zusammenleben zu widmen. Denn wohl kaum ein anderes Genre verlangt den Einzelpersonen so viel Disziplin und Durchhaltevermögen ab wie das Streichquartett. Das „Leben zu viert“ ist schon fast ein geflügeltes Wort geworden. Und so ist es spannend, von den Interpreten selbst zu lesen, wie sie arbeiten, was sie denken, was sie bewegt. Das war der Beweggrund, dieses Buch zusammenzustellen. Denn es bietet einen Querschnitt durch die Geschichte des Streichquartetts über fast ein halbes Jahrhundert, angefangen beim *Alban Berg Quartett*, bis hin zu den jüngsten Streichquartetten, die sich erst von einigen Jahren darauf eingelassen haben, ein Leben zu viert zu führen.

Dabei sind Interviews immer auch ein Ausdruck des Moments, in dem sie geführt wurden. Sie haben in etlichen Aussagen allgemeinen Stellenwert für die Arbeits- und Denkweise des jeweiligen Streichquartetts, bilden aber auch eine Momentaufnahme. Einige der Quartette, die in diesem Buch vertreten sind, haben ihre Besetzungen längst geändert, haben sich also verändert. Dann sind die Interviews ein Blick in die Vergangenheit des Ensembles, aber in eine, die auf dem Weg zu neuen Interpretationsansätzen weiterführt.

Wie facettenreich das Denken und Arbeiten ist, wie vielfältig die Felder für Streichquartette

sind, kann man ebenso anhand dieser Interviews ablesen. Da gibt es solche, die sich der Moderne verschrieben haben, solche, die sich auf das historisch informierte Musizieren eingelassen haben, und solche, die sich bestimmten Repertoire-Regionen widmen. All diese Dinge zeigen, wie lebendig die Streichquartett-Szene ist und bleibt. Denn noch nie haben sich so viele junge Streichquartette auf einem hohen Niveau auf den Konzertbühnen getummelt. Ein Ausdruck für die ewig junge Besetzung Streichquartett.

Dieses Buch bietet einen Einblick und einen Ausblick in die Welt der Streichquartette, nicht durch eine journalistische Autorenbrille gesehen und bewertet, sondern durch konkrete und direkte Aussagen der Interpreten selbst. Das macht das Lesen dieses Buches so spannend.

INHALT

- Alban Berg Quartett* Ade zu viert
Apollon Musagete Quartett Erfolgsrezept: Ideenreichtum & Konsequenz
Artemis Quartett Spielen, als würde man zum ersten Mal erklingen
Artis Quartett
Auryn Quartett Lebendige Spontaneität
Brentano String Quartet „Streichquartett ist ein Messie-Prozess.“
Cuarteto Casals
casalQuartett Die Geburt des Streichquartetts
Delian Quartett Mit Reife ins Streichquartettabenteuer
Doric String Quartet Spielen wie ein Gesang
Quatuor Ebène Spielen wie eine fünfte Person
Gewandhaus-Quartett ... im 200. Jahr
Hagen Quartett „Die Kammermusik ist noch eine heile Welt.“
Heine Quartett Mit Lust und Erfahrung
Jerusalem Quartet Wie eine Boygroup
Juilliard String Quartet Vier starke Stimmen
Keller Quartett Pure Intensität
Klenke Quartett Quartett als zweites Zuhause
Leipziger Streichquartett Erfolg durch Souveränität
Mandelring Quartett Inspirierende Kraft aus den Weinbergen
Minetti Quartett Nur spielen, wovon man überzeugt ist
Minguet Quartett Das Prinzip Kontinuität
Modern String Quartet „Sich dem Wandel der Zeit anpassen, ohne sich dabei zu verleugnen.“
Quatuor Mosaiques Auf historischen Instrumenten ohne museale Authentizität musizieren
Navarra String Quartet ... spielt Pēteris Vasks
Das Nomos Quartett 25 Jahre alt
Pavel Haas Quartett Schritt für Schritt zur Weltspitze
Pražák Quartett Altmodisch und modern
Rosamunde Quartett
St. Lawrence String Quartet
Tin Alley String Quartet „Wir arbeiten nicht, wir spielen nur.“
Tokyo String Quartet Urgestein
Verdi Quartett Eine Oase, in der einem die Ohren aufgehen
Vertavo Quartet Spaß zu viert
Vlach Quartett Wie vier Bäume im Wind

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