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## **PROLOGUE**



**Gunta Melbārde –**

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Master's degree of Pedagogy obtained in Latvian University.  
Artistic director of International Festival – Competition of chamber  
ensembles for young performers *We Play Music with Friends*.  
Creator of numerous anthology's for young musicians.

### ***Dear colleagues!***

First of all - the sincere gratitude to all authors participating in the formation of our magazine! We are looking forward to receive your letters with reviews, thoughts and suggestions. Our e-mail is the same: [weplay@inbox.lv](mailto:weplay@inbox.lv) .

I hope that the recent *Winter Master classes for chamber ensemble teachers* have strengthened us all giving each of us something useful. Maybe that 'something' was the encouragement to think over the methods we use in daily work with young chamber musicians. Maybe it was some concrete advice or new ideas. Similar to playing in a chamber ensemble, in our pedagogical quest it is good to realize that one is not alone, that listening to one's colleagues one finds out that just like innumerable variations on a theme, others encounter similar problems, too. Discoveries and losses... That is the goal of the Master classes – to encourage collaboration constantly searching for the right way.

But the way to what? Do we have to find the shortest path to a brilliant moment of a perfect performance at a concert or a contest? Or maybe we should show them the way to music in itself, which is *our spiritual motherland* (R.Steiner)? Isn't it playing music that makes us more sincere, humane, sympathetic, noble, that makes us a little bit '*not from this world*'?

This way may be long and full of obstacles, but we all know that the way home is a happy one.

***We will make it – together with friends!***

## **REVIEW, IDEAS, COMMENTS**

### ***Alevtina Tairova,***

violinist, violin and chamber music teacher of Engure Music and Art School. Graduated from the J. Vitols Latvian Academy of Music, classes of prof. A.Baumanis and doc. T.Ziberte-Ījaba, chamber music – by prof. G. Sprōģe.



For the seventh time, with inexhaustible enthusiasm, the annual Winter Master classes for chamber ensemble teachers 2012 have been excellently organized. The model and structure remain the same, but every time the Master classes thrill in a different way, with a special flavor. Thanks to the organizers' strength of spirit and enthusiasm, teachers have the opportunity to take a look at the way outstanding musicians work. This year our special guest was Hans Erik Deckert.

I got acquainted to the main principles of his pedagogical work reading the E-journal at [www.kamerfest.lv](http://www.kamerfest.lv). The professor's profoundly philosophical thoughts and beliefs, some of which I found extremely useful, inspired me and encouraged my own intuitive experiments. H.E. Deckert proved his theory clearly at the open classes. I wanted to take an instrument and try to feel the tension of the harmony, the curves of the melody, the surprises of the form and rhythm, too.

One of the main ideas of the professor is '*to listen with the heart*'. With a clever heart, I must add, based on deep theoretical knowledge that only helps to understand the power of the emotional impact of music. The precipice between music theory and music practice, which exists in our music schools, does not let the children to thoroughly feel and understand the essence of music. Besides, we, teachers, often focus on the technical part too much. Children more often try to find the answer to the question '*What do you think about your play?*' in their technical flaws and do not even mention the music in itself. Emotion and theory should be well-balanced. How can that be achieved? '*Every musician has to learn how to become his own teacher*' says H.E. Deckert. During the process of studying, qualities of a good musician and in fact, of a good man, too, such as independence, responsibility, capacity to think clearly, initiative and others are developed. And the most important thing, by playing music with friends we feel the sense of joint happiness – the incomparable bliss we convey to each other.

(Translated by Aleksey Pegushev)

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Liebe Freunde!  
Liebe Gunta Melbārde!

Vielen Dank für Ihre zwei Mails, darunter die Gratulation zum meinem heutigen Geburtstag.

Ja, ich kam gut nach Hause und war glücklich über meine zahlreichen aufbauenden Erlebnisse in Riga.

Jetzt muss ich aber danken: Mein Besuch bei Euch war ein sehr starkes Erlebnis. Ihr alle seid, aber vor allem Du, die stärksten Repräsentanten für eine wirkliche musikalische Erneuerung. Ich bewundere Euch zutiefst für die Arbeit, die Ihr leistet. Lettland wirkt auf mich wie ein Vorbild, wenn es um die Rettung der Musik für die Zukunft geht.

Wie wenig Leute wissen heute etwas über die zentrale Aufgabe der Kammermusik. Sie ist in Wahrheit ein Modell für

menschliches Überleben durch soziales Engagement: Weg von der Egomane und hin zum Mitmenschen! Wir müssen nur immer weiter arbeiten und hoffen, dass einmal eingesehen wird, dass nur der musische Mensch, nicht der Machtmensch, einen Weltfrieden bewirken kann.

Sehr gerne komme ich wieder zu Euch zu neuen Projekten, auch gerne in der Musikakademie, wo es mir ein Herzensanliegen ist, die grossen Meisterwerke der Kammermusik zu vermitteln.

Ich werde in den nächsten Tagen weitere Literatur für Cello-Ensemble zum Weiterreichen an Ihre Kollegin schicken.

Grüssen Sie bitte auch Ihre Kinder! Ihr cellospielender Sohn ist herzlich willkommen bei mir irgendwann für eine Woche, wo ich beispielsweise mit ihm die vier Bach-Kanons aus "Die Kunst der Fuge" in meinem Arrangement für zwei Celli spielen könnte. Ich will gerne helfen, seine Motivation zu stärken.

Ich bin dabei, einen neuen Artikel über Kammermusik-Pädagogik zu schreiben. Sobald er fertig ist, werde ich ihn schicken.

Liebe Gunta! Nochmals vielen, vielen Dank für alles in Riga. Es war unvergesslich.

Herzliche Grüße von Hans Erik Deckert

Am Mittwoch, 11. Januar 2012  
Copenhagen/ Dänemark

## **AN ARTISTIC PORTRAIT. INTERVIEW**



**Petras Kunca** (born 1942) is a Lithuanian violinist, awarded the National Prize of Lithuania (1979) and the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas. For 31 years he performed with the *Vilnius Quartet*; now – with String quartet *Akademia*. In 1965 Kunca graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and continued his studies at the Moscow Conservatory. He took further courses on violin and chamber music in Hungary (1968), Finland (1988), Spain (1992), Sweden (1998), Denmark (1999), Austria (2001). Between 1964 and 1974, Kunca taught at the National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Art and then became a professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Since 1996 he was Head of Chamber Music Department. More than 200 chamber music students have graduated from Prof. Petras Kunca class.

### **Conversation with professor, violinist PETRAS KUNCA.**

**Gunta Melbārde:** Dear professor, please accept our sincere congratulations on your anniversary! Our collaboration has been giving fruits in different forms for almost 10 years now. You were the initiator and now you have become the ‘Godfather’ of the tradition of children chamber music performance in Latvia.

Your active participation in the work of the jury during the first few International Chamber music Festival-competition for young performers „We Play Music with Friends”, methodical help at the annual Winter Master classes for chamber ensemble teachers in Riga, exciting articles in our jointly created E-Journal for chamber music teachers – all this is not enough to thoroughly describe your contribution and support. I would like this interview not to be a plain ‘Q and A’, but more like a continuation of our conversation.



**Petras Kunca:** Our acquaintance roads have formed truly happily. What you are doing for the benefit of chamber music in Latvia is a good example for us there in Lithuania. In the events under your leadership of the Foundation “We play Music with Friends” the ensemble music making naturally connects with each young person’s individual professional development. I think, it is really difficult to achieve it, but when the results are clearly positive, I would like to be together with you to learn and support your activities.

**GM:** In Lithuania there have been many chamber music contests and festivals for children and young people for quite a long time. It seems that they are held in every other city, even in small

cities, such as Birzhai, Anikshchi. In your view, what is the reason for that – the Lithuanian mentality or maybe support from the government?

**Petras Kunca:** It is interesting that in Lithuania the music school teachers themselves began



“The Ensemble-building Movement”. Now, in the time of independence, we wanted to find something new in the music education and the ensemble music for children and young people began having a lot of communication with joy. This new challenges arose for the teachers to notice the new development trends in our society, encouraging young people to communicate through music in an ensemble and grow individually. Officially it is not very encouraged, due to, lack of funds, but it is possible to realize these ideas taking part in joint projects, and claim the support from various charitable foundations,

which mostly support the young people. You yourself are the organizer of many youth music events and also a witness of theirs, so you are aptly noticed that a lot of initiative for chamber music in Lithuania show the small town teachers in these schools, and we have such ones over one hundred. This is a great trend.

**GM:** How did you find your way to chamber music? Did you find it on your own or maybe someone helped you? Or is it - His Majesty the Case?

**Petras Kunca:** It is during these days, that the thoughts revolve on this. Firstly, I remember my desire to learn to play the fiddle, it really was an unexpected choice for myself, but it had a real basis – my parents were big music lovers – my dad had a violin and in his young days he set up a small salon music ensemble. I still have parts of the transcriptions made by his hand for violin: Robert Schumann’s “Träumerei”, Oscar Fetras’ “Carmen-Marsch”, Franz Drdla’s-“Souvenir”...I would not call a violin coming in my life by chance. However, I started my grand chamber music only in music school in Kaunas, whose teachers were real fanatics of this kind of music.

**GM:** There is an opinion that little children, who are studying in the first few grades, shouldn’t participate in chamber ensembles for they have not acquired enough skill of playing their instrument. What is your opinion on the subject? When should children be introduced to the basics of chamber music?

**Petras Kunca:**

You have answered the question yourself including the activities of your led Foundation. I confirm that when developing student’s individuality it is needed to combine the two possibilities for young people, i.e. his ability to be and to remain quite free physically to coordinate the body movements and ability to relax for the production of a certain sound, to convey a necessary musical character. These are really great psychological challenges as ensemble playing has

its own specifics – here you have to combine among yourselves the individual management skills with the tasks of the whole ensemble. In my opinion, the teachers consider the possibilities of each student individually, and, of course, have the right to an experiment. Here one rule can not exist.

**GM:** You are a sincere and passionate ‘patriot’ of the string quartet, which is the king of chamber music genres. How do you view its role in the contemporary music world?

**Petras Kunca:** Just these teachers, while making music for us at concerts, revealed its beauty.



In fact, they were convinced themselves of the necessity of the chamber music in the educational process. The tradition formed by the great violinist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century J. Joachim that the art of string quartet was an integral part of individual music education, and even today it remains in the programmes of the best music schools all over the world. Then, after just-finished war, it was difficult to us in Kaunas, but the quartet’s music gave us light and hope. In modern world the quartet music making values have changed and

,I would say,- it has increased – this kind of chamber music has clearly gained a new social function as an example of society behavior model, i.e. consciously to cooperate for harmonious result.

**GM:** Please describe your attitude to festivals and contests of different kind, including those of chamber music. Does performance in such events have a positive or negative influence on pupils? Are there any limits, beyond which such experience becomes more harmful than useful for the development of the young musician?

**Petras Kunca:** The competitive world keeps us in constant tension, and this will inevitably spill over into the sphere of chamber music. Now from each of the youth ensemble, it is required greater professional abilities, experience, wide repertoire, which should be professionally mastered in a short period of time.

So, thinking about future prospects, one should have early knowledge of specifics of chamber music playing. But if we are talking about young people rallying together for chamber music making, you should not rush to overload with repertoire and its complexity, because the space ought to be left for their natural artistic maturity. The damage of competitions appears when they try to impress by inadequate and too difficult repertoire of a student. This is not a student’s but his teacher’s problem.

**GM:** For most persons the first musical impressions come (if they do come at all) from our childhood, our household, and our parents. How do you view the possibility and necessity to renew home music traditions?



**Petras Kunca:** Home music making fascinates us as a memory of a lost paradise. In what forms is it possible to exist today? Rushing and still accelerating today's world as there seems to be no time for anything. But we have our own and our loved ones' birthdays, we have days when we stop and fall to thinking, and when we get out into the shelter of nature...and it is all associated with chamber music spirit. I think nothing is lost. When we think that we need live chamber music, and then let us make music at home, make music yourself. What must our society be to re-home this musical tradition...? I wonder how we shall live after a hundred years with chamber music...

**GM:** At a concert during our Winter Master classes in Riga you performed J. Klengel's Piano trios with your colleagues - Kindertrio op. 35, Nr.1-2. That was the first time we ever heard these pieces. We would like to thank you for the scores you gave to us. Six years have passed since then and these Trios have become an important part of our students' repertoire. It is likely, that many similar opuses for the young musicians exist, which are suitable for performance on stage, not only appropriate for regular work in classroom. What else could you advise? One of our recent discoveries is the sublime op. 58 of Theodor Kirchner (Kindertrio op.58). Our living composers, including Latvian composers, are constantly trying to create something like that, but their compositions are mostly short pieces. What should chamber music for the younger generation be like?



What elements should and should not it contain?

**Petras Kunca:** Oh, Julius Klengel! This is a historical figure. Some of his former students have been our teachers. The Trios he wrote to his children and most probably he played with them himself. My French colleague teachers introduced me to these works over their master-classes. I noticed with what love the French children played these pieces...I have brought these copies to Lithuania and shared them with you here in Riga.

In fact, to write good music for kids it is really amazing. I think, the author should become as genius as all the children. But what is to be done if the composer's childhood and life long passed by and the life made him "tough"? Everyone is aware of the responsibility to write for children, but the implementation is not an easy one. There are no recipes and will be not. If you ask my opinion, I think may be it is worth remembering the young Mozart's aesthetic values.

**GM:** My colleagues would like to know your opinion on teachers' and students' playing together in one ensemble? Is it something you support or not? Is it necessary?

**Petras Kunca:** I remember my schooldays – a teacher with a student ensemble playing, and



this would set an example and encourage them. But the teacher must have the ability and time to step aside to summarize and critically evaluate the student's progress. This is why I think that the public appearance with students is worth resolving only in senior classes, when the student has sufficiently formed his personal skills. And especially complex is the string ensemble pedagogic, where much attention should individually be given to coordination of each students bowing and ensemble synchronization.

**GM:** Your creative and pedagogical activity is well-known not only in Latvia. For many years have you worked at the Chamber ensemble department of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre; your ideas, suggestions and advice is highly valued throughout Europe. You are also an active member of the Board of the European Chamber Music Teacher Association (ECMTA). Our Foundation 'We Play Music with Friends' takes part in the activity of ECMTA as an institutional member. How do *you* view the mission of ECMTA and the fruits of its activity?

**Petras Kunca:** Thanks a lot for so many beautiful words I do not feel deserved them, but I am very glad with our cooperation which now unites us already in ECMTA. The Foundation "We play Music with Friends" is a good European example how to create new spaces for chamber music pedagogy.

After all, owing to ECMTA we discover new possible abilities to extend our activities for all our institutions in Europe and at the same time discovering new themes combining our entire educational system of chamber music from music school to higher school graduation. We are broadening the circle of our friends and partners, and we are in search of those who



want to link its activities in the field of chamber music with ECMTA. It is my great pleasure to inform you, that, while walking in the footsteps of your Foundation, recently the Lithuanian Music school named after composer V.Jakubėnas in Biržai (the town in Lithuania near Latvian border) have become an institutional member of ECMTA with which we all together quite successfully put in practice our project last autumn, i.e. the Biržai International Creative Educational Camp "Let's play Music together".

**GM:** Thank you very much for this conversation!



## **Hans Erik Deckert** (b. 1927, Hamburg), cellist.

Honorary President of the Danish section of ESTA (which he also founded in 1978) and resident conductor with the Cello Academy. He also holds a visiting post at the Freie Musikschule in Hamburg. He studied cello and conducting in Copenhagen. His career in these fields, and more generally as a passionate animator in the field of chamber music, has developed from posts held at academies in Germany, Denmark and Sweden to his present freelance activity throughout Europe. H. E. Deckert runs music workshops such as: Cello Children Camp at his home, Cello Master Class in Steinfeld/Germany, Orchestra and Chamber Music in Alsbach-Hähnlein/Germany, Chamber Music in Jindrichuv-Hradec/Czech Republic and others.

### The main topics in his musical practise:

1. the individual musical experience, conditioned for each person by musical phenomena – listening with the heart,
2. the communal musical experience on the basis of giving and taking – listening to others,
3. the development of independence in the teaching process – each participant learning to become his or her own teacher.

## **MUSIC AND METHOD**

### ***On Method in Musical Education***

Lecture given at the ESTA International Congress, Rome, 1988

[www.hedmusic.net](http://www.hedmusic.net) ; [www.celifamily.com](http://www.celifamily.com)

### **Medium and goal**

Music exists for humanity; but where does it exist? It exists within each living person. We cannot explain music, but we can experience it. Music is not reducible to mere sound; but it can arise through the medium of sound. This we all know from our own experience.

According to one survey, there are only about 300 000 true lovers of music world-wide<sup>1</sup>. With a world population of around five billion, this is equivalent to just six in every hundred thousand people; a depressingly small proportion in view of the contribution which music could make to the solution of world problems.

Having a method means having a path or procedure to follow; thus, having a musical method entails following a path or procedure towards music. We need a path to follow, in order to bring out the music which resides within us. But which is the right path?

In the field of music there are countless methods, schools, systems and techniques. Perhaps the two best known are the Kodaly and Suzuki methods. One talks of “the French school”, “the German“, or “the Russian schools“. Violinists refer to Shevčik and Flesch, cellists use Casals or call themselves adherents of the Tortelier school, or speak of the Navarra technique. Double bassists have to contend with the coexistence of two completely different bow-holds.

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<sup>1</sup> Information from the conductor, Sergiu Celibidache

In earlier times there was even more on offer on the ‘method-market’. A small book from the 1920s by a piano-teacher, Theodor Ritte, is representative of the manifold endeavors in this field in past times; it bears the title „How To Become a Virtuoso Pianist: Advice and Tips for the Ambitious”<sup>2</sup>. The book introduces the „Energetos-Ritte” system, otherwise called the finger-sport system, which advertises itself as „a completely unique gymnastic-auto suggestive experience”. An epilogue quotes from the disciples of this method; one director of a music college writes, for example, “I have applied your system to my own playing and can say that it works wonders“. This eulogy ends with the following passage: “I intend to introduce your system in my college, which consists of 30 piano-teachers and over 1100 pupils“. Another recommendation claims, “the life-work of Ritte should become the Gospel of all musicians“.

We seem to be confronted with a variety of methods, but are they really paths to music? Are the majority of them not merely paths to the instrument, to technical dexterity?

We know that numerous methods have indeed produced miracles above all in our instrumental development, and that countless pupils have been helped. The arrival of the twentieth century brought the research of instrumental, physiological and psychological laws to the musical community; the triumphal march of science invaded even music. Everything which could be described as a tool was to be employed. Our present high standard of technique, a prerequisite for the music industry, is due in large part to the originators of different methods and schools, to the musicians whose experience we now draw on.

The necessary unity of musician and instrument has however led to a change of focus; the means have become far more central to our concerns than the end. However, when our instrumental method is not part of a musical method, we are no longer on the path towards music. An instrumental method which is not seen as a permanently transitory phase en route to a higher goal can be fatally damaging to the aspects of music which concern us most closely. However necessary attention to the external or technical elements of music may be, obsession with the material is the first stage of musical oblivion, leaving the musician no more than an instrumental robot.

### **The fatal tendency toward technical media**

The age of technology is responsible for the materialistic narrow-mindedness in all our current-day methods. This imbalance is the logical consequence of a cast of mind typical in our present lives. In the face of increasing inundation of music through technical media and other mechanical elements in our daily lives, we must ask ourselves where our point of saturation lies. Where does the role of serving and helping end, and where does the enslavement of the human begin? At what point is it no longer the case that humans are being served and helped by these media, but rather that we are being enslaved by their dictatorship?

Contemporary musical life is already largely mechanized; this fact alone is already problematic. Moreover, a gigantic recording industry makes our relationship with music progressively more technical, thereby increasing the danger of regarding technical perfection as an end in itself. Wilhelm Furtwängler recognized this trend already in 1931, stating in his essay „The Vital Force of Music”<sup>3</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> Theodor Ritte: *Wie werde ich Klaviervirtuose? Ratschläge und Winke für Aufivartsstrebende*, Alexander Fink & Co., Freiburg i. Br., 1919

<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm Furtwängler: *Die Lebenskraft der Musik*, in *Ton und Wort, Aufsätze und Vorträge*, F.A.Brockhaus, Wiesbaden, 1966

“The criterion today of a good piano recital or orchestral concert has come to be measured more against the perfect, balanced and omniscient recording than by the quality of the ever-unique live performance. Thus, the standards and norms of the recording studio have been transferred in large part to the concert hall. Technical perfection has brought with it a fear of radically slow tempi, of large contrasts, and of silence and pauses, and worst of all, a fear of everything which is extreme, structure- and form-giving, and educative in the deepest sense. This is a fundamental change in our whole sense of musicianship. Music has lost its driving, living and spontaneous character; rhythm, the pulsation of the living heart, has been replaced by the mechanical, schematic beat of a machine, thereby destroying the organic shape which permeates music down to the smallest sung phrase and gives its content real warmth and sinewy, living existence. The more interpretations have identified with the mercilessly all-hearing recording, the more acute music’s malnutrition has become, assuming the insipid taste of distilled water which cannot even be improved with artificial additives. Thus we arrive at the present situation of musical excess.”

The fact that Furtwängler also made records, or that recording techniques have improved greatly since those times, does not weaken his argument. The betrayal that emanates from the recording industry is as perfectly crafted as the recordings themselves. As far as Furtwängler’s sound-documents are concerned (which, incidentally, were often recordings of live performances), it should be pointed out that not even the slightest trace of recording-studio standardization can be detected in them.

I have made this excursion into the technical environment surrounding our musical lives in order to cast some light on the background and sphere of influence of the musical methods currently in use. This entire range of problems throws up a flirter issue, which is of far more importance for teachers; namely, the issue of how to teach, which is equally important to consider as what we teach. To put it bluntly: should we be bending our pupils into form, like a piece of flexible wire; or are they individuals whose unique personalities we must respect, and in whom we must discover the true instrument of music?

### **A question of *dogma versus* and communication between individuals**

Should we imprison our pupils in the confines of a single indisputable method, reducing them to obedient subordinates of a single, unsurpassable, solely valid method, or should we develop a method which takes account of the pupils’ individualities, allowing the instrumental and anatomical laws to be funneled through the pupils’ own personalities into music? Are we trying to give them orders, or are we striving to set up a dialogue? Is the teacher someone ‘up there’ with the pupil ‘down below’, or should the ethical slogan *primus inter pares* (‘first among equals’) be our guiding principle? The answer to such questions is not hard to find.

In earlier centuries, the power of the teacher and dependence of the pupil were far more pronounced. In the twentieth century we have experienced the assumption of personal responsibility in all thinkable areas of human action. Any method which fails to take account of this overlooks the efforts of the individual in our time to become, under the guidance of an expert, his or her own teacher. Working on the self-sufficiency of the pupil has become a central task of modern teaching. The days of the professor’s oracle role seem to be over. Pupils have become an active part in the general teaching process, with the teacher’s cards on the table, as it were. It should not be left to the pupil only to ask questions of the omniscient teacher; rather, the teacher should set about questioning the pupil: what was wrong with what he or she has just played; which are the weak points which let the playing down; what must be practiced; where does the phrase lead; where does the movement culminate? This gives the pupil a chance to air all the possible answers. And if the pupil does have questions for the teacher, they

can be provocatively answered with, “I don’t know“. This turns the tables on the pupil, communicating the message that we are not the real teachers, we only represent the teaching process; the pupil is the real teacher, taking lessons from him- or herself. We are only the catalysts.

This approach may seem to reduce the role of the teacher, but the opposite is in fact true. The motto ‘first among equals’ still emphasizes the importance of the first. Naturally, the fundamental impulses and their corresponding methods can only originate from the teacher; but as they are taken on board by pupils, they are subject to rich differentiation and nuance, in contrast to the production-line attitude, which reduces the pupil to anonymous robotics. One of the crucial differences between humans and parrots is that we are capable of more than mere imitation. It cannot be our intention to allow a military element to creep into music. There is a vital place for order within music, but military intervention destroys all that is musical. Paul Rolland, a source of inspiration for all string players, said once that militarism is the dialectical opposite of music.

It must never be our intention to drill people as the military do their horses, to gain maximum achievement from them for our own uses, but rather we must help each individual toward personal and musical maturity, through the challenge of the musical material in question, and through the responsibilities to which we, as teachers, are bound.

We are bound to the uniqueness of each lesson, to what occurs in the ‘constant moment’ in the interaction between the individual qualities of the teacher’s giving and the pupil’s receiving of information. This uniqueness condition does not in any way reduce the role of the teacher; on the contrary, it broadens immeasurably the sphere of teaching responsibility.

Musical education is not a side-kick to artistry; it is in itself the art of an art, and its structure is akin to that of a theme with an infinite number of variations.

Hence we may conclude that there is in effect only one single method: the human, living and breathing method of the moment. This method has no list of rules, no right or wrong answers; it knows no dogma, pedantry or philistinism. It does, however, contain all that we have inherited from the testimonies of the great musicians and excellent teachers which we know from history, and particularly from our own century - all that we have borrowed from the rich treasury of our predecessors, and which has grown to be such an integral part of us that we may use it as a vital teaching source.

In addition we have at our disposal our own curiosity as eternal pupils; we continue to study music to the ends of our lives, seeking perpetually to deepen our musical, technical and pedagogical experience. And, last but not least, we have a wealth of literature on the teaching of music, from which we must select the fruits which will satisfy our spiritual hunger. Unfortunately, it is all too common for this flood of publications to mirror the tendency which I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, namely to ‘scientise’ our work.

Some time ago I discovered the following listing in Doblinger’s catalogue of new publications: “Music and its psychologies: the socio-psychological, eco-psychological, cognitional-psychological, developmental-psychological, differential-psychological, and neuropsychological aspects of musical perception and complex psychologies and psychotherapy. 140 pages.“

All I can say is that we are lucky to have - in addition to so many complex “aspects“ of music - the European String Teachers’ Association, ESTA! In my address on the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Danish branch of ESTA, I described the Association as a “permanent forum for the

broadening of horizons“. The culmination of our work lies in the individual teaching capacities of each one of us; the experiences we gather in our teaching lives are the life-giving forces for our existence as musicians. When people ask me who I studied with, I like to answer, “with my students“.

I have tried to set down the conditions of the ‘living method of the moment‘. I have spoken of the necessity of an art of teaching based on the individuality of the pupil, and I have mentioned the danger which is represented by methods which do not transcend a purely technical control of the instrument.

### **Dissonances in pedagogical life**

What is the actual situation? Where are the possible frictions, dissonances and errors, the confrontations between so-called truths, each of them claiming to be the one and only universally valid method? Should we find it unsurprising that things can evolve in different ways?

A single example should suffice to illustrate the intensity of this deeply problematic situation; namely, the passage of a pupil from one teacher to another - an entirely natural process in the musical development of a young person. What happens? The new teacher receives this pupil with a thoroughly negative condemnation of all that has been learned previously. This is the more or less obligatory counterpoint, even the *cantus firmus*, through which the invalidity of all previous work is revealed to the pupil.

Of course it may be that all or much of what was learned before is simply incorrect, but even then, is such a condemnation justified? It may be that it is the pupil, and not the teacher, who is wrong. All too often, a change of teachers is accompanied by the undermining of the former teacher’s competence. I am sure that we are all aware of this, as all or most of us have found ourselves on one or other side of this transfer in the past. We can either dismiss the whole topic as trivial, or we can try to see the positive side of it; such important changes in the pupil’s independent development can contribute to a wonderful broadening of perspective.

How is it when the pupil proceeds to his or her third or fourth teacher, and has to start from scratch each time, maybe having to change the bow-hold or completely alter all the basics of playing technique? In the maze of these problems, in the turmoil of method, is there any indication to the pupil when he or she will be able to begin addressing actual musical phenomena?

We, as teachers, know that there will be something in particular to work on more intensively with each new pupil that comes to us. Of course there will be some correction of the basics, and there may even be problems which are virtually insoluble. We all know that development is a purely individual thing. Even after a thorough musical education, it is not uncommon for fundamental problems to lead a pupil right back to elementary questions. All the rudiments need a general inspection from time to time, just as every house or garden needs attention. Similarly, in music, we must continually reckon with the possibility that a technical check-up is in order. No teacher should be held to blame if such check-ups seem most relevant when a pupil changes teachers; in fact, this is an opportune moment to intervene.

There is clearly no point in driving a highly motivated nine-year-old to tears with intensive finger drills and bowing exercises, or in failing a pupil in the graduation examination of the institution where she has received all her education, simply because the external examiner does not approve of her technique. These are, however, situations which do occur, and they represent the senseless abuse of the building blocks of our medium. The kind of narrow mindedness which only considers technique, ignoring the laws of individuality, ends all too frequently in frustration. False ambition, vanity, arrogance and

narcissism are infertile ground for the formation of the healing processes which must take place in musical education.

### **A single goal: musical realization**

However, even the most seemingly hopeless teaching situations can be saved by transformation and metamorphosis, giving the kind of continuity which is so vitally important for the pupil's creativity; continuity alone does not rule out the danger of a one-track method, but it gives at least a sense of direction. However, the decisive basis for all our endeavours lies in something further: the ability to recall, and to keep in mind, the original aim - namely, music.

None would dispute this, but few know what is actually meant by it. The musical powers which, as I noted at the beginning, reside in all people, must be realised in every moment of playing. "Fourth finger, more vibrato; a bit less on the third; more bow here, but less there; flatten the a- flat more; don't forget the staccato in bar 53; remember your bow-hold; check yourself with the metronome, the mirror, the tape..."; such commands do only lip-service to the musical goal.

Naturally, without analysis, there is no synthesis; the analytical stages are obligatory in the musical process, and anyone who omits them neglects the entire fundament of music. Music without technique is impossible; but, as I have indicated, technique without music is possible and unfortunately all too common. The problem lies in the current obsession with perfection as the single goal, which kills music and destroys the musician.

It is not my purpose here to attempt an introduction of the vast and visionary field of thought in musical phenomenology today; instead, a few examples should suffice to illustrate a procedure originating in the purely musical experience. We must ask ourselves, for example, what is true intonation? It is the constant uniqueness of intervallic relationships. What is true rhythm? It is the musical identity of a rhythmic sequence. What is the right musical sound? It is the way the music should sound in every moment of a musical context; no simplistically exaggerated vibrato, as is so often the case. It is the production of tone which is the most sensitive indicator of a musician's mental and emotional proximity to the music. Each individual tone carries in itself the possibility of becoming a miniature form; it is the activity of our inner hearing which is decisive in realising this.

In chamber music, for example, we should not say to the second violin, "raise the c", but rather we should allow the dynamics of ensemble-playing to prevail, saying instead, "listen to the cello, and feel yourself part of the musical environment of the ensemble and of this chord". Some time ago I experienced confirmation of this approach while I was rehearsing César Franck's Symphony with a college orchestra. The ten woodwinds and twelve brass were becoming familiar for the first time with the wonderful harmonies of this composer. At first it sounded out of tune and unbalanced. However, through mutual listening to the harmonies and their progressions, combined with a detailed chord analysis, they achieved not only flawless control of intonation and dynamics, but also a real identification with the musical forces at play.

None of the concrete, technical work in the earlier stages is disqualified in such an experience, but that groundwork does gain a larger context in which to thrive. We should not begin with technique, but with music, and with the triad of the three unique aspects of each teaching situation: the uniqueness of the music, and of the pupil and of the teacher. These are the conditions of a single method, with infinite variations, the "living method of the moment". It is the influence of all one's past musical experiences which is decisive in providing a method which carries the hope of bringing pupils, together with their



instruments, to music. There is no place for intellectualism in music; musical consciousness is of an entirely different nature than the intellect; but neither is music a cosmetic decoration.

The unifying perspective in all our work is the striving to allow the divine powers which are given to us through music, to shine through. In this way we hope to make a contribution to the highest aims of humanity.

Edwin Fischer, an incomparable musician, said in Lucerne in 1949<sup>4</sup>:

“Each and every musician belongs to those chosen few, who, be they painters, architects, scientists, or other sages, work for the continued life of the spirit. Beyond the boundaries of race, nation, language and environment, they weave, together, the heavenly carpet of unbounded spirituality and of the imperishable dome of the soul which rests on, and above, the walls of the material world. There they receive wisdom and love, respect for the enduring, and for the mortal and immortal powers of human hands, in the knowledge of the enduring canon of the law of the universe which is fixed in the stars. To be allowed to serve in this pure sphere is the holy duty, highest honour and greatest happiness of any musician.“

Translated from the German by *Juliana Hodkinson*.

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<sup>4</sup> Edwin Fischer: *Von den Aufgaben des Musikers*, Insel-Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1960

**Sanna Vaarni-Kemppainen**, pianist, was trained in Sibelius-Academy in Helsinki, Finland. She studied piano with Eero Heinonen and chamber music with Ralf Gothóni. She continued her studies with Konstantin Bogino in Paris. Sanna Vaarni performs as a solo pianist and in several chamber music groups. She plays regularly as a piano duo with her husband, pianist Mikael Kemppainen. Sanna Vaarni-Kemppainen works currently as a professor of piano and Head of Piano Department in Espoo Music Institute. She has been lecturing also for music professionals in the Department of Continuing Education in Sibelius-Academy.



### ***The more the merrier!***

Studying piano can be quite a lonely thing to do: you have to spend hours and hours alone with the piano when other instrumentalists can enjoy the benefits of orchestral social life. These young musicians meet other kids with similar interests and ambition every week. They can



share the exciting moments backstage before performances and feel the joy and energy after a successful concert. And naturally they get lot of support from other children during the practising process.

But there is a wonderful possibility for young pianists also to enjoy the company of fellow musicians. Playing four hands (or six or even eight hands) is fun but also very challenging and educational. It forces pianists to develop the sense of sound and sense of balance in an effective way.

In music for four hands performers must always remember music's orchestral nature: texture is often thick and balancing must be planned thoroughly. There can be many layers at the same time and yet the players must be able to bring out the melodic line and keep the polyphony clear. Melodic line can also travel from hand to hand and from player to player. Balancing is one of the most challenging issues in performing four hand music. Even though four hand music was originally composed as "house music" for music lovers and was intended to be performed at home in smaller rooms the nature of music's orchestral character often requires larger halls.

Sharing the same instrument and the nearness of your pianist partner brings another challenge in playing piano duets. The space is often limited and the two pianists must plan carefully how and where they should sit so that the both players are able to play their parts. Very often they share even the same keys and the two players must plan carefully when to release the key so that the other player can use it!

The use of pedal is another great challenge. Every pianist has his or her own typical way of using pedal and the relationship between a pianist and pedal can be very intimate and personal. Suddenly when playing piano duets you should trust your life in other pianist's pedal foot! The timing and level of pedalling needs careful attention in the stage of practising. The proper use of pedal in four hand music requires the perfect knowledge of the whole score from the person who uses the pedal.

Fingerings need careful planning, too. Sometimes the hands of two players work so closely (hands can even overlap) that it is hard to avoid collisions. The most convenient fingering for you can be impossible when playing together because your partners hand is under your hand!

Despite all the compromises you might need when playing piano duets, all the sacrifices are forgotten after a good performance. It is hard to express the almost sacred feeling when two pianists melt into one and breath together in front of great music. When you get to feel this magical connection between two musicians you wouldn't change this uplifting experience for anything.



For young pianists there is a lot of interesting four hand repertoire from all eras: from barock to our time. It is delightful that many composers of our own time have composed music for pedagogical use for piano duets. For example Finnish composer Harri Wessman (1949-) has written many pieces for piano four hands and also for piano six hands.

These little humorous pieces are easy to approach and they give a lot of of pleasure for young pianists. Also many Finnish piano schools (for example "Pianon Avain" and "Pianokoulu Musikatti") contain many pieces composed for many hands.

I recommend playing piano duets for pianists of any level and age. It is fun, social and will improve you as a pianist and musician! And like in a marriage, you and your partner are there together "for better or worse"!





## ***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. Adresse des Verlags: [www.staccato-verlag.de](http://www.staccato-verlag.de)

### ***Eine Art von Wahrheit***

#### Brief von der Magazin ***ENSEMBLE***

Liebe Kammermusikfreundinnen und -freunde,

ist es wirklich so, wie viele immer behaupten, dass die Publikumszahlen gerade im Bereich der Kammermusik zurückgehen? Die Statistiken, die existieren, berücksichtigen in der Regel die Zahlen aus großen Städten. Daneben gibt es aber doch weit mehr Konzerte, als dies in den Reihen größerer Städte der Fall ist. Zum einen können die Statistiken vermelden, dass die Konzerte wieder besser besucht sind – also auch in den größeren Städten. Zum anderen kann man – als aufmerksamer Konzertgänger – durchaus beobachten, dass die Konzerte in kleineren Städten und Gemeinden durchaus hervorragend frequentiert werden – zum Teil von einem extrem kenntnisreichen Publikum.

Wo also kommt das Gefühl her, dass es immer weniger Zuhörer werden? Nun, wahrscheinlich liegt dies meist in der Maschinerie der Musikindustrie, die aus früheren Zeiten vollkommen andere Zahlen gewohnt waren, als aufgrund von weniger Angebot und Konkurrenz die Konzerte sich sozusagen selbst verkauften. Aber die Zeiten hatten sich bald geändert, immer mehr Enthusiasten erkannten, dass auch sie Konzerte veranstalten könnten. So pilgerten die Menschen nicht mehr in die Ballungszentren, sondern konnten auch ein Angebot

vor ihrer eigenen Haustür wahrnehmen. Dadurch stieg aber nicht die Gesamtbesucherzahl, sondern wurde nur entzerrt.

Lange Jahre gingen aufgrund des immer stärkeren Angebots in den Einzelkonzerten auch die Zahlen zurück, ja. Zudem kamen immer mehr Sommerfestivals hinzu, die sich speziell der Kammermusik widmen (zum Teil auch aufgrund der Größe der vorhandenen Säle). Aber in den letzten Monaten kann man wieder einen Anstieg spüren, so ist meine eigene Beobachtung: Selbst wenn ungewöhnliche Werke auf dem Programm stehen, sind viele Zuhörer im Saal. Woran das liegen mag? Nun, vielleicht erkennen die Menschen wieder verstärkt an, dass da – zum Teil ja junge – Künstler sich aufopfern, um ihnen etwas zu geben, was sie woanders nicht bekommen- eine ganz eigene Wahrheit. Und aufgrund dieser Tatsache fühlt man sich im Konzert wieder zu Hause, wird nicht verunsichert durch Lügen und vordergründige Aussagen, die bei genauerem Hinsehen nicht der Wahrheit entsprechen. Und hier beziehe ich mich auf die Politik der Verunsicherung sowie auf die immer stärker dem Marketing und der Werbung verpflichteten Industrie. Gut so, denn dann erhält die Musik – und vielleicht gerade die Kammermusik – wieder einen Stellenwert, den sie schon früher einmal hatte. Nur dass es heute dann letztendlich auch mehr Menschen sind, die die Konzerte besuchen.

Die Musik bietet eine Art von Wahrheit, die man heute fast nirgendwo im Leben auf diese direkte Weise mehr erhält. In diesem Sinne: Holen wir sie uns, genießen wir diese Wahrheit und gehen weiterhin in Konzerte.

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