

01.09.2012

Nr.7



E-JOURNAL

FOR TEACHERS OF CHAMBER ENSEMBLES



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PROLOGUE



Dear colleagues!

First of all I would like to say a warm thank you to all authors who helped creating the 7th issue of our magazine. Take it as greetings in the new – academic year 2012/2013. Letters with your opinion, thoughts, and suggestions are more than welcome. Our email is still the same: weplay@inbox.lv.

This time the magazine is dedicated to anniversaries of 2 significant events in the Latvian musical life. Both involve our future, our hopes. The events are: **X** International Festival – Competition of Chamber Ensembles for Young Performers *We Play Music with Friends* (Riga, May 31 – June 2) and **X** International Latvian Young Musicians Master Classes *New Dimensions in Music* (Sigulda, July 14-23). Authors of this issue have put their hearts into organizing these celebrations and taken part in them enthusiastically one way or another. Besides, in the last decade children’s chamber ensembles and participants and teachers of master classes in Ogre and Sigulda have often visited each other at both of these inspiring events. We cooperate, share with each other and enrich mutually.

Speaking of new dimensions, an inspiring thought comes to mind which Kaspars Bikse (*Kaspars Bikše*), Psychologist and Conductor of Continuing Education Courses for Teachers suggests repeating to yourself every single day: “Our aim is not to be the best or the most perfect but to be the happiest!” It is time to discover and sense this dimension of happiness in music pedagogy, teacher and student life as well.

(Translated by INNOTESCO)

We will make it – together with friends!

REVIEW, IDEAS, COMMENTS



Māra Rozentāle, conductor, director of the Dobele School of Music (Latvia); conductor and artistic director of the mixed choir *Viesturzeme*. A graduate of the choir conducting programme at the Latvian State Conservatory (1964) and received her Professional Master's degree in Music (The Latvian Academy of Music, 2009). Added to her expertise with seminars in Germany, Estonia, and Finland. Directed choirs in festivals in Hungary, Slovakia, and Germany. M. Rozentāle is a distinguished caretaker of her region's cultural life, having formed many projects for the enrichment of the musical life of Dobele. At the Dobele School of Music, she established a chamber concert hall – museum. With a tireless enthusiasm, she has supported the V, VI, and VII International Festival – Competition *We Play with Friends*, hosting it in *her home* – the Dobele School of Music in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

For ten years, the International Chamber Ensemble Festival – Competition for Young Performers *We Play with Friends* has lived, resounded, and grown. At a time when, at every turn, we are all burdened by the light entertainment industry's attempts to gain superiority, this personally significant work by young musicians and teachers is particularly significant. It should be, at all costs, supported and grown, so that the young generation develops true values in the field of both music and social development.

Over the past ten years, this festival has been held in many different places. Young musicians have performed in *Jumprava*, *Mārupe*, *Kuldīga*, *Baldone*, as well as in our town, *Dobele*, and, as of 2010, it has *its own home* in Riga, at the *Jāzeps Mediņš Riga 1st Music School*. In the large, wonderfully restored building at *Kronvalda bulvāris 8*, many broad opportunities are presented to young students and visitors to become familiar with our nation's culture and art.

The 10th anniversary of this festival was for us, the listeners, a remarkable, emotional and long awaited event! Children's and youth ensembles from Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Poland, as well as from Latvia (the music schools of Olaine, Ventspils, Engure, Ķekava, Dobele and Riga) participated. This was a major event for these young musicians. Participation facilitated and expanded their musical ability, among other benefits. A large and dedicated effort is needed to prepare such a programme. And such happiness as a result of a successful performance – this gives pride not just to the musicians themselves, but listeners, parents, friends, and teachers as well!

The preparation of a successful festival was made possible by the founders and organisers – the Foundation *We Play with Friends* as well as the *Jāzeps Mediņš Riga 1st Music School*. The energy and great love of music of pianist *Gunta Melbārde*, the festival founder, is impressive, organising this event, and who, in collaboration with *Gunta Sproģe*, professor at the *Latvian Academy of Music*, maintains the tradition of youth chamber music performance.

Listening to the closing concert of the award winners, I was particularly moved by the performance of the very young musicians in the *Cerība (Juniors)* category. I particularly empathised with the students of *Vija Embovica* – the attractive performance of our young musicians from Dobele, winning 1st place with a commanding performance. Also notable was

the duet of the Pardaugava Music and Art School in the *A category* (teachers *Inga Grīnvalde* and *Signe Docīte*) and the piano trio of the Olaine School of Music and Art, prepared by three teachers (*Ailīta Vīdauska, Anita Roze, Olga Zujeviča*). The flute quartet from Ventspils, led by teacher *Aina Lodziņa*, performed freely and easily. However, the most vivid impression was created by the 1st place winner in *C category* – duet from the Kaunas Jozus Naujalis Music Gymnasium. *Artūras Šukys* (clarinet) and *Mantas Šernius* (piano), with a genuine joy of performing, fascinated me both with their technique and virtuoso interaction, a performance free of nervousness. It was a joy to listen to the wonderful sound and performance of the clarinet. True talent could be heard in both of the young musicians' performances, which was developed by the masterful teaching of *Daiva Stulgyte*.

The international jury (which was, as it has been all these ten years, led by professor of Latvian Academy of Music *Gunta Sproģe*) awarded special prizes both for the most artistic ensemble, as well as for the best romantic and modern music performance, as well as impressionistic performance and performance of the obligatory work by a Latvian composer.

I would like to repeat the words of the honorary patroness of the Festival – competition, deputy of the Saeima *Ingūna Rībena*: „*Love and music are the most beautiful things which we encounter in life. I wish – may you never be without either!*”

(Translated by Egils Kaljo)

Mārcis Kuplais, cellist,

born in 1983 in Riga. First teachers (in Latvia) - L. Sudraba and A.

Štrauss. From 2002-2010 studied in Music Academy of Basel (Switzerland) by prof. Ivan Monighetti. His chamber music teachers were G. Wyss, A. Oetiker, F. Renggli, B. Engeli.

In July 2006 he got the teaching diploma with marks of “very good” and in July 2008 – the concert diploma with the highest marks of “excellent”. In July 2010 he finished his studies at the Music Academy of Basel, getting the highly prestigious Masters Degree with Soloist distinction with the highest marks of “excellent”.

Since July 2011 he is a teacher in a children music school Binningen-Bottmingen (Baselland). He has given concerts as a soloist and chamber music player in Latvia, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Georgia, Cyprus, Brazil, USA, South Korea and Japan. He has had master classes with B. Greenhouse, A. Bylsma, D. Geringas, Troels Svane, Y. Feigelson, M. Villerušs and others.



I took part in the *International Latvian Young Musicians' Master Classes* already few times: four times in Ogre and in this year the fifth time in Sigulda. As usually, artistic director of Master classes, composer Dace Aperans (New York, USA) and the whole organizer team made a great job to make the camp really successful and that it stays for all participants in memory.

Different courses, master classes with excellent teachers, lectures and dance lessons changed one by one all the time. Often in the same moment were two, three and more courses, so it was difficult to choose, what to attend. Of course, I was happy to be inside in this creative musician circle. I tried to give out from me everything, what I can - theoretical acknowledge, musical experience, tried to inspire young musicians by playing in many concerts on the stage.

I tried to share my experience in individual cello lessons. I told how to avoid stage fright, how to study correct and few important musical rules. I tried to play as much as possible chamber music with teachers and students, that I can inspire young musicians with my energy, keenness and playing happiness on the stage to open themselves, not to hide emotions, to feel similar keenness and happiness to play with old and new friends.

I think, music notes are like letters, motives are like words, which together creates sentences. Sentences are building a story – music piece. A story can be told by one person, like, for example, Ch. Dickens. But it is possible to tell the story by many people together – two, three, four and so on. They have to know and have to analyze the story very precise – who and in which moment is the leader, where starts and finishes the musical lines, sentences; where are musical climaxes, which needs to show. They have to feel each other. In the life $1+1=2$, $1+1+1=3$ or $1+1+1+1=4$, but in the music in one ensemble $1+1=1$, $1+1+1=1$ and $1+1+1+1=1$. Listeners enjoy or criticize duo, trio or quartet, and not separately first violin, viola or cello.



After the concert with famous Indian dance teacher, choreographer Vija Vētra

Then comes emotional part. Each letter, word, sentence and story means something, has own emotions. The most interesting story without an emotional narrator can be boring. Every person feels emotions, but not everyone is developing the deepness and sensitivity level of emotions. In my opinion, the life and reading books helps to create emotions. It is necessary to try to feel in life everything – joy, happiness, spree, friendship and love, as well as sadness, longing, unhappiness, loneliness and tragedies. As much life experience someone gets, as rich emotionally he is. As much someone gets emotions from the life and books, as sensitive he becomes. Musician should be like an actor, narrator, in one moment he should feel pain and hate, in the second moment he should laugh and feel happiness. It is up to text.

I was happy in Sigulda to listen many long concerts, where the chamber music played by young people in high technical and emotional quality, did not let the audience to be bored.

I am happy about the next possibility to hear young chamber music groups and to share my experience and emotions in Winter master classes-2013 for Chamber music teachers, which will take part in Riga, Jāzeps Mediņš 1st Music School of Riga.

(Translated by Mārcis Kuplais)

Andra Dārziņa, violist,

born in Australia, and studied at the University of Adelaide, and subsequently with Wolfram Christ in Berlin at the Music University, where she graduated with honours. She is a prize winner of various competitions, including the "ABC Concerto Competition" in Australia, the International Music Competition in Geneva, as well as the "Lionel Tertis Viola Competition" in England. She was principal violist with the *Hamburg Philharmonic* from 1993 till 2004. From 1998 till 2003, she was appointed a part time Professorship at the Hamburg Music University, and from 2003 till 2004 she took over the viola class of Tabea Zimmermann at the "Hanns Eisler" Music University in Berlin. Since 2004, she is a Professor at the *Musikhochschule in Stuttgart*. Andra Darzins gives master classes in Australia, Italy, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Spain, and acts as a judge at various competitions. She leads an active solo and chamber music performance career at home and abroad.



New dimensions in my pedagogical experience

Speaking at the pedagogical cycle in 10th International Latvian Young Musicians Master Classes “*New dimensions in music*” (July 14-23, 2012 Sigulda, Latvia)

In the beginning, I would like to say that this is not going to be a lecture in the traditional meaning, but more like an exchange with colleagues. I thought over some things while coming to this meeting and I will share my experiences with you. What are the new things, what is the difference in my work with viola students today; what has changed or stayed the same in these 17 years since I teach?...

In the Music Academy of Stuttgart where I work as the chair of String department, there are viola players from all over the world learning at ages 19 to 29 (exceptionally we enroll also 17 year olds). A new approach is that I ask at the very beginning of their studies: what is your goal in music, in working life? Today you can partly create and influence your career yourself – it can be orchestra as well as chamber music or pedagogical work. Sometimes a combination of these fields, one thing complementing the other. The student must realize what he wants and what can he actually achieve. Some of them say: I don't want to play in an orchestra, I would rather play only chamber music. It is necessary to talk about job opportunities at the very beginning. I try to explain what is and what is not possible or realistic. Our students participate in international competitions, in auditions for orchestra positions and play chamber music.

If we talk about methods in everyday work – there is the question, whether or not student should play exactly like his or her teacher, copying his manner? Now, when technology allows to record (video and/or audio) a particular piece or even the whole lesson, sometimes students

(especially diligent ones from Asia) literally copy every nuance, every bowing and movement of the body. I don't really support that.

Previously teachers gave their bowings and fingerings to students, and the pupil was not encumbered with this difficulty, with creative thinking and searching. Some teachers do this today because at first it seems faster. But, in my opinion, in the long run the students must learn to think for themselves. I do not give my fingerings and bowings at the beginning of studying a new piece (only sometimes, maybe...), and I suggest my students to search, find and write down their own "*edition*" of the piece, that is, the technical side of the performance. . In this way some interesting and exciting discussions arise. The same principle should be used (and this is different than before) to scales and etudes: nothing is to be drilled without thinking, mechanically. Practicing scales can and must be creative: to create your own system, changing the rhythm, dynamics, bowing and so on.

I would like to refer to the role of the teacher in the student's everyday. We have to train them to get along without a "*babysitter*", to think and listen themselves, to organize their studies and daily chores themselves. For example, I do not call my students if I know he is busy with concerts or writing an academic paper. All exams and papers in other subjects they must organize themselves. I believe that with this attitude they are more prepared for life than, if we "*babysit*" them too long.

A new development which helps the student immensely to control and teach himself? It is the technology of recording and video. Sometimes we don't see and hear inaccuracies in our performance (false bowing, bad posture etc.), because we do not see ourselves from the side. Teacher's remarks remain insufficient, if student will not see and analyze himself. Sometime it is almost a revolution in motivation, once a student sees his strengths and weaknesses as from the side, through help of a video.

Another innovation which didn't exist in my study years – the Internet. Students can find music, download them for free or buy, for example, good editions of pieces (including *Urtext*), also various descriptions of teaching methods and information about composers and interpreters can be found in the Internet. They can listen to recordings even on *YouTube*, because it is not always possible to attend concerts of famous artists. Besides that, a number of famous musicians are not among the living anymore, but their performances are worth

listening, comparing, analyzing etc. Teachers also should orientate themselves with this information to be able to suggest performances to students, to help them separate meritable from less so. In a way, it is possible to say that it helps students to choose and make their own repertoire, and this is a novum.

There is one more new challenge for teachers. New pieces are created every day, written in various modern techniques and styles. Sometimes the pieces included in contest repertoires are very modern and complicated. To help students to prepare, a teacher should study and learn these pieces, learn new techniques and modern music languages, so that it would not be a “foreign language”. One must constantly follow the development in this field. In this context – what can be defined as “modern”? We used to say: music of the 20th century. Now the division is more detailed: the request is to play the piece composed after the 1950, or after 1970, or after 2000 (so – the 21st century music). Exam requirements are changing as well.



*Concert in the Mežotne's Castle (Latvia)
(A.Dārziņa, L.Skrīde)*



*... and after concert
(P.Vasks, D.Aperāne, L.Skrīde, A.Dārziņa)*

Progressive teachers will recommend their students to attend masterclasses of other artists. In the past some teachers did not support this (jealousy, insecurity?) There are numerous masterclasses, summer academies and camps, for example, our master courses here in *Sigulda*. And they are not only limited to specific musical scopes (violin, piano or chamber ensemble etc.). Students can also participate in courses where they can learn a minimum of knowledge about so called music management (how to organize concerts and how to apply for vacancies in some good orchestra or learning institution etc.).

There is another new dimension in the learning process. Every young musician (and, of course, teacher) who has participated at least once in a contest or audition, for an orchestral position, or taking the entrance exam for a university, must know that you give an impression of your playing, your musical and technical abilities in the first 10 minutes your performance, the time space is usually even shorter! So one must prepare particularly for that. There is a so-called *Probespiel-Training* method, which can be helpful. Video recording ones own playing can help here again. Besides you leave an impression not only with your playing. I can share a funny experience. Once I met a young female vocalist, who was on her way to the entrance exam at the music academy, at about midmorning. She was wearing a fancy evening dress, long gloves and all. Like a real opera *diva!* For the audition this was completely inappropriate! I persuaded her at least to get rid of the gloves...

I can say that in my time there was not great attention devoted to a relaxed, organic and effective body language, to the consonance of it with the music played. Although many techniques are not so new, today they attract great interest. Many well-known teachers are invited to give master-classes (*yoga, Feldenkrais, Tai Chi, Dispokinesis, Alexander Technique*).

Another new thing. Some music academies have a particular teacher, who works with *Musiker Medizin*. Of course, it is a privilege; not everywhere is this possible (in *Stuttgart*, we do have one). But today it is not hidden or repressed thing that many musicians suffer both physically and mentally; there are a variety of illnesses, characteristic to musicians. And it is necessary to identify them and actively works towards cures. In *Freiburg, Germany*, there is particular Institute (*Zentrum für Musikermedizin*), which deals especially with these problems.

I want to mark as a very important dimension the possibility of playing music together (both in lessons and in concerts). It is great for a teacher to play chamber music in ensemble with his students (in quartet, quintet or duo with two violas etc.) This live process sometimes bears more fruit than theory and remarks. Chamber music, as we all know, is the conversation in music between intelligent people. The student gains self-esteem being an equal partner, listening and learning, but also leading the interplay.

In conclusion, I would like to remind a long-known truth:

“The best teacher makes himself unnecessary for his students”.

(Translated by Andra Dārziņa and Lauris Melbārdis)

AN ARTISTIC PORTRAIT. INTERVIEW



Normunds Dreģis, conductor

of the Latvian National Opera, artistic director of Jāzeps Mediņš Riga 1st Music School chamber orchestra *Armonico* (Riga, Latvia). Pedagogue and conductor of chamber orchestra in the Latvian International Young Musician's workshop (since 2004) in Ogre and Sigulda.

His academic degrees include the MA in Music (2003), BA in symphonic orchestra conducting with prof. Viesturs Gailis (1997) and BA in choir conducting with prof. Imants Kokars (1992); all awarded by Jāzeps Vītols Latvia Academy of Music.

The professional competence was upgraded by prof. Volker Wangenheim at the Cologne Music Academy, Germany, prof. Eri Klaas at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland and master classes with prof. Helmuth Rilling in Stuttgart, Germany.

N.Dreģis collaborated with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Liepāja Symphony Orchestra (Latvia), the New Rhine Chamber Orchestra (Cologne, Germany), South-Westphalen Philharmonie-Orchestra (Germany) and early music ensemble *Ludus* (Riga, Latvia). He has given concerts in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Austria, France, Italy and England.

Conductor's repertoire includes more than 20 operas, ballets and operettas in the Latvian National Opera. Conducted many recordings including *Ecumenic Christmas*, *Armonico* (2007). Since 2012 the Youth chamber orchestra *Armonico* is a member of European Orchestra Federation (EOFed).

Conversation with the conductor NORMUNDS DREĢIS

Gunta Melbārde: Was becoming an orchestra conductor your childhood dream?

Normunds Dreģis: I recall an episode from my childhood when my mother and I were listening to a wind orchestra concert in *Vērmanģdārzs* (*Wehrmann's Garden*). I was 5 years old then, and during most of the concert I stood next to the stage passionately trying to imitate the conductor's actions. After the last piece, as I made my way back to my seat, an elderly lady said with a smile on her face '*...this boy is going to become a conductor!*'

Seriously though, from the very first age I can remember myself I always liked listening to most different types of music and tried myself out in this sphere as well. I used to play the cello a little; I also played the piano, sang in the boys' choir of *Emīls Dārziņš Music School* (EDMV) and performed as a soloist. I have studied choir conducting with professor *Imants Kokars*, whose personality inspired and enthralled me, and have founded and supervised several choirs in Latvia.

The turning point in my creative activity occurred in the late 80s, when conducting *Jazeps Vītols's* ballade for mixed choir and symphony orchestra '*The Singer of Beverina*' at the finals of the 2nd International conductors' contest in the *Great Aula of the University of Latvia* an immense irrational urge to become a specifically orchestra conductor took over me. I was fascinated by the magnificent sound of the *tutti*, by the rich colors of timbres, which together with the chorus created a very special, unforgettable music adventure. That was the point when I decided that I would head for in-depth studies in symphony orchestra conducting at the first opportunity.

GM: Which character features are necessary to become specifically a chamber orchestra conductor? Is it desirable to master an orchestra instruments?

ND: Of course being able to play an orchestra instrument is very valuable. For instance, one can demonstrate a passage to a less experienced orchestra musician. However, it is not the main or the most important task for an orchestra conductor. An orchestra conductor has to possess knowledge about the specific features of every instrument, understand instrumentation, the form and the musical content of a piece. It is also important to have a good hearing, because during the work with an orchestra a lot of attention has to be paid to articulation and intonation. Sense of rhythm and tempo, manual technical skills, which the orchestra's being in sync depends on, are essential, too. During the rehearsals of a new piece it is important to pay a lot of attention to phrasing, style and musical content. An orchestra conductor has to possess knowledge in musicology, pedagogy and psychology. This, of course, is not a recipe how to become an outstanding orchestra conductor, but all of the skills mentioned above help to form the personality of a conductor. If you have talent, musicality, education and the ability to work hard, you have all the chances to become a good orchestra conductor.

During my studies in *Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music* my first ever teacher in orchestra conducting professor *Viesturs Gailis* said to me:

‘... a professional symphony orchestra conductor has to be able to conduct both a symphony and an instrumental concert, both an oratorio and an opera, both a ballet and a musical or an operetta’.

Of course, every conductor narrows his range later on, and makes his choice to focus on the closest, the most interesting genre to him, but during the mastering of this difficult yet exciting profession, one must obtain all kinds of knowledge. In my view, it is the same with character features and compatibility with different types of orchestra. A professional must be able to adjust to a symphony orchestra, a chamber orchestra or a wind orchestra.

During the 20 years of my life as an orchestra conductor I have collaborated with both symphony/chamber orchestras and different theatre orchestras (including 16 years in the *Latvian National Opera*). I cannot really stick to a concrete preference of one type of orchestra or genre over other ones, but I know for sure, that I have chosen the right profession, through which I can fully express myself in music. During every performance with an orchestra and every opera or ballet I conduct, my primary goal is to take the audience to the wonderful world of sounds and images, where everyone can have his own associations and enrich his world of emotions.

GM: What are the differences between conducting a big orchestra and a little chamber orchestra, like the one of yours – *Armonico*, the chamber orchestra of *Jāzeps Mediņš 1st music school of Riga*?

ND: Having worked with different professional orchestras and youth orchestras in Latvia and abroad I understood that the only things that differ are caliber, status and ambitions, but the most important things, the ones that unite the orchestra and the conductor, are the same – mutual respect, understanding and trust and shared love for music. I am very pleased and satisfied that my 8 year work has resulted in the creation of

not only an outstanding study orchestra, but also a good, artistically qualitative concerting unit. The evidence is the international recognition and our successful concert life in Latvia.

The young musicians forming *Armonico* change frequently, which is common for school orchestras, but the creative spirit, positive relationships between students and the joy of making music are the values, that are preserved from year to year. I can surely say that *Armonico* is something I have carefully cherished as a beloved child.



GM: Managing a youth chamber orchestra you are sure to feel your ‘Teacher’s mission’. Please tell about it more!

ND: Having worked with youth orchestras for more than 9 years, I came to a conclusion that working with school students a conductor does a teacher’s mission and contributes to the education of the children. It is crucial to create a creative and positive atmosphere during the rehearsal process. Students come from different families with different mentalities, conduct culture and understanding about making music together. I try to listen to all of them, understand them, and encourage them to speak about important issues connected with our joint work and the tasks to do. I believe that a conductor must be sympathetic and understanding, but I have always pointed out, that it is not possible to achieve good results without discipline. That is what I am trying to be at work – strict but with a good will.

Rehearsal time is strictly limited and I have to fit into schedule to manage to get all the work done, but it is also essential to talk to students, and not only about the creative activity of the orchestra, but also about general human values. I always try to balance it, for I believe I am not only raising future professional musicians or passionate music amateurs, but also educated and intelligent people that our Latvian society needs.

GM: Concerts, festivals, contests... What are the ones that remain as the brightest memories now?

ND: I have had a lot of notable music events in my life. It is somewhat difficult to focus on several particular ones. However I would like to mention those that are connected with the word ‘*FIRST*’ for me as a conductor.

My first ever concert that I had prepared and conducted entirely on my own was the one with *Liepaja Symphony Orchestra* in 1992. I chose to make the program out of music from

the romantic period - the one that appeals to me the most: *F.Liszt's* symphonic poem 'Preludes', *P.Tchaikovsky's Variations on a rococo theme* (the cello solo part was performed by my schoolmate *Ēriks Kiršfelds*). In the second part I conducted one of the most beautiful German romantic music pearls – *F.Schubert's Unfinished Symphony*. I recall the warmth of the attitude of the musicians of the *Liepaja Symphony Orchestra* as well as the positive atmosphere at the rehearsals and the overwhelming emotions during the concert.

I have a special feeling when remembering my first conducted singspiel in 1993 at the *Music Theatre of Riga* – 'The Green Meadow' by J. Benesh and also my first operette – 'The Land of Smiles' by *Franz Lehár* (the same year).

I have bright and unforgettable memories of the first opera I conducted in 1994 – 'Hansel and Gretel' by *Engelbert Humperdink*. The *Latvian National Opera* was being reconstructed and the staff had to adjust their performances to other stages in different Latvian theatres. I was invited as a guest conductor to revive the show and to review the instrumentation, to decrease the number of instruments as possible in order to be able to perform in theatres without an orchestra pit. Besides, the target audience is kids, and a smaller orchestra would be easier for them to hear and understand. It is known that *Richard Wagner* was a good friend of *Humperdink* and had an influence on his style, too. And the evidence is this fairy-tale opera, where a massive, lush sound of the orchestra is deployed. And so I started to edit the instrumentation. Respecting the author's ideas and his music dramaturgy I preserved only the string quintet, a standard set of woodwinds (two of each), 4 French horns, 2 trumpets and one trombone. I was very anxious before the first rehearsal, but it turned out that to my delight, the orchestra sounded good and no damage was done to *Humperdink's* music. Together with the director *Uģis Brikmāns* we managed to renew this splendid children opera and do several shows in the *New Theatre of Riga*.

My first collaboration with the LNO ballet troupe dates back to 1997 when we worked on *Johann Strauss's 'The Blue Danube'*. That was an aesthetically beautiful, visually saturated show. The choreography was by the legendary *Helēna Tangijeva-Birzniece*. Conducting a ballet is a very special thing to do, because the tempo and rhythm has to be adjusted to the choreographer's ideas and the dancers' level of technical skills. Even though I strongly believe that music is the main part and the movements must be adjusted accordingly, as the outstanding ballet master *Janīna Pankrate* kept telling me, a good conductor must feel the movement and help the dancer.

A particular memory is the premiere of *P.Tchaikovsky's* opera 'Yevgeni Onegin' in 1999. I was working as the conductor's *Gintars Rinkēvičs's* assistant then. That was an unbelievably exciting process and so was the collaboration with outstanding LNO soloists, such as *Samsons Izjumovs, Zigrīda Krīgere, Nikolajs Goršeņins, Sergejs Martinovs, Lilija Greidāne*, as well as those who only made their debut back then – *Andžella Goba* and *Aleksandrs Antoņenko*, who is one of the most popular tenors in the world now.

It turned out later on, that after the second show *Gintars Rinkēvičs* suddenly had to go abroad for an unplanned performance and I was offered to conduct the third show. I had been working a lot in the preparation process of the show and had studied the score thoroughly, but I hadn't conducted a full rehearsal, which is so essential to any conductor, who must grasp the sense of the overall pulse of the show, lead the dramaturgy of the music and conduct all of it without stopping. Relying on my inner sense of it all, I agreed, because

I really wanted to live through the passionate story by *A. Pushkin* and *P. Tchaikovsky*. I had worked well with the soloists and the choir and the orchestra musicians did their parts in an excellent way. Everything ran perfect and my unplanned show turned out to be a success.

Another unforgettable event is connected with W.A.Mozart's opera '*The Magic Flute*'. This show (2001) was a premiere not only for me, but also for my son Oskars, who was singing the part of one of the *Three Boys*. That was a wonderful moment, for I was overwhelmed with double joy.

Another opera worth mentioning is W.A.Mozart's '*Don Giovanni*', which was the centre of two important events, videlicet my first guest performance with the LNO troupe in Estonia at the Saaremaa opera music festival in 2002 and the show in 2003 in the LNO, when the world famous owner of a golden voice *Maija Kovaļevska* made her debut.

In fact, my biography is rich with concerts, festivals, opera and ballet shows, that were important events for me, but this time I would like to finish the list with the first Charity Concert (2009) in the *Riga Society of Latvians* (RLB), which I organized in collaboration with Strazdumuiža boarding school and *the Latvian Children Foundation*.

After several years of regular concerts, this has already become an RLB tradition that keeps attracting new and new participants, listeners and supporters. The main goal of the concerts is to give children with special needs the ability to be fully integrated into our cultural environment, to discover their music talent and to perform together with their peers in different ensembles and orchestras.

All the incomes from the concert are spent on new musical instruments and other goods necessary for the education of handicapped children.

I always address professionals and ask them to participate in these concerts. Many soloists have contributed, such as *Sonora Vaice*, *Kristīne Gailīte*, *Antra Bigača*, *Miks Vilsons*, *Inīta Āboliņa*, *Oskars Petrauskis* as well as my wife *Andra's* vocal group Putni (Birds). In my view, this joint making music together with a philanthropic goal always is a great pleasure for both the helper and the 'helpee'.

GM: Since 2012 your chamber orchestra Armonico has been in the *European Orchestra Federation* (EOFed). What new possibilities for the youngsters' future and development (both musical and social) do you see opening because of the participation in this international organization?

ND: I am truly pleased that our chamber orchestra *Armonico* has been accepted as a member of the *European Orchestra Federation*. During the general assembly this year in Tallinn, the president of the Federation *Daniel A.Kellerhal* exposed his plans and ideas, which would also give our orchestra the opportunity to fully fit in in the European orchestra movement as a rightful member of the Federation.

The Festival, which is organized by EOFed every three years, is a big event, in which both youth and amateur symphony and chamber orchestra from all over Europe take part.

EOFed has been working since 1988. Its main goal and task is to popularize and support the creative activity of youth and amateur symphony and chamber orchestras. The European orchestra movement is well developed and rich with traditions, and is comparable with our *Song and Dance Festival* tradition. During this international festival orchestra musicians have the opportunity to meet colleagues from all over the world, to perform in front of an

educated audience and to obtain more knowledge in the sphere at masterclasses with the help of experienced professional conductors.

This year, the Festival gathered more than 700 participants, including 26 orchestras from 13 European countries. The honorary patron of the Festival maestro *Neeme Järvi* conducted the *Estonian National Youth Symphony Orchestra* at the opening concert. Four days in a row orchestra concerts were held in churches and concert halls, and all the participants had the opportunity to participate in different orchestra master classes held by conductors from all over Europe invited by EOFed (*Toomas Siitan, Risto Joost, Konstantin Kucushev, Normunds Dreģis, Martin Studer-Müller, Christoph Brunner, Ari Poutiainen, Gerhart Drijvers, and Marco Schadler*).

Our chamber orchestra *Armonico* performed with a solo program in *St. John's Church* and participated in classical music, romantic music and folk music master classes.

I am sure that our youngsters' active participation in this international event and communication with musicians from other countries broadened their horizons and played a significant part in their professional growth and personality development.

GM: For the fifth time now it is you who conducted the orchestra of the *International Young Latvian Musician Master Courses* (used to be in *Ogre*, now in *Sigulda*). I admire your capacity to prepare a full program, and an interesting one! How did you make it?

ND: Thank you for the compliment! Talented musicians are the ones that usually apply here, those who can and want to work with full commitment and excitement. Our rehearsal time is limited, therefore the conductor has to be constructive and implement a professional approach. Usually there are 5-6 orchestra rehearsals, during which we must prepare absolutely new pieces together with younglings from different countries and schools.

If the repertoire is found in time, if the scores are prepared and the rehearsal process is well-planned, it is possible to achieve a lot even in a short period of time.

The orchestra is one of the main concerting unit of the Master courses, which unites both Latvian and foreign students. Usually these are students from Latvian Academy of Music, *Emils Dārziņš Music School, Jāzeps Mediņš Music Secondary School* and other schools.

As I've already mentioned, every time we study new pieces from different époques and of different styles, which I select according to the topic of the mastercourse, but one of my goals is to perform and popularize the music of Latvian composers. This year we performed, in my view, emotionally colourful pieces rich with subtleties composed by *Dace Aperāne, Ilze Arne, Pēteris Plakidis and Andris Vecumnieks*. The solo parts were performed by our outstanding musicians *Antra and Normunds Vīksne, Artis Sīmanis and Dzintars Beitāns*.

Having conducted this orchestra for five years now, I understand that the main values of the mastercourses is the joy of making music, professional approach, a positive creative atmosphere and cordiality in relationships among students and the teaching staff.

In conclusion, I would like to add that this is a truly immense contribution to the education of the younger generations, all initiated by the artistic director of the master course *Dace Aperāne*. The master course, the idea of which belongs to her father *Mārtiņš Štaubers*, started out as a music camp for young Latvian musicians living abroad. It was first held in

Orford, Quebec (Canada) in 1985. Starting with 1992 the master course has been held in Latvia, and this year we celebrated our 10th anniversary in *Sigulda*.

GM: Having a look through the concert programmes that you have created, one can see that Latvian music takes an important place there, both Latvian classics and brand new compositions. This is your mission, too: to collaborate with contemporary Latvian composers and young talented performers and to popularize the name of Latvia throughout the world via music.

ND: Who else, if not us, Latvians, is going to take care of our national values, including popularization of Latvian music?

During the last years I have worked a lot with youth orchestras in particular, and thinking about the choice of the repertoire I pay a lot of attention to both Latvian classics and modern music by encouraging composers to write music for different youth orchestras.

I have successfully collaborated with many Latvian composers, who wrote pieces specifically for my youth chamber orchestra *Armonico*, such as *Ilona Breġe*, *Ilze Arne*, *Dace Aperāne*, *Indra Riše*, *Dzintra Kurme-Gedroica*, *Georgs Pelēcis*, *Jānis Zandbergs*, *Andris Vecumnieks*, *Andris Balodis*, *Ingmars Zemzaris* and others.

We also performed a lot of Latvian music with the EDMV symphony orchestra, such as 'Ballade' by *Dzintra Kurme-Gedroica* (2009), 'Rituale Focoso' by *Jānis Zandbergs*, '13th London Symphony' and 'Approaching the Fetes' (2010) by *Georgs Pelēcis* and 'Perpetuum Mobile' (2010) by *Valts Pūce*.

When conducting different mastercourse orchestras in Latvia and abroad, I often include pieces by *Jāzeps Vītols*, *Jēkabs Mediņš*, *Emīls Dārziņš*, *Pēteris Plakidis*, *Imants Zemzars*, *Imants Ramiņš* and other Latvian composers in the repertoire.

Speaking of performers, I would like to point out, that here in Latvia we really have many talented musicians. I collaborate with the teachers of instrumentalists and try to give gifted students the opportunity to perform solo accompanied by the orchestra. That, of course, is a great challenge for any young musician and a great responsibility, too. Not all children who start out as wunderkinds preserve the status in highschool and/or their higher education institution though. Nevertheless, I know some young talents personally, who, in my view, have all the chances for a great music career, if they continue their studies and keep their industry and passion in them and most important, not get arrogant.

Here I would like to mention only some, who have collaborated with me as soloists and who have proved themselves by now, in my view, as good musicians with personality and keep purposefully moving ahead in their professional development. My best regards to violinists *Paula Šūmane*, *Konstantīns Paturskis* and *Madara Liepiņa*, cellists *Dace Zālīte*, *Agate Ozoliņa* and *Māra Botmane*, flutist *Maija Zandberga*, percussionists *Guntars Freibergs* and *Edgars Vaivods*, singers *Gunta Cēse*, *Tīna Gelnere* and *Agris Hartmanis*.

GM: I guess there are many new ideas in your head right now as well as many new scores in your folder!

ND: Yes, that's what makes a conductor's work so interesting and versatile. One always has to generate creative ideas, encourage composers to collaborate and look for new

repertoire. I know for sure that in the next season we (*Armonico*) are going to perform fresh pieces by *Georgs Pelēcis*, *Ilze Arne* and *Andris Balodis*.

In collaboration with the boarding school of *Strazdumuiža* and the *Latvian Children Foundation* I am going to organize the already mentioned traditional charity concert 'Adventa Gaismā' in the *Riga Society of Latvians* on the first Advent Sunday of the year.

There is also some collaboration with the chamber orchestra of *Turku Conservatory* (Finland) and the chamber orchestra of *Chichester University* (England) scheduled for 2013.

There are also many other beautiful ideas and creative plans, but one must take into account, that nowadays in culture and art a lot depends on lucky coincidences, positive attitude of some institutions, financial resources. Therefore, I will temporarily withhold the information about the projects that are still in the stage of design.

In conclusion, I would like to wish all the chamber music teachers and other readers of the E-Journal a creative, fruitful and successful new academic year 2012/2013. May the love for music and the creative spark in you fill your every day with joy! Good luck!

GM: Thank you very much for the conversation!

(Translated by Alexey Pegushev)



Dace Aperāne, composer, music educator, organizer of musical events. Born 1953 in Winnipeg, Canada. Graduated from *McGill University* in Montreal, receiving her BA, honors in composition. Attended the *Fontainebleau School of Music in Paris*, where her teachers were Nadia Boulanger and Louise Talma. Graduated from *Hunter College in New York*, receiving her MA with honors in composition. Since 1985, she has been the artistic director of the *International Latvian Young Musicians' Master Classes* in Canada (3) and Latvia (10). Since 1989, her music is in the repertoire of many Latvian interpreters. D. Aperane is the director of the World Federation of Free Latvians Music division and the director of the Latvian Cultural Association *TILTS* Music division. She is a music critic for the newspaper *LAIKS*. Since 2007, D. Aperane has been a full-time music teacher at the *Quaker Ridge School* in Scarsdale, New York. She has received the *Order of Three Stars* from the government of Latvia (2001) and other awards. Dace Aperane is a member of the Latvian Composers' Union and the Canadian Music Centre. More: www.lmic.lv

MUSICAL GATEWAYS

Interdisciplinary Activities in the Music Classroom

Part One: Words as Musical Gateways

**“Where the word stops there starts the song,
exultation of the mind bursting forth into the voice.”**
(Thomas Aquinas)

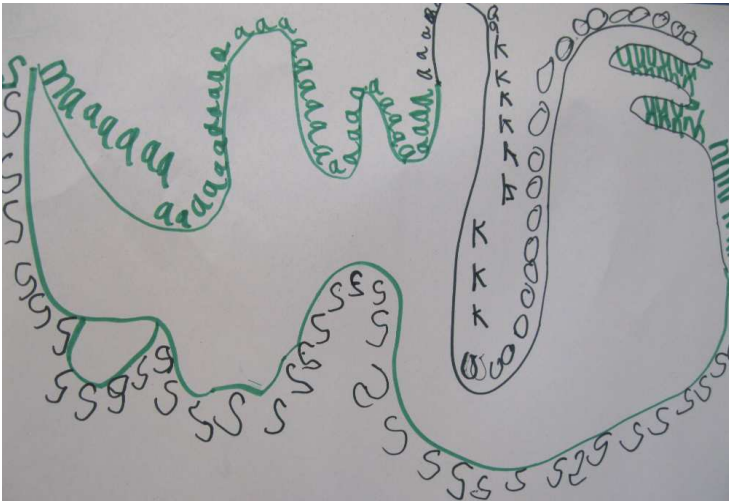
In the process of teaching young students with different learning styles or multiple intelligences in the elementary music classroom, I have discovered that certain activities linked to words, images, gestures and sounds can greatly foster students' awareness of various musical elements and help them become more engaged listeners and performers. To initiate these activities, often a single word, image, gesture or sound may be able to serve as a “gateways” in helping children explore musical and interdisciplinary concepts in imaginative and thought-provoking ways.

I have found that sources for these “gateways” may be musical or non-musical. “Gateways” may be inspired *by* a musical score or inspire the creation *of* a musical score, as well as associations *with* a musical score. Eventually, “gateways” can also be chosen or created by the students themselves. When this high level of creative activity or critical thinking occurs, my role as a teacher is to act mainly as an advisor or observer within the students' learning environment.

In *Part one* of this article – *Words as Musical Gateways* I will describe three activities that use the spoken and written word as the main “gateways” for musical exploration.

The first activity – “Clouds”, will be discussed in more detail than the subsequent two activities. The descriptions of “Clouds” and the other activities approximate their content and implementation and can be freely developed and modified.

First activity – *Clouds*



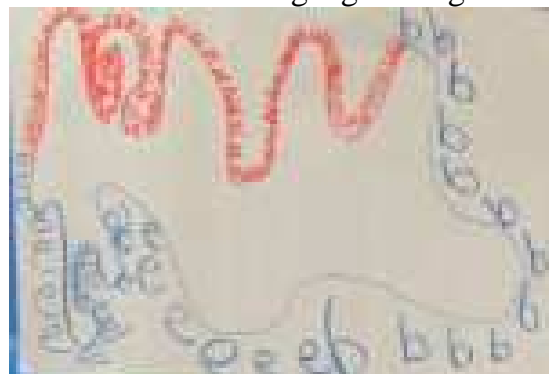
Drawing of the Latvian word for cloud – “mākonis”.

The “Clouds” activity enriches young children’s (primarily six to seven year olds’) understanding of melodic or pitch contours, in addition to elements of dynamics, tempo and timbre. This activity is especially enjoyable to a child if done with a partner, but can also be completed without one. Materials needed for “Clouds” are a large blank piece of paper, a set of colored markers or crayons and a list of the word “cloud” in different languages, written on both a long, scroll-like sheet of paper and on cards for the children to use.

Students can be encouraged to research the translation of the word “cloud” in different languages with their parents at home and share their findings with the class. In this way, new words can be added to the primary list or “word wall” provided by the teacher.

The “gateways” for this activity is in essence one word, which with its timbre and pronunciation leads the child into a sonic environment of various pitch designs or contours that he or she can both create and perform. The sounds of the word in a language foreign to the child often lend an aura of mystery and wonder to the overall process of exploration. A list of “cloud” words could include: *nube* (Spanish), *mākonis* (Latvia), *ulap* (Filipino), *pilvi* (Finnish), *awan* (Indonesian), *nuage* (French), *molnet* (urdu), *weolcan* (Old English) and others.

After introducing the children to the sound of each word, the teacher can call upon a volunteer to demonstrate the main



Drawing of the Spanish word for cloud - “nube”.

components of the “Clouds” activity by first of all, choosing one word and then, sounding it out clearly. After doing so, the student can choose a marker or crayon and begin pronouncing the first syllable of the word, while at the same time drawing a line that matches the pitch contour of his or her voice. Once the line has been drawn, the student can say the syllable again, but now write the letters of the vocalized sounds next to the drawn line.

The next step in this activity consists of the student tracing the contour and sounding out the letter sounds that he or she has written down. Afterwards, the student can trace the contour, with a partner or a group of students sounding out the letter sounds at least three times

with or without arm movements that reflect the contour's shape. To continue the demonstration of this activity, another student volunteer can be called upon to repeat the same set of actions, but with the remaining second syllable of the word in question; if the word should have more than two syllables, then more students can be involved accordingly.

After the two students have completed their line and letter contours, they can be called to reflect upon the similarities and differences between their respective line shapes, letter sizes and colors. They can be asked to think about possible connections between the size of a letter and the dynamic level of its pronunciation, the color or texture of a letter and its timbral quality.



Sounding out the letter sounds with arm movements.

Most children will be mainly fascinated with tracing their drawn contours and hearing their voices ascend and descend in pitch. After seeing, hearing and performing their own and other students' melodic contours, students will develop an appreciation of the great variety of melodic designs and the ability of their voices to reflect them in a melismatic, legato way, or in a more separated, staccato manner. To deepen this experience, students can be given the opportunity of transferring their contours to Orff instruments, the piano or even virtual musical instruments, such as electronic renderings of the American composer *Harry Partch's* instruments. During this process, students can be encouraged to view

their work as a musical composition. In addition, comparisons can be made between the non-traditional or graphic notation of sounds in the cloud drawings to a musical score composed with traditional notation. The teacher may also introduce students to well-known melodies that mirror some basic melodic contours.

In addition, music from Claude Debussy's "*Nuages*", both its main themes and complete score can be listened to in short segments with or without choreographed movements that may include scarves and small percussion instruments. Songs about clouds may also be taught and artwork or photographs of different types of clouds can be displayed in a special designated space or throughout the classroom. Poems about clouds can also deepen this activity with the addition of dramatic play and movement, such as "Clouds" by Christina Rossetti:

*White sheep, white sheep,
On a blue hill,
When the wind stops,
You all stand still.*

*When the wind blows,
You walk away slow.
White sheep, white sheep,
Where do you go?*

Words in multiple languages representing other natural or man-made objects can also be substituted for this activity, such as “flower”, “tree”, “rock”, “bird”, “building”, “road”, “car” - the options are limitless. The word “rock” or “stone” would adapt especially well to this activity.



Drawing of the Indonesian word for cloud – “awan”

Second activity – Word Sound Posters

Another way to use individual words or word phrases as “gateways” is to have students create “Word Sound Posters” on a theme, using the sizes and designs of words to initiate a spoken and sung improvisation with varying musical dynamics, tempi and rhythmic accents. After having created their posters by drawing, painting or in the style of a collage, students can perform their words by vocalizing the word sounds and by adding body percussion to their vocal renditions. Small percussion instruments can also be included to heighten an awareness of musical textures. This activity lends itself well to children in the seven to eight year-old range. Music with dynamic contrasts, accents and changing meters can be connected successfully to this activity.

Third activity – Musical Haiku

Haiku poems act as wonderful “gateways” for older children in activities that concern musical improvisation based upon poetry. In the “*Musical Haiku*” activity students, especially in the eight to nine year-old range, are encouraged to improvise melodies based upon the pentatonic scale (on an Orff instrument or the piano) and improvise rhythms on a small percussion instrument. The haiku that the improvisation is based on may be either student-written or a traditional *haiku*.

In this partner activity two students individually read their own haiku poem and make a decision as to which two lines of haiku poetry they will musically illustrate with a short melodic, pentatonic improvisation and which one line of poetry they will illustrate with a rhythmic improvisation on a small percussion instrument.

When experimenting with their melodic improvisations, students are asked to be aware of the type of melody they are improvising – a basically step-wise or “up and down” melody, a melody with repeated tones or a melody that skips around, the so-called “back and forth” melody. This activity helps students expand their imaginations within very concise realms of poetry and music. In doing so, it also encourages students to think more deeply about a set of poetic image or moods, while using a limited set of tones and timbres to interpret them musically.

When performing their musical haiku, it is important for students to do so in complete silence, or as I like to remind them, in “white space.” This helps them listen carefully to each sound, just as if it was one of the seventeen syllables of the haiku or a series of brush strokes on a white paper scroll. In general, the *Musical Haiku* is an activity that fosters a young child’s sensitivity to musical pitches and timbres.

Inspiration for the above activities has been provided by my students, the writings of R. Murray Schafer in his book “*When Words Sing*” (Berandol Music, 1970) and Hajo Duchting’s book about Paul Klee, “*Painting Music*” (Prestel Verlag, 1997). The following website about Harry Partch’s musical instruments can be used in conjunction with the “Clouds” activity: http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/feature_partch.html# If substituting “Rocks” for the “Clouds” activity, a valuable resource would be the book “*The Sight of Silence – John Cage’s Complete Watercolors*” by Ray Kass (Taubman Museum of Art and the National Academy Museum, 2011).

In the second part of this article, I will discuss using images as “musical gateways.”

(Continuation of the next issue of the e-journal)



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

Founder (1978) and Honorary President of the Danish section of ESTA 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.

Kammermusikalische Gesetze

Anregungen zur gemeinschaftlichen musikalischen Aneignung

Musikalische Aneignung bedeutet in Besitz nehmen, Einswerden mit dem Werk. *Verbindlichkeit* allem gegenüber, was erklingt! Musik ist nicht mehr ausserhalb von mir. Ich selbst bin das Intervall, das Thema, der Rhythmus, die Harmonie. Der schöne Klang allein tut es nicht. Der Klang benötigt den inneren Strom, der ständig die Vergangenheit mit der Zukunft verbindet. „Der Klang ist der Köder, hinter dem sich die Wahrheit offenbaren kann“ (Sergiu Celibidache). Wie soll es klingen? So wie es klingen soll!

Partiturstudium. Einteilung in Taktperioden. Häufiger Ausgangspunkt: Viertaktsperioden.

Rhythmus. *Obligatorisch* in der Kammermusik: Der *kollektive* Rhythmus. Der kollektive Rhythmus entsteht durch Verzahnung der Rhythmen der Einzelstimmen. Bei Polyrhythmen gelten die gemeinsamen „Treffpunkte“. Elementare Voraussetzung für jede rhythmische Aneignung: *Einteilung* eines gewählten Pulses in *gleiche Teile* (zweiteilig, dreiteilig, vierteilig, fünfteilig, sechsteilig, siebenteilig, achteilig, neunteilig). Jede Einteilung muss als eine zusammenhängende Gruppe, als *Identität*, erlebt werden.

Intonation. Erkennen der jeweiligen Tonart als *Voraussetzung* für die Intonation. Melodische Dimension: *Stufenbewußtsein* (Grundton, Sekunde, Terz, Quart, Quint, Sext, oder Septime). *Leittonbewußtsein* (Zuordnung zur jeweiligen Stufe der Tonart, z.B. ein fis in C-Dur führt zur 5. Stufe g; ein ges in C-Dur führt zur 4. Stufe f). Harmonische Dimension: *Erkennen der Akkorde*. Bei Bedarf systematischer Aufbau der Akkorde z.B. ausgehend vom Grundton mit anschließender Quint, Terz und eventuell folgenden dissonanten Tönen (Ausnahme: Bei mitwirkenden leeren Saiten ist immer von der betreffenden leeren Saite auszugehen).

Erstellen von Gerüststimmen. Der *Extrakt* einer Melodie, der „rote Faden“ „hinter“ einer Passage muss gehört werden. Der *Kern* eines Akkordes muss festgestellt werden (z.B. Orgelpunkte, Auslassen „fremder“ Harmonietöne oder Ergänzung solcher Töne). Die tragenden Elemente eines rhythmischen Verlaufs müssen erkannt werden (Reduktion auf einen überschaubaren Zusammenhang).

Vereinfachungen bei Schwierigkeiten. *Prioritäten erstellen*: Melodisch durch „Hauptttöne“ (z.B. keine Vorhalte), rhythmisch durch Verwandlung in leicht zu bewältigende Einheiten (z.B. keine Synkopen oder bei schnellen Passagen nur die erste Note in einer Gruppe).

Euphonisches Zentrum. *Entscheidende Hilfe bei der Aneignung schwer zu hörender Prozesse*. Euphonisches Zentrum bedeutet die vorübergehende Verlagerung eines Problems dorthin, wo unser Auffassungsvermögen optimal ist: Eine Melodie in der dreigestrichenen Oktave bzw. in der Kontra-Oktave wird in die Mitte unseres Hörbereichs (etwa zwischen c und c´) versetzt. Eine weit auseinanderliegende Harmonie wird analysiert und erklingt anschließend als *enge Lage* in der Mitte unseres Hörbereichs. Ein *Presto* bzw. ein *Adagio* wird zunächst als *Andante* gespielt. Ein *fortissimo* bzw. ein *pianissimo* wird als *mezzoforte* geübt.

Übungen, abgeleitet aus Problemen. Die immerwährende Bereitschaft, spontan zusätzliche *elementare Studien jeglicher Art* einzufügen, die einen entsprechenden musikalischen oder technischen Prozeß fördern. In jedem Werk liegen eine Fülle von Möglichkeiten.



Gunta Melbārde –

Editor by e-journal,
piano and chamber music teacher of the Jāzeps Mediņš Riga 1st
Music School. Graduated from Leningrad State Conservatory.
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.

Unsere Erfahrung

Anlässlich des X Jubiläum Internationales Kammermusik Festivals – Wettbeverbs für Jugend *We play music with friends*

(ECMTA – Treffen; Tallinn, 4.05.2012)

Ich freue mich über die Möglichkeit direkt heute auftreten, denn in Lettland in diese Tage wird Wiederherstellung der Unabhängigkeit gefeiert. Es ist merkwürdig in Hinsicht auch der musikalischen Bildung – wir sind nicht mehr so Abhängig von Zentralisierung und sind frei in Auswahl.

... Und so entdeckten wir einen anderen, besseren Berg, deren Spitze wir anstreben wollen. Die ist Kammermusik. Vor 10 Jahren wurde in Lettland ein internationales Kinder- und Jugend-Festival-Wettbeverb *We Play Music With Friends* gegründet. In den ersten Jahren, als meine Schule (Jāzeps Mediņš Rigaer 1. Musikschule) noch keine so großartige Räume hatte, fanden Festivals jedes Mal in einer anderen schönen Kleinstadt in Lettland statt.

Die Struktur des Verlaufs unseres Festivals-Wettbewerbs ist relativ einfach. Das ist ein Fest des Kammermusizierens an drei aufeinander folgenden Tagen am Ende eines Schuljahres, in der schönen Fliederzeit. Am ersten Tag – Ankunft der Teilnehmer und Proben; am Abend Eröffnungskonzert, in dem Mitglieder der Jury und Pädagogen musizieren (traditionsgemäß in einer Kirche); am zweiten Tag – der Wettbewerb; am Abend – Party; am dritten Tag – Treffen der Pädagogen mit der Jury (Meinungen, Empfehlungen, Bewertungen, Gedankenaustausch), danach Konzert im Botanischen Garten, am Abend – Konzert der Preisträger und Vergabe der Preise.

Im Laufe dieser Jahre wurde auch die Satzung geändert: anfänglich gab es nur 2 Werke aus verschiedenen Epochen und Charakter und Ensembles wurden nur in 3 Altersgruppen unterteilt. Derzeit gibt es 3 Gruppen nach Besetzung der Ensembles (Duos mit Klavier, Trio

und größere klassische Besetzungen mit Klavier, untraditionelle Besetzungen mit Klavier und ohne). Es gibt 5 Alterskategorien (6 bis 21 Jahre alt). Im Repertoire – drei Werke: Ein Werk muss große Form haben, anderes – frei gewählt, noch ein – obligatorisches Werk eines zeitgenössischen lettischen Komponisten.

Die Zahl der Teilnehmer übersteigt nicht 150 Musiker (35-50 Ensembles). Geografisch gesehen nehmen Kammerensembles der Musikschulen aus Lettland, Litauen, Estland, Finnland, Polen, manchmal auch aus Russland teil. Die Jury ist international besetzt. Die Vorsitzende der Jury während dieser 10 Jahre ist Frau Professorin Gunta Sproģe, Leiterin des Lehrstuhls für Kammermusik der Lettlands Musikakademie von Jāzeps Vītols; Mitglieder der Jury: Herr Prof. Evan Rothstein, vertritt ECMTA, Professoren aus Litauen, Estland, Finnland und einige Jahre auch aus Russland. Im Wettbewerb werden 25 Punkte vergeben. Man bewertet das Zusammenspiel der Ensembles, Präzision des Notentexts, Intonation, das technische Niveau, künstlerische Darbietung und Bühnenkultur.

Dieses Jahr ist ein Jubiläumsjahr – wir treffen uns bereits zum zehnten Mal. Heute, rückblickend auf all diese Jahre, ist ein Moment zum Nachdenken und Resümieren gekommen: Was sind unsere gemeinsame Erwerbe für unsere Zöglinge, Lehrer, Eltern und das Publikum? Jetzt ist die Zeit, zu erfahren, womit wir uns von anderen Festivals dieser Art unterscheiden.

Unsere Erwerbe verflochten sich und schaffen ein eigenartiges Netz vielseitiger Beziehungen, Ergänzungen und Bereicherungen.

1. Professionelle Erwerbe

- Es wird eine aktiv musizierende Umwelt geschaffen, in der sowohl Schüler als auch Lehrer Schulter an Schulter musizieren: in den Konzerten des Festivals, in den Meisterklassen, im Wettbewerb. Das Interesse hat zugenommen, einander zu hören, sowie anderen Ensembles und Lehrer. In der freundschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit, die die Grundlage des Kammermusizierens ausmacht, sind alle Niveaus vereint.
- Dank der Erfolg, Popularität und internationale Resonanz diesem Festival - Wettbewerb, eine Reihe von Musikschulen in Lettland allmählich beginnen, um ein Lehrfach "Kammerensemble" (als Wahlfach) auch in 1.-9.Klasse, einzuführen;
- Fortschrittliche und zukunftsorientierte Schulleiter suchen nach Möglichkeiten den Lehrern – Kinder-Kammermusik-Enthusiasten diese Stunde von Budget zu zahlen (es ist immer noch nicht überall so);
- Vielleicht – inspiriert gerade von unserem Festival – Wettbewerb Modell, wird in Lettland (*Mārupe* and *Daugavpils*) noch 2 neue Youth Chamber Music Festivals gegründet;

- Hier kommt das pädagogische Meistertum der Lehrer zum Vorschein: „Spreu von Weizen trennen“, in dem man nach einem passenden und hochwertigen Repertoire sucht.
- Die Lehrer lernen von ihren Schülern und Kollegen, man findet besondere methodische Handgriffe in der Aneignung der Grundlagen des Kammermusizierens.
- Nach Wettbewerben tauschen wir oft Noten mit Kollegen von anderen Schulen und anderen Ländern; die sind die unmittelbarste Erwerbe für die Bereicherung des Repertoires für die Zukunft.
- Am Festival und Wettbewerb nehmen auch Kammerensemble mit untraditioneller Besetzung teil, für deren ist es schwer originale Werke zu finden. Dann machen die Lehrer selbst Bearbeitungen, indem sie sich neue Fertigkeiten aneignen.

2. Musikalische Erwerbe

- Wir haben viel neue Musik kennengelernt, die auf der großen Bühne praktisch nicht gespielt wird. Das ist wie eine parallele Welt, die in Bezug auf die musikalische Qualität ist nicht weniger inhaltsreich und wertvoll. Wir lernen auch Komponisten kennen, deren Namen uns bisher fremd waren.
- Das Festival ist ein Ort, wo wir auch das Repertoire der gegenwärtigen Kammermusik der anderer Länder zu Ohr bekommen, das speziell für Kinder und Jugendliche komponiert wurde.
- Dank der eingeführten Regel, ein obligatorisches Stück gegenwärtigen lettischen Komponisten zu spielen, sind auch unsere junge Komponisten aktiv geworden. Dieses Jahr unsere Zusammenarbeit mit dem Komponistenverband Lettlands ist mit 20 Neuwerken für Kinder- und Jugendkammerensembles gekrönt wurden, die vom Verlag *Musica Baltica* herausgegeben wurden. Am 24. März in Riga fand Premiere dieser Musik in der Kinder-Performance. Als unser Gruß zu ECMTA, ich würde gerne diese zwanzig Hefte übergeben.

3. Menschliche Erwerbe

- Man kann sagen, es ist uns gelungen, eine eigene, besondere musizierende Gesellschaft zu erschaffen; es ist uns gelungen, nicht nur engere Kontakte mit Kollegen in Lettland und im Ausland zu knüpfen, sondern auch eine echte brüderliche Verbundenheit und herzliche, ungenierte Freundschaftsbande.
- Wir haben mutiger geworden, auf der Suche nach neuen Wegen und Möglichkeiten; unsere Initiative ist frei gelöst und das Selbstvertrauen erhöht.

- Verhältnis Lehrer zu Schülern und unter der Schülern selbst haben eine neue Qualität erreicht: dort herrscht ein anderer Geist – freundliche, gesunde Beziehungen, mit Liebe, ohne Rivalität und Eifersucht; wir sind einfach wie Geschwistern geworden.
- Und dank dies allem beziehen sich auch die Eltern der Schüler, (Verwandtschaft, Freunde, Bekannte) mit mehr Engagements in das Festival ein, wie auch in die alltägliche Lernarbeit.

Im Laufe dieser Jahre gab es auch manche Zweifel wie z. B.

- Ob man den Wettbewerb jedes Jahr organisieren soll;
- Ob das nicht eine zu hohe Forderung ist, im Ensemblewettbewerb auch eine große Form und ein obligatorisches Stück zum Repertoire einzufügen, denn Kammerensemble in unseren Musikschulen nur ein Auswahlfach ist.
- Ob Sieger des vergangenes Jahres erneut in der selben Altersgruppe auftreten dürfen.
- Wir haben uns geeinigt, dass Duos getrennt von Trios und größeren Ensembles bewertet werden.

Ob und wie weit unser Festival sich von ähnlichen Veranstaltungen in anderen Orten unterscheidet – das ist für uns selbst vielleicht schwer zu bewerten. Lehrerin Frau Daiva Stulgyte aus Kaunas sagte: „Im ihren Wettbewerb herrscht eine besondere Fest- und Freundschaftsatmosphäre, wo jeder Teilnehmer freundlich aufgenommen wird, und man gute Bedingungen für Proben und Auftritte, als auch Unterkunft und Verpflegung sicherstellt“.

Und wann wir anschließend in die Klassenräume zurückkehren, wo uns Kinder mit leuchtenden Augen erwarten – gibt es so viel, worüber wir uns unterhalten und woran wir uns erinnern können. Als Folge schmieden Kinder neue Pläne und wollen sofort neue Musik einstudieren. Und die ist Dimension unseres wahren Glück, dass wir solche Freunde haben, mit denen man gemeinsam musizieren kann.

(Translated by Elmira Christensen)

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