

Aspects of the pedagogic work with young pianists

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Abstract: *The principles of the contemporary German musicologist Anselm Ernst are some of the most studied and recommended in the pedagogical studies at the University of Music and performing arts Vienna, being used widely as literature material for the lectures of didactics and teaching practice with beginners and advanced students. In his book „Teaching and learning in instrumental classes - a pedagogical handbook for the practice“, he emphasises the importance of the interpersonal relationship between teacher and student as an exchange of expectations that should be based on respect, openness, and understanding.*

Key-words: *pedagogy, piano, didactic, understanding, education*

1. Introduction

The principles of the contemporary German musicologist Anselm Ernst are some of the most studied and recommended in the pedagogical studies at the University of Music and performing arts Vienna, being used widely as literature material for the lectures of didactics and teaching practice with beginners and advanced students. In his book „Teaching and learning in instrumental classes - a pedagogical handbook for the practice“, he emphasises the importance of the interpersonal relationship between teacher and student as an exchange of expectations that should be based on respect, openness, and understanding. The content of the teaching process, named also the „global teaching object“(Ernst 1999, 211), is given by the various music genres and the so-called „*Lernfelder*“ – learning areas.

2. Discussion

The school must prepare the individual to deal with circumstantial needs (acquiring competences), but also to master the need and desire for culturalization, for a permanent search of authentic values, of discrimination between good and evil,

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beautiful and ugly, truth and lie, value and lack of value. We are going through a period of dissolution, deficit, and ambiguous values. Identifying authentic values should represent the ultimate goal of the education system. „Education, beyond its instrumental dimension, also has an important human connotation, stimulating the propensity to go higher, to be better, to exceed one’s possibilities“ (Cucoș 2016). So, both actors take part to the teaching process and bring their own, particular contribution.

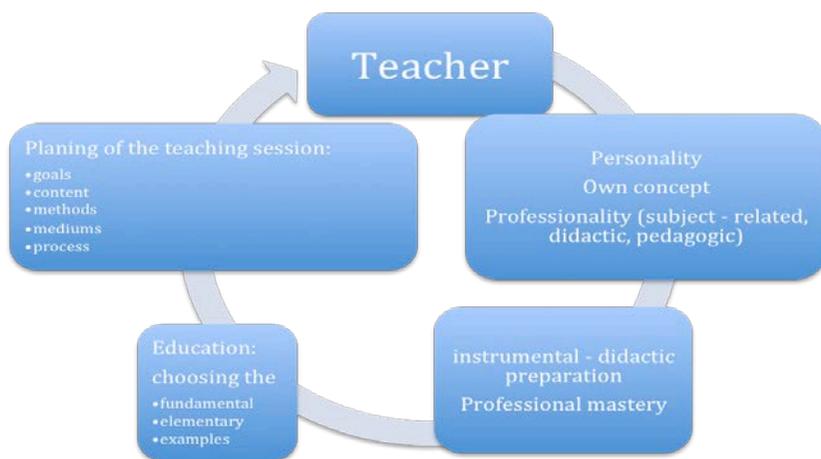


Fig.1. *The learning circuit (the teacher)*

„From many points of view we need continuity, congruence and correlativity of action, as well as stability in order to see the real effects of a change, and to adopt when necessary, after mature consideration, the most appropriate intervention, correction, adjustment measures. We are dealing with people who have abilities and needs. Continuous or sudden changes are not good for an education system which is attuned to the rhythm of societal changes. We are not pleading for a rigid system, but for judicious change which takes into consideration the adaptive possibilities from a psychological and social perspective“ (Cucoș 2016, article 23). The teacher uses verbal and non-verbal communication mediums and supports the student in his / her artistic learning effort.

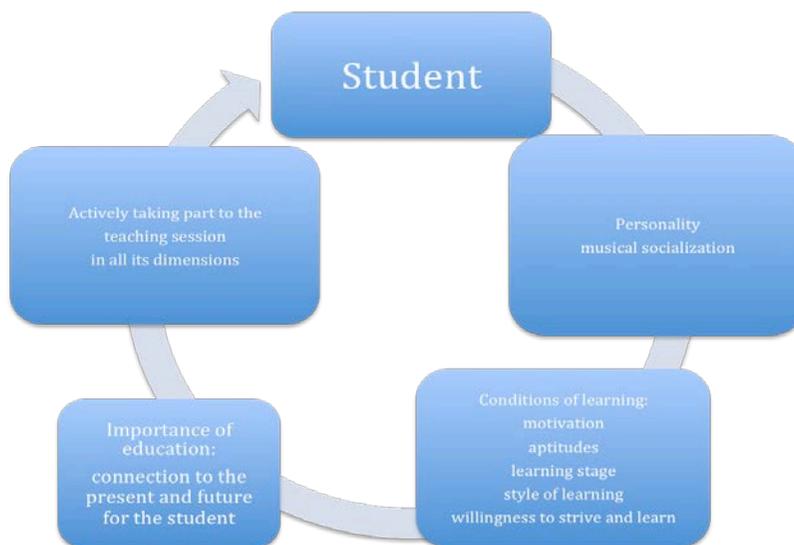


Fig. 2. *The learning circuit (the student)*

The teaching should be: transparent, systematic, effective, economical. The learning should be: significant, self responsible, independent, self determined. The reality is „the “facebook” generation is a generation which caught the entire society off guard. There are still voices today that draw attention to the form and especially to the content of education, to the adjustment of the student to the social requirements of the modern system of values. We could say that school and society have always been dissonant, but it seems that the axiological distance between them has never been greater“ (Micu, 2016).

A good instrumental training includes attributes as:

- Mutual respect and good interpersonal relationship as an intrinsic value
- Praise and encouragement to build and strengthen self-competence
- Activation of pupils for self-controlled learning
- Promoting of learning as a joint process between teacher and student
- Clear objectives
- Diversity of learning contents / learning areas
- Diversity of teaching methods

Anselm Ernst structures four learning areas with fourteen fields (Ernst 1999):

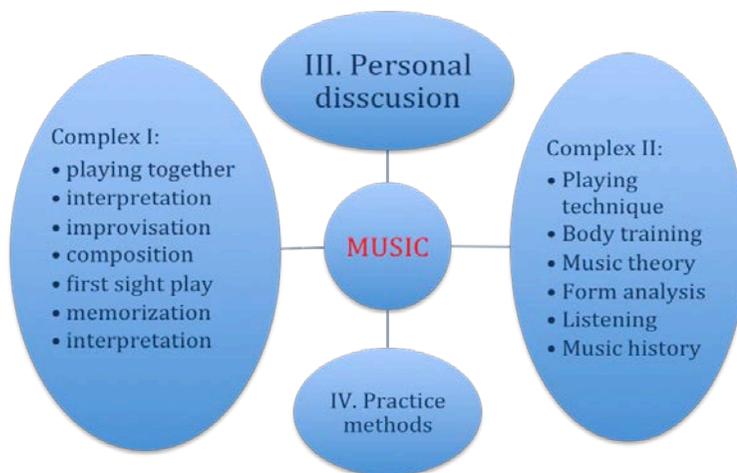


Fig. 3. 4 learn areas and 14 learning fields of the instrumental teaching
(after A. Ernst 1991, S. 44)

The importance of a human, harmonious artistic training: unfortunately, the early musical education of the contemporary - currently adult - generation of instrumentalists was all too often used by force. In the meantime, the physical violence in the school is officially forbidden. Whether this will result in a future of pianists who, by their own highest artistic motivation, practice innumerable hours at an early age alone or whether other, physically nonviolent but psychologically no less harmful methods of motivation have been invented, remains an open question without claim to have an answer.

It is important here that there are other types of „violence” in the university relationships between teachers (professors) and instrumental students, which are psychological, such as:

- fear (of the pupil, caused by his lack of performance, or the possible result of an examination),
- indifference (of the teacher about the student, his / her progress and the regularity of his / her teaching hours),
- in rare cases also the mobbing and defamation, or disadvantage by examinations and grades

This "violence" is no less repulsive, but unfortunately accepted by many as a normality.

The society of today undergoes a very accurate reflection on this subject, but the criticism or the plead for more humanity is still more striking in the realm of metaphysical morality than in the real academic world.

„We need people who are able to integrate easily into today’s world, but it is also necessary for them to have a coherent interior life, guided by authentic values, transfused

with the particularities of a specific historical and community context. From this point of view, it is advisable to resort to tradition, to a series of paideia patterns which were validated by the community, by re-activating certain educogenic structures pertaining to the informal common sense pedagogy upheld by families and the community. We cannot learn everything in school, and achieving a complementarity between the actions of the school, on the one hand, and those of the family, church, other community structures, on the other, could generate a much more ample ethos in favour of a superior education“ (Cucoş 2016, article 23).

The great Russian pianist Elisabeth Leonskaja was interviewed for the nation Austrian radio Ö1 in April 2017 and declared that she loves her students, their energy and motivation so much, that she could not possibly evaluate them in competitions or exams because there is a big hazard of misjudging a young life. She prefers to act as a companion, because „*education means to know who you are and where you are heading*“ (Păunoiu 2016).

3. Conclusion

We should be aware of the importance of arts education especially since art is currently given less place in formal education (both for those under 18, and in the education of adults). Arts education (which also includes the instrumental interpretive arts, aimed at developing the ability to play an instrument) is a component of spiritual education, which reveals to children, teenagers and adults or elderly people the most valuable component of human life: the connection to God, the contact with eternal life (so little noticed and valued today, but so obvious).

If we take the instrumental teacher as a companion who kindly leads the student through the magical worlds of music and artistic creativity, being a role model would not only aim the practical, musical fields, but also a skilful employing of feeling and intellect, imagination and consciousness in order to create both musical, as well as human relationships based on understanding, harmony and transcendence. In our opinion, a person’s character is the most important element in defining their personality, which entitles us to say that this is the essential element of a profound reform in education. Thus, individuals are more valuable for themselves and for their community if they are actively involved in valuable projects which increase their accountability. This is how school becomes society’s partner in correcting certain social or moral errors. “Man should not be just a person, but also a personality, whose soul should have a well-defined, unitary character. Character can only be shaped in accordance with the specific activities performed within the family or within the community” (Micu 2016).

3. References

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