

MODERN ACCORDION PERSPECTIVES

**AN INTERNATIONAL  
OVERVIEW  
OF ACCORDION PEDAGOGY**

edited by  
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MODERN ACCORDION PERSPECTIVES #3

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## Introduction

The third publication of *Modern Accordion Perspectives*—collection of writings dedicated to classical accordion—deals with the important and delicate matter of accordion pedagogy. As the previous two books, it provides an overview about the current situation of accordion cultural development in several countries.

Nowadays it is not difficult to get information about what is going on in the world, news are going in and out in every moment of the day, but very often without letting us the time and the chance of going deeper into topics. That is why I found it important to ask my colleagues to talk about their experience as teachers. Many of them are experienced musicians whose work is already broadly recognised. Others are new teachers and young professional performers who clearly show a new step forward in the development of the accordion didactics.

Beside the articles, I have included the answers to a questionnaire on pedagogic issues and also a brief appendix with a selection of pedagogic material and various writings that some teachers liked to share.

I would like to thank all my colleagues who wanted to participate with writing an article for this book but they couldn't finally do it for being too busy or for not being familiar with writing papers. Their friendly support and their pragmatic daily work in the art of teaching are the most important contributions to the development of the accordion culture.

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## **Is there room for music in music pedagogy?**

*In general, teaching is a healthy infection.*

*It leads a horse to water and makes him drink.*

Ned Rorem: Lies, A Diary 1986–1999

Every now and then for the past few years, this question has crossed my mind. It may be partly due to the observation that today there are more formally qualified accordion teachers with a university degree working with children in music schools and privately than ever before in the history of our instrument. It also seems to me that the accordion is quite a popular instrument in music schools.

On the other hand, even though I have no hard statistics, I believe that the number of young accordionists who want to deepen their relationship with music by enrolling in music academies and universities is not necessarily rising. If we look at how many participants there are today in international competitions (e.g., Klingenthal, Coupe Mondiale, Arrasate) in categories of 18+ years of age and compare that to 30 years ago, it might be fair to say that the number of young people who are passionately interested in developing their skills as accordion players, as well as their understanding of music, is not increasing.

Those who know me also know that I have never been a great advocate for competitions. In fact, when I was 17 years old and came in 4th in the International Klingenthal accordion competition, I realized then that I would never win a major accordion competition. That realization back then was crucial for me. It pushed me to find other ways to develop myself as an accordionist and direct my musical interests elsewhere. However, in connection to the topic at hand, I think international accordion competitions can serve as indicators of certain observable developments within the accordion culture of the past 30 to 40 years.

YES, I am referring to classical accordion!

NO, I am not worried about the future of accordion competitions as such. I will gladly let other people worry about that. If I am worried about something, it is the appreciation of classical music!

I have been a senior lecturer for music and a teacher of classical accordion, chamber music and music history at the Turku Arts Academy in Finland since 1998. I sometimes wonder what could or should be done differently in pedagogy in order to make the transition from a musical hobby into a professional musicianship more organic and more attractive as a goal. In my opinion, a cornerstone of professional musicianship is an idea that can be expressed in two words: MUSIC MATTERS. The mental transition from a talented hobby-accordionist into a more determined and proud professional musician/teacher is vital. In the end, someone who earns a diploma from a music academy may very well be teaching children and serving as an authority for music in his or her community for the next half a century.

NO, I do not think that every child playing the accordion at a local music school should be mercilessly trained into becoming a professional musician!

YES, I do think, however, that it is not unreasonable to hope that every child starting to play the accordion should have the chance to receive the kind of guidance that could later open the door to a career in music. Furthermore, I believe that a teacher's proud and healthy attitude toward music making would also serve the greater majority of students for whom music remains a beloved hobby. In other words, there is nothing wrong in doing things properly and with conviction.

To get straight to the point, there are now significantly more university trained accordion teachers, in practically every corner of the continent, than ever before. Nevertheless, the number of people with a passionate interest in music seems to be, if not a rarity, pretty much the same as 30 years ago. The educational institutions are in place, the societies are wealthier than 30 years ago, access to music through various media has never been easier, and yet classical music seems to be on the losing end of this equation.

NO, I am not trying to turn various music styles against each other. That would be the last thing we accordionists need!

The very idea, that someone's touching experience with a certain kind of music would diminish somebody else's equally personal experience with another kind of music, is absurd! Having said that, we cannot ignore some practical and economic issues here. Education needs resources, and there is an ever greater number of people who see education merely as an investment. This may cause situations in which a string orchestra, chamber music or accordion ensemble at a local music school is no longer given the resources it needs. This is usually accompanied by the argument: "This kind of music is not popular enough! We should be serving our clients something the majority wants." Yet we know from history, as

well as from economics theory, that it is the supply that creates the demand, not the other way around.

For example, back in the 1970s, the public was not eagerly awaiting mobile phones when Nokia and other companies began developing such technology. Rather, the technology was developed, the phones were built and marketed, and at some point people realized that they wanted mobile phones, to such a degree that today no one can imagine life without one. Supply created the demand.

There might be at least one lesson to be learned from Nokia's loss of the mobile phone business to Apple: consumer experience. Nokia's products were not necessarily technically inferior to Apple's when Apple started launching mobile phones onto the market. There was a certain vibe or atmosphere that accompanied the product, and it quickly appealed to more and more people. Lately, that same atmosphere seems to be showing signs of fading, and Apple may be losing some of its original charm.

Now, how does all this translate into music pedagogy? Product, demand, supply, customers, market, consumer experience... words that should scare a sensitive musician, right?

I will go through some of those terms one by one.

### **Demand**

Music, together with all other forms of art, reflects the inner world of human beings. This may sound strange and maybe even scary, but it is really very simple and very true. Everybody knows how passionate teenagers can be about a certain type of music and even hate another. The kind of music I am referring to here may not give the most sophisticated expression or reflection of a young person's inner world, but it is good enough to allow people to identify themselves and to relate to others. I could go into how Schubert combines poetry with music, or how such composers as Alban Berg, Luigi Nono and Helmut Lachenmann formulate their innermost thoughts and emotions with precision and elegance and thus would I only touch the surface of those great composers' music.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the basic demand for music is universally there by nature.

### **Supply**

If we think about classical accordion music, I am sure the limit of how much the world can take is nowhere near in sight! Seriously, the demand for experiencing music in various ways seems to be innate in most people. Therefore, there is also the demand for people who can

teach and guide other people to become better in their musical expression, through the musical, emotional and technical aspects of music. The social aspect of making music together with others should not be forgotten.

### **Customers/market**

Based on the concept of supply and demand, I am inclined to say that if we, as musicians and teachers, start to think about and treat our students as customers, we will disrespect the needs of the people who want to learn an instrument. The same goes for someone who wants to hear a certain piece of music in a concert played by a certain musician. This is even more true in the case of contemporary music, where a person might be courageous enough to go to a concert to hear something he has never heard before. In economic terms, a customer and a market are there to add value to the supplier/seller. In a teacher/student relationship, it is the other way around—the increase of value is directed toward the student. The same can be said about a concert situation. This is the very reason why I think it is a fundamental problem when students and audience members are treated like customers. Education is not a commodity to be provided.

One might ask, how is this even relevant to music education? I am sure Finland is not the only country where universities are being transformed into Ltd.'s and the rectors are now being called managing directors. I personally have nothing against this development as such, and even if I did, it would not change the course. We just need to be aware of the fact that the language we learn to use may also affect the way we will think and act in the future.

### **Consumer experience**

Clearly there must be something very special in studying and performing music. One can come to this conclusion by realizing that we who have decided to become professional musicians have been willing to invest so much of our time in practicing and studying. Sometimes we might spend months in order to master a certain technical challenge that will allow us to play a single piece of music. This is a very unique consumer experience, I should say!

Recently, I had the chance to hold in my hand one of the very first iPhone models. That experience was disappointing and sad because I was holding an old, outdated machine. The wow effect I had had some 10 years earlier holding a similar phone was nothing but a pale memory now. The consumer experience was not so unique and special anymore.

However, this experience is not the same with music. I recently played just for myself the 3rd French Suite in B minor by J.S. Bach. Some 30 years ago, I tried to learn the piece for the first time, a piece of music that was composed centuries ago. Nevertheless, the wow effect was still there! The effect seems to get even more intense each time I play it. It is possible to find new things and new meaning in this music every time one plays it. The music remains fresh and does not need any updates to function!

I think it is fair to say that being able to share this kind of an experience and to help make it accessible to students is the very foundation of music pedagogy.

Music academies and universities function as a kind of gatekeeper by determining qualifications and handing out diplomas to people who meet certain criteria. I am sure this serves a function very well and is also necessary to give some structure to musical activities and education. I do not question that at all. However, I do wonder why, despite all of the institutions we have for higher education in music and of all the many highly qualified people who work as music teachers, there are not more people who let classical music bring joy into their lives.

This is why I sometimes ask myself: Is there enough room for music in music pedagogy? And as much as I feel uncomfortable using the word “product” in this context I want to ask: at the end of the day, can anyone reading this book really think of a better “product” than music?

Joseph Macerollo O.C.

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## **Finding my way**

I believe that the most important musical instruction should occur critically in the beginner stages. These young children should be given the proper musical tools by professionals who understand the total environment for the child to access knowledge to learn music. The teacher may draw on any number of existing approaches whether Orff, Kodaly, Alexander Technique, Dalcroze in order to stimulate and initiate musical responses. Work and fun together generate motivation. I believe strongly also that the physiological aspects and importance of body movement are extremely important in these early years. Many international elementary method books instructing how to play the accordion exist but must be supplemented by the critical insights of a teacher to generate the child's consciousness eventually to understanding the production of time and tone.

This “incubator phase” if properly controlled by the teacher can stabilize many positive approaches for the future development of the child. What years of teaching advanced students has demonstrated to me is that many faults or incorrect applications of teaching ideas occurred in the earliest years. These observations of poor skills applied to learning are as follows:

- (a) Left and right hand manuals are played at the same time. If so, this is wrong since the reed response of the left hand is always later than that in the right hand; the child should be taught to play the left hand notes slightly before those in the right;
- (b) The above stems from reading music vertically so that everything lines up according to the bar line or the individual beat. This produces accurate playing but the musical gesture usually is stiff or stodgy. I believe we should play horizontally with sound being projected through the spaces between the notes with direction of line being the goal. The grouping of rhythmic stresses is equally important. This approach is more vocal in concept and allows analogy to a string player's bowing technique.
- (c) Following point (b), one should avoid using rigidity of the right arm which pulls neck muscles and does create tonal blandness. The arm should be free to move freely as positions are adjusted, and the fingers can be used percussively for digital speed or rolled as an extension of the forearm for linear, sonorous lyrical passages; any physiological rigidity does impede proper tone production;

- (d) In creating tonal variables, it is important to understand proper breathing with the bellows. To only push and pull following the dictates of the notation is only one way to perform. In order to absorb time and tone in the body, the left hand should move like a snake twisting and turning rather than just straight playing. In some ways, resisting the air flow is analogous to reverse breathing in a wind instrument. To play a note or phrase the degree of intensity or tonal inflection is determined by the player and the signal is then sent to the arm to find it.
- (e) Finally, the most important element is finding the rhythmic point of any note. The DNA of a note, whether long or short is its rhythmic point. These rhythmic points emanate from many sources and must coincide: (i) from finger articulation (ii) from reed response (iii) from bellow points. The interaction and coordination of multiple convergences is a challenge but is necessary to understanding the relationship of physiological movement to the production of time and tone. Naturally, these ideas are complex for a young student but I believe an introduction to these ideas in the early stages is critical.

In conclusion, these comments are general and offer only a glimpse into this important phase of physiological study of time and tone. I know, any point extrapolated, can be argued and negated counterproductively. Obviously, I respect the teaching experience and approach of any teacher who works with accordion students. Each has their own approach and results can be decisively acceptable. I only ask the reader to think through some of my thoughts and challenges. My philosophy and approach is entirely my own as a result of years of playing my instrument with other musicians in chamber groups and orchestras and teaching advanced students. Advancement has progressed steadily and students are increasingly aware of how and why they do what they do.



Helka Kymäläinen

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## **A new path - towards teaching?**

### **Prologue**

An instrument teacher's wide-ranging job requires extensive expertise in command of the instrument, the ability to develop the pupil's skills, and interactive skills. While most amateur accordionists take up the instrument in early childhood and, at best, enjoy it as a life-enriching pastime for decades, only a few children or teenagers studying at music institutes aim at becoming professional musicians. An instrument teacher's pupils are at different stages of their musical development, and they pursue different goals. Teachers must be able to plan individually for each of them and facilitate goal-oriented and motivated learning.

Model learning, a traditional method based on the master-apprentice principle, is still part of everyday learning, but today, teachers and learners alike encounter a lot of new perspectives for and methods of instrument study. Research has produced ample information about effective teaching methods, practice guidance, ergonomics and performance coaching. Music as a pastime has also been proven to promote the quality of human life and build identity, and its significance as a life-enriching social activity also has been recognised wide and far. In my article, I will discuss some additional aspects to what being a teacher entails.

At the Sibelius Academy, pedagogical studies are divided into two phases: at the bachelor's level, students study accordion pedagogy for 2.5 years under the guidance of their assigned pedagogy teacher. For students, pedagogical studies include giving weekly accordion lessons to their assigned practice pupils. At the master's level, it is possible to study general pedagogy (worth a total of 60 ECTS credits) for another 2.5 years while preparing for a master's degree in music performance. At the Sibelius Academy, pedagogical studies go hand in hand with performance and chamber-music studies.

While teacher training can provide tools and a limited amount of exercise, the teaching profession requires constant training and seeking for new knowledge and development.

### **The student's path into the teaching profession**

An instrument teacher's work is based on his or her own reflective musicianship. Teaching and musicianship are intertwined, and in many ways, linked to each other, even though they

are two separate phenomena. A great musician is not necessarily a great teacher. At the same time, teaching can provide a musician with insights regarding his or her own instrumental skills and vice versa: when playing, a teacher can explore his or her own way of implementing certain technical or musical phenomena, identifying and developing methods for practising that are better suited for his or her own pupils. At best, these two are mutually supportive.

In the early stages of their professional studies, most music students already have assumed a strong sense of identity as musicians. They have studied music for years and are gradually finding more tools for their own self-exploration. However, few students consider themselves teachers at the beginning of their studies. With career progress, musician and teacher identities gradually begin to integrate and support each other. Often, after the first hands-on teaching experiences, students become more interested in the variety of learning and teaching theories and in the psychophysical development of the child. As a result of this learning process, students often see a new dimension to and gain an understanding of teaching as a more comprehensive and responsible profession.

It is typical that, when teaching, young people imitate their own teachers, often inadvertently. In the teaching process, young teachers can identify their own learning strengths but, at the same time, they may face situations in which the pupils work and learn in differing ways, and the young teacher needs to look for ways of perceiving and teaching that are unfamiliar to him or her.

Instrument teaching should always be planned with regard to the pupil's individual development. The teacher should be familiar with the main principles of child and adolescent development and strive to take them into account when selecting teaching methods and planning activities for a specific age group. Motor skills are in particular focus in instrument teaching. However, technique is only a tool that serves the ultimate musical goals. The fundamental goal is to carefully plan and support the pupil's overall development. When selecting teaching methods, the pupil's potential learning disorders also should be taken into account.

Musical compositions and related techniques, styles, and interpretation are cognitive and professional goals of music study and teaching. Teachers transfer the cultural model of music performance and sustain its prevailing values. Therefore, the teacher should be aware of different teaching practices and their history, as the techniques and sound traditions of various schools or neighbouring countries may differ considerably. The characteristic features of different schools will appear, for example, in physical instruments or in sound ideals, sound production, repertoires, and performance practices. The teacher must be

critical of the traditions and accepted practices of teaching and strive to respond to changes in society so that the instrument remains relevant and interesting to new generations.

### **Teacher's diverse knowledge and skills and the nature of the job**

In a narrow sense, instrument teaching can be perceived as teaching a craft: the teacher's main task is to provide the pupil with basic technical skills and the correct playing positions. In a broader sense, instrument teaching, like any teaching, involves interaction. The instrument and the piece being rehearsed are part of the interaction. The performance of the piece is accompanied by the interpretive traditions of the present and the past, as well as creative musical expression. All of these together determine the content of teaching.

To start, teachers should have good basic skills and knowledge of the practical possibilities of teaching. The teacher must plan, implement, and evaluate his or her teaching; master a variety of teaching methods; be familiar with the repertoires; and carefully train the pupils to apply the necessary playing techniques. Efficient classwork that takes the pupil's age into account, versatile lesson structures and illustrative examples, music literacy training in a variety of child-friendly methods, and using the child's imagination are important features of early instrument teaching.

In addition to instrument skills and diverse repertoires, current education emphasises a variety of musical skills, which remained almost untouched in classical instrument training of the past. In Finland, improvisation, playing by ear, and accompaniment are now part of all instrument teaching. Teachers improvise with young 4–5-year-old beginners, encouraging them in their musical “discovery” and, at the same time, stimulating their creativity.

For teachers to be able to hear the subtlest nuances in their pupils' accordion playing, their own musicianship and general music education are extremely important and help them decide whether the pupils should be guided towards vocational studies. The teacher should also know how to draw up teaching materials, for example, small exercises and compositions—which may be titled in accordance with the young pupil's interests—as well as sight-reading assignments and arrangements for an ensemble of 3–4 young accordionists. This is one of the key issues of accordion teaching: how does one constantly find new, current, and interesting teaching materials for new generations?

The teacher's interpersonal skills are essential when it comes to cooperation between the teacher and the pupil. Teachers need good interactional skills in the most varied situations, not only with the pupil but also with the parents and the teaching community. The teacher's knowledge of education psychology is needed in interactional situations with the pupil and in situations typical of the respective age group.

Interaction in instrument teaching includes continuous feedback from the teacher in words and gestures and in terms of assisting pupils with playing the instrument. In these situations, the pupil is vulnerable, and the fear of failure can narrow the range of expression and decrease the number of the pupil's spontaneous reactions. To avoid this, the teacher should create a safe and tolerant, but at the same time sober and honest, atmosphere, in which the emerging issues are tackled supportively. Pupils also want to hear how they have evolved as a result of their homework. To encourage and motivate, teachers should also commend the pupils' work in addition to intervening in the issues.

Since the development of instrument skills is not possible without long-term and goal-oriented efforts, motivating the pupil to keep practising year after year is a central task and a real challenge for the teacher. Motivation can be strengthened by an improved technique which becomes a means of self-expression and nascent, creative musicianship. This can be seen in many instrument pupils already making their own little compositions and trying to play their favourite pieces by ear. Properly sized instruments and an interesting repertoire ensure the preservation of interest in most cases. According to current ideology, children need to be offered a wide range of music; their own interests defines how they want to continue and at which genre.

Positive experiences at public performances, either individually or as a group, are important for a child's comprehensive development. Motivation can also be fostered through varied activities: for example, teachers can organise various events, concerts, trips, excursions, or weekend camps, creating a sense of community among the pupils.

An instrument teacher's everyday work includes curriculum design, a wide range of administrative tasks, such as staff meetings and pupil concert arrangements within the school and outside, consulting tasks related to instrument acquisitions, and co-operation with families. In many countries, new applicants attend entrance exams for music schools, and the teachers test the applicants' musicality and musical skills.

An investigative attitude to one's work guides teachers to detect learning problems and to question the acquired ways of working. Investigative teachers reflect on their thinking and activities critically, which develops their decision-making skills and pedagogical thinking. The teacher's comprehensive pedagogical thinking is based on the history, traditions, and values of accordion teaching. By becoming aware of these aspects, the teacher becomes competent in reforming educational culture, with insight on the significance of tradition and its features that are worth preserving.

Today, teachers are also encouraged to share expertise in the work community and peer-group teaching situations. For a small instrument group, teachers' international networking

is of paramount importance. Teachers also should communicate with teachers of other instruments in order not to isolate the accordion.

### **Pupil-centred pedagogy**

Currently, pupil-centred pedagogy is a popular topic. This does not, however, mean that the pupil should get to dictate everything that happens in class. The following questions can help a young teacher to reflect on pupil-centred teaching:

- How does my interest in the pupil's learning show in my teaching?
- How do I take into account the pupil's motor and musical skills, physical and mental development and its phases, and the pupil's experience?
- How does my teaching inspire, encourage and activate the pupil's own thinking and provide the pupil with tools for solving problems independently?
- How does my teaching take into account the pupil's personality and individuality?
- How does my teaching support the pupil's self-awareness and self-esteem?

The teacher should fully appreciate the child or teenager he or she is teaching: all pupils have an individual personality, and each pupil needs tailored methods and pieces. Modern pedagogy entails activation of and dialogue with the pupil. Gone are the days when the teacher had one course book that was used for all pupils, progressing page by page.

The teacher also provides the pupils with an opportunity to set their own goals. Furthermore, the teacher takes into account the pupils' individual differences and supports the pupil's individual, holistic development. It is relevant to the pupil's whole life that the teacher strives to raise the pupil's self-esteem and create the conditions for a happy relationship between the child and music.

A challenge to pupil-centred pedagogy and to creating a happy relationship between the child and music is that they are often implemented in a traditional music school, with an emphasis on playing-skills assessment and grades. This does not mean, however, that pupil-centred teaching was substandard and merely entertaining: the goal is always to aim for versatile and high-quality results while also addressing an individual pupil's natural skills, objectives, experience, and interests.

Constructivist learning sees the learners as active agents, and learning is based on doing, forward planning, and the learners' ability to assess their own learning. As learners take more responsibility for their own learning, instrument teaching should leave room for the pupil's questions and options. A dialogic learning atmosphere like this helps the pupil in his or her learning process and also builds the pupil's self-esteem.

Joy for learning an instrument is important for the pupil. Joy promotes and motivates learning and enhances the pupil's imagination and artistic skills. Joy can arise, for example, from improved skills, group activities, immersion in music making and its interpretation, or from the expression of one's own idea or emotion. Bearing this in mind, teachers should enable interpretation and creative-expression training from the beginning.

Instrument study is a bodily activity. For example, rhythmical precision, finger speed, articulation, dynamics, phrasing, tone, and interpretation are all connected to playing and its physical nature. The bodily nature of music making also challenges the teacher to see the pupil comprehensively and to understand that the pupil's hobby, playing an instrument, is a part of his or her entire life. Holistic body control and awareness can be developed through various methods, such as Body Mapping, Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, Trager, and Pilates, which aim to make the students aware of their bodily habits and support them in the discovery of good posture and economical and balanced use of the body. The development of body awareness is important for teachers as well.

### **Accordion teaching in Finland**

In Finland, no specific teaching method for children dominates the field. The Suzuki method was used a lot in the 1980s and 90s. Learning by listening, imitating, repeating, and listening to CDs and playing together was a natural way to introduce the instrument to 3–5-year-olds. Similar results were reached with the Kodaly method and music playschools or the Colourstrings and other related methods. Colours, singing, rhythm reading, solmisation, "composing" with musical note cards and starting instrument study with small thirds, so well suited for the accordion, have inspired many teachers to create their own teaching styles and methods for beginners.

In my opinion, all early-childhood education methods and repertoires should be adapted for the needs of each country. In Finland, a child can take up a specific instrument and attend a preparatory instrument group from the ages of 5 to 7 while still going to music playschool and playing Orff instruments. The repertoires in both preparatory instrument groups and music playschools are based on Finnish music, especially folk tradition, which is of course different in every country. Ideas just need to be applied. Every country has simple two- or three-note songs and a number of educational folk and children's songs, which belong to each country's own cultural heritage. This is valuable and worth transferring to new generations. In Europe, we should be familiar with pedagogical ideas developed in different parts of the continent and use them to diversify our own teaching.

Finnish preparatory groups for different instruments work, at their best, in cooperation with

each other. In the springtime, the results of the winter's joint work are presented in concert; the accordion is always included as an equal first instrument for a child. Finland also has a long tradition of summer and weekend camps, where children, young people of different ages, and a group of teachers assemble to study and make music individually and collectively. The young ones look up to the older ones and want to become as good as they are. At best, the camps attract more than 50 participants and could not be organised without the help of parents. Parental support and participation in their children's pursuits is vital to allow the teachers to focus on teaching.

After the early-childhood learning methods and beginners' repertoires, Finnish music institute pupils largely concentrate on the musical styles required at the level examinations. The ideal is a versatile repertoire, which provides a good basic technique, introduces the pupils to various styles, and is inspiring to the pupils. Finnish composers commendably have taken into consideration the children's and young people's skills and written a number of serial contemporary works. During the 10 years of study at a music institute (7–18 years of age), Finnish pupils usually play four level examinations. The level requirements also include scales and sight reading.

In Finland, more than 100 different course books and repertoire collections—as well as individual compositions for children, teenagers and professional students—have been published over the last 30 years. Teachers have plenty to choose from when planning a tailored repertoire for every pupil.

## **Epilogue**

Continuous reflection (i.e. the ability and desire to evaluate and develop one's teaching) should be a constant tool for a teacher throughout his or her career (lifelong learning). Teacher qualifications no longer include only instrument skills and familiarity with one musical genre. Instead, the teacher is required to possess a wide range of musical, educational, and organisational skills. As reflective operators, teachers develop their work and improve the pupils' learning process to help them enjoy their playing and musical skills.

In different countries, instrument teachers are resourced in varying degrees. This naturally affects the teacher's possibilities to promote pupils' skills or to brainstorm various activities and maintain pupils' motivation.

Nonetheless, for a teacher, the work is always about the love of teaching and of raising a new generation and guiding them to experience the joy music brings.

Friedrich Lips

GNESSIN RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC – MOSCOW

## **We are losing a generation of talented musicians**

Throughout his history, man has created material and spiritual values, but regardless of the importance of all material values, only the works of art, music, and literature remained in the grateful memory of humanity. What remains is the image of a people and a state, whereupon its leaders are proud of at later summit meetings, but money for it is always missing. Yes, we educate musicians at the highest level. There is a reason why our school is very highly regarded in the world. But today the field of musical education is in serious danger in connection with the possible accession of our country to the Bologna process. Almost 100 per cent of musicians are against, but we are trying hard to be drawn into this "event". Russian School of Music, at the origins of which were such great names as Anton and Nikolai Rubinstein, the Gnessin family, whose three-level system caught talented children from childhood, the envy of our foreign colleagues and the desire to study in Russia or with our teachers abroad. We are invited to teach at academies and Conservatories of various countries, or in summer courses and seminars, so students have the chance to study with us, but, in the other hand, education is forced upon us in two stages, where the wide network of children's music schools can be lost.

In my opinion, we should strive for a full and extra-curricular learning of children. Children's sports schools, children's music schools, computer classes, as well as working groups of chemists, physicists, actors, etc., can help to identify the abilities of children from their early childhood. And even if they will choose a different profession in the future, no one has been harmed by music or sport. They will be our future concertgoers. We can reasonably take some of the advantages of the Bologna process, but it is not permissible to destroy the musical education system in Russia, where generations of legendary educators and performers have grown up, who are respected and admired by foreign musicians. Let's join the global processes where we have shortcomings: in the industrial sector, in agriculture, in a favorable investment climate, but where we are strong, others should join us. It should be remembered that our music was one of the most innovative of all times.

Another problem, which is by no means solved after two decades of collapse of the USSR, is the tour activity of musicians. The system, which existed until 1991, and which included Goskonzert, Sojuskonzert, Roskonzert, Moskonzert and the regional philharmonic orchestras, made it possible to cover all the corners of the country with concerts held by



philharmonic artists. Nowadays this system is completely destroyed, and a new one has not yet taken its place. Of course, in the last years of its existence, this system has mutated into a monster that the Philharmonic could only endure with difficulty. It was nonsense, in fact, when in a month about seven to eight performers of the same instruments flooded a city. Our stage is more quickly oriented to new conditions and has turned into show business with a great number of concerts across the country and on TV, quite quickly, with the help of skilled managers. Of course, outstanding personalities of academic music, who have made their name in the 70 – 80s, are now in great demand. But where are the young laureates no one knows? Artists of the rank of a D. Matsujev will not disappear, of course, but individual stars can hardly be in a safe situation. We are losing a generation of genuinely gifted musicians, but what is even worse – we have already lost a generation of serious musicians. If there are few concerts already in the regional centers, what can you say about the deep province? Of course, one can be delighted that a working group with the highest leadership of the ministry and the agency for the observation of the creative way of the award winners of the last P.I. Tchaikovsky competition was used to the organization of tours as well as the publication of audio and video productions. But who will examine the creative fate of the winners of the competitions of the pianists in Warsaw and Leeds, the violinists in Genoa and Brussels, the accordionists in Klingenthal and Moscow? I am not convinced by the local actions of this kind: helping young laureates with some prizes like purchasing French horns for a particular symphonic orchestra...

Artists on Russian folk instruments – bayan, balalaika, domra – almost are no longer on tour anymore. At the beginning, there were outstanding masters such as the bayanist Yury Kasakov and the balalaika player Pavel Netchporenko who later attained the high rank of a people's artist of the USSR. And the excellent representatives of the following generations of performers also filled the halls.

But nowadays the audience, no longer accustomed to concerts with classical music or folk music, thinks that the concert – this is what happens every night on the 1st and 2nd TV channels, and modern music is not A.Schnittke and S.Gubaidulina but “pop music“. Russia is a huge country that has always been rich in talents, and of course, you can find a huge number of venues and audience. In this regard, D.Dondurej expressed the right idea: “Drag Fradkov to Schnittke!“ If we saw the leaders of the state in the symphonic and chamber concerts (they go to pop concerts), a different relationship to serious art would develop. And no high-ranking official would have told: “Many balalaika players got divorced!“ I am convinced that as an intelligent person, he is most embarrassed not to attend any philharmonic concerts. As a matter of fact, it is known that Vladimir Putin studied in the bayan class of his music school. And did not become a bayanist. So what? After all, not

everybody needs to be a musician. We also need the ordinary listeners, and somebody also must be president!

By the way, we still have not felt the results of the Department of Management opened in many universities. And concert agencies and impresarios who would understand that with the involvement of public and sponsors, this business also could be profitable, have not yet filled this niche so far. I remember when the impresario invited us to dinner at his home after one of the concerts abroad, together with G.N.Roshdyestvensky, under whose direction I was fortunately able to play. Seeing my admiring gaze at the forest located in the mansion of our host, Gennady asked: "Do you like it? This is our house!" My astonishment has been scattered about it: "He has built it with our money!" It is evident that not only pop music, but also philharmonic art can become a profitable business! It is necessary to find an impresario in every city, which has in its agencies a number of artists: pianists, violinists, vocalists, accordionists, balalaika players, cellists, etc. If these artists travel through the country, they would also be engaged by other impresarios. By the way, a skilled management is not just about organizing the performance of Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff concerts for the hundredth time, but also a skillful inclusion of modern music into the programs, which are otherwise reserved mainly for the festival "Moscow Autumn". And you do not have to convince anyone that the great composers are degenerated. We have remarkable composers, but one must also play and promote their music! Our ears are already stunted, we are ready to hear only well-known works. As M.E.Shvydkoi said in his speech, "It depends on us whether there will be a decay of the Russian people. Today, the problem of simplification has degenerated to intolerability. People have ceased to listen, have ceased to understand a complicated text, have ceased to catch the versatility of the world". But dear Mikhail Efimovich! It is only up to you and Minister A.S.Sokolov to inform the Duma, the government, the president, and also the meetings of well-known musicians and other personalities in the arts at the discussions and forums, similar to those taking place during the summer in the Moscow Philharmonic Society, can help these tasks to be concretized. And most importantly, please pursue their implementation!

So far, we have not lost our intellectual and creative potential, which has developed not even for decades, but now for centuries. It is necessary to gather the clever minds and authoritative names to rethink the conception of the development of music in Russia. It would be catastrophic to let things go, especially as the young men, who have come to power, are not always, and in all, competent enough to rise to the dignity to assess a historical profit accumulated over centuries, and to give a constructive view of the future.

Luka Juhart

ACADEMY OF MUSIC OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

## **What really matters in teaching?!**

Participants in courses and seminars as well as teachers often expect from me a ready-made recipe or rules as to how something should be played; how music should be listened to and evaluated or how they should be teaching. This is understandable to the point they are themselves researching and showing an interest in pedagogical approaches, art of music and their music environment. But time and again I find myself confronting the issue when this is not the case.

For some time now, I've been burdened by the terribly disconcerting fact that many teachers, students and by extension pupils show so very little interest in musical art. It astounds me to see how few are those who regularly attend concerts, listen to quality music and educate themselves about art. The fact that in the days of schooling, pupils and students do not try their hardest to expand their own horizons is partly the fault of the example set to them by their teachers, most of whom seem rather disinterested in their music environment, new knowledge and in art in general.

I have myself been lucky in that over the last few years I have had the privilege of teaching mostly students at the Academy or at least highly motivated young musicians attending my courses. However, despite the fact that they are technically very strong and intellectually gifted, time and again I find myself being surprised at the large percentage of them who, in their spare time, are not really interested in music, or perhaps there is a gaping void between what they play in class and at competitions and to what they listen to at home in their spare time. Young musicians—often show marks of craftsmanship from very early on, even though consciously they are heading for the direction of becoming teachers or are even dreaming of a solo career. One of my main goals—in the time that I get to spend with them, whether a week at a summer camp or over five years of their schooling—is to awaken in them an interest in music. I talk to them about different styles, about performers, history, anecdotes. But above all I encourage them (and sometimes force them) to go to concerts (often being the first to enthusiastically recommend them something), to read books, critiques and journals (on music); to listen to music, also to traditions unknown and foreign to them. I try to convey to them that for a consummate and successful musician it is not enough to play an instrument well, but that it is essential to have a good grasp of all-round knowledge as well. This way they get acquainted with different instruments, styles of

playing, interpreters, and composers. They begin to recognize and discern a decent interpretation (and music) from a top-notch or a lesser quality one. Their music taste buds get refined and they find themselves deeply immersed in the music scene. They are able to see connections between different historic periods and periods in music, literature, and painting; they become familiar with different styles and able to differentiate between them as well as make connections.

What is encouraging is that once you recognize the need to work with music in such a comprehensive way and put enough effort into it, this will become second nature to you and music an indelible part of your life. For indeed, the work of a musician is not merely to practice and play in concerts; it is also organization, interviews, contracts, lectures, etc. Working with music (or the accordion) is not mere production, but rather a creative process underpinned by hard work and discipline, inspiration and knowledge, and finally also general knowledge.

Amongst other things, it is precisely general knowledge (or lack thereof) which is responsible for the fact that the level of musical content (for the accordion) we listen to every day is constantly dropping. Given the vast number of concerts and the huge variety of styles of playing, it is precisely the discipline of music itself that should give direction, pointing out anomalies, plagiarism and populist playing. The discipline itself should be the guardian and advocate of high quality authorial music. And it is above all made up of teachers. And how can this 'discipline' have an opinion if it does not go to concerts?

How can a teacher stir a pupil's enthusiasm for music if he himself shows no interest in it, let alone enthusiasm? I have always 'admired' teachers who somehow managed to motivate and get their pupils/students to practice for hours on end without their protégées seeing them even once on stage, let alone seeing them practice. I myself speak at length about this and see how the conversation about practice interests, calms and motivates my students. We musicians spend an inordinate amount of time with our instruments and knowledge about how to achieve designated goals in the fastest possible way is crucial to the development of every musician. Of course this entails sitting for hours and hours behind our instruments. In my courses I motivate my students by being the first to get up in the morning and practice. True, that is partly because I then teach the entire day and therefore have no time to practice later in the day, but I do it also because this is much better than my preaching to them when and how long they should be practicing.

It is by example that one motivates and directs students. It would also be expected that everyone working in music is conversant with the music creativity in their own environments; that they regularly attend concerts, read relevant publications, books and listen to CDs. I myself notice and hear from my active colleagues that accordion players do

no show much interest in concerts, new recordings, seminars, and other events related to the accordion. Everyone is their own master and the best instrumentalist in his environment, while only few and far between are those who want to learn something from others. Most live in their 'orchestra-' or 'competition-' bound worlds and in fact hardly associate the accordion with music in general.

The nature of our calling is such that most of the accordion players do not live off their performing. Most end up in music schools where they teach but hardly ever—or never again—play. In that case the breadth, knowledge and relationship to music that they developed as students or are still developing as teachers is vital and needs to transcend categories of how fast they moved their fingers, how often they slipped up at the exam or how many competitions they won in the course of their training. But teachers who were very successful “craftsmen” in their youth but lack this kind of attitude, showing little or no interest in music and art, are most probably lesser teachers than those who approach their calling with passion and enthusiasm. Above all they are far less inspiring in their music and non-music environments.

I would say that whoever is reading this journal is not really the target of this piece. It is addressed to those to whom our opinion is of no interest. Of course there is a lot more room for new pedagogical measures and innovative approaches to teaching the accordion, and I have only focused here on a particular issue which I have often seen come up. This is merely to set an example. Over the past decades, the accordion has made huge steps towards the emancipation of the instrument. It can be brought to higher ground still with a more open attitude towards other instruments, active engagement with high-quality authorial music, better pedagogical approaches and better instruments, and last but not least with more inquisitive, knowledgeable and active teachers. But above all, with teachers who will convey their knowledge with enthusiasm and be an example to their students and colleagues.

Iñaki Alberdi

MUSIKENE HIGHER SCHOOL OF MUSIC SAN SEBASTIAN

### **Warning! Music in progress**

As a professor, it is hard for me to predict how a music student is going to evolve, and in what direction. For years, I observe slow or minimal progress. Suddenly, one day, without any apparent reason, the student starts participating more actively, thinking up his/her own ideas and rigorously applying them while displaying his/her own individual character.

This has nothing to do with “categories” or “types” of students: it represents a change in attitude. The musician embraces full progress, a point from which he/she starts to evolve using an entirely different perspective. This new, open attitude – remaining flexible and open to all types of contingency – is conditioned by good study habits: when we adopt such a routine, we attain a state of tranquility, patience and a capacity for self-criticism, among other virtues. All this should inspire us to remain constantly curious, searching for “something else” – something that will challenge and modify our interpretational perspective. In hindsight, this turns out to be something more concrete and entertaining, instead of an arcane metaphysical justification rooted merely in one’s innate musical instincts (which, of course, play an important role as well).

If we as musicians can develop the capacity to bring an idea to life in the form of sound, in a way that is both genuine, alive and personal, such a capacity results from a combination of musicianship, rigorous respect for the composer’s intentions, diligence, and the search for the kind of minute details capable of profoundly transforming a musical interpretation. This can hardly come from mere “inspiration” – unless the inspiration arrives and finds us already busily at work, as Picasso once remarked.

We thus establish a relation between good practice habits and the results they help us obtain. On stage this requires that we remain true to ourselves every time we perform. A positive retro-feedback effect emerges between good practice habits and their own beneficial effects. Our abilities, as well as our performances, start to improve more rapidly and effectively.

We can draw an interesting, concrete parallel from our travel experiences. As a performer, one often has the chance to become acquainted with wonderful spots and landmarks. I often find it hard, nevertheless, to take the initiative to actually go see them – even when they are located close to the hotel. If I decide to discipline myself and devote a portion of

my free time to become acquainted with these new experiences, I can profit from something new and enriching. However, if instead I confine myself to a reduced space such as my hotel room without any defined or self-imposed goal, I am passing by an opportunity to widen my horizons.

The same occurs with musical practice. If I discipline myself to wake up early every day – no matter where I may be, or whether certain tasks have been accomplished or not – such apparent constraint will actually give me much more freedom in other areas, including the quality of my performance onstage. Once I truly know how to attain my objectives with rigor and discipline, I can attain much more conviction and security as a performer, while gaining considerably in self-confidence and professionalism.

Many methods and combinations obviously enable us to impose efficient daily study habits upon ourselves. Significantly, apart from certain students' individual musical potential, those who generally seek to attain the above-described inner balance in their activities are often the ones who ultimately get farthest in the race of endurance in their professional musical careers. At an earlier stage, such students are already those who start to learn in a more self-taught, dynamic and decisive way, hardly depending on outer sources. Their renditions soon start to represent the result of a truly personal quest. An outside imposition (say, from a professor) can be useful at certain points in their lives to show the way, or to serve as an example, but such an imposition never becomes a true work method. The initiative has to come from the student him/herself; otherwise we, as professors, are limiting their true future potential.

Let us not forget that in the Middle Ages, for example, the artist only enjoyed the status of a “mere” craftsman. Working from an artisan's point of view helps us devote total concentration to the tasks we need to accomplish. What particularly attracts me in craftsmanship is the “know-how” aspect, and each task demands that we devote the required time to it. This also reminds us how important it is to cultivate a capacity for self-criticism. We thereby plunge headlong into an ongoing search for truly elaborated, refined sonority, the fruit of many years of close listening, of appreciating the results of well-accomplished work while constantly developing a more human approach to everything we do.

In modern society, even brand names and logotypes are designed with utmost attention and care. Could this be another form of artisanship? A simple yellow, rounded “M”, with its pleasant, almost humorous visual form, its attractive color and apparently “soft” texture, becomes instantly recognizable and manages to attract and seduce us by evoking concepts such as happiness, family, proximity and accessibility. At first glance, however, the symbol's

mere “content” would never be enough to convince us to go have a meal at such an establishment.

Undoubtedly, diligence, coherence, dedication, time, self-criticism and rigor are the very qualities that ultimately provide us with the greatest freedom, accentuate our individual personality and help us focus our attention on our goals, on ourselves. They help us become more authentic while eliminating distractions. They also enable us to listen more closely and optimize our time schedule and our results. We also then attain a greater understanding and focused awareness of our bodies and minds, wherever we may be. These qualities help us exist in the here and now and simply to be ourselves: they are the combined result of our work and our artistic personalities.



Claudia Buder

FRANZ LISZT UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC WEIMAR

## **How? Now! ... the living sound ...**

*How?*

*The searching is leading to the answer.*

*Now!*

*This is your chance. Like a present. At every moment you can set new steps.*

*Take it.*

The most important issue nowadays is the the issue of all days, whether past or present. Enthusiasm combined with dedication.

Further:

The old master of our city Weimar says it right now:

*Think about the WHAT, but more think about HOW!*

Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749 – 1832)

Life changes, but quality remains.

No matter what age, what time, what kind of instrument: The quality of sounding is the first question to me. Regardless of whether it is one single note of the beginner or more than thousand sounds played by an advanced – I listen how the sound is created.

My responsibility as a teacher is to recognize the given quality of every human being and to connect them with the quality of music.

### **Suggestions to a new teacher**

- Happy New Ears!!
- Open your mind with your ears – listen!
- If you can sing, you can play
- Again Goethe: „*Who misses the first buttonhole, does not manage with buttoning up*“

So ... same words to us as accordionists, think about the right timing to start!

- Most shocking experience in many years of practical experience: the missing posture! The body is the shell of the sound. Body, mind, instrument and music are one unit. The sound is what you are!!
- For new teachers: Your enthusiasm is your potential. Even if you have no experience: the freshness of the beginning is yours. Your attention at the moment is the best teacher for you.
- Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179) *I have everything in me, which I can act.*

### **Knowledge in pedagogy**

The word pedagogue is a derivative of the Greek ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ (*paidagos*), itself a synthesis of ἄγω (*ágo*), "I lead", and παις (*país*, genitive ΠΑΙΔΟΣ, *paidos*) "child": hence, "to lead a child."

What does it mean to me?

- In my entire activities I am a role model (I like the German word VORBILD = a sight in front of you). As well as you do it, your students will do. Consider it at all (even drinking a beer).
- To lead, to join means that I can see what kind of support is useful. Think about what the student need – more than about what you want.
- Of course, you will start with your way, the way you have learnt when you was a child. But consider that the child in your lesson will go into the future. Take your tradition with you, but be open enough to recognize lively principles and structures of development.
- There is no end of learning, even for you.

### **Systems**

Each system built with universal qualities can be applied for accordion lessons.

An example from the Suzuki method: The way of learning corresponds to the learning of our mother tongue. Imitation! As a teacher you have to play by yourself the music you want to teach. Like in language the student (the child) listen to the music. Both: as whole as well as in detail. For the first step of learning you have to find that element the student can play immediately without any problems. Even if it is just one single note. The code word is: I CAN DO! Step by step you will add the next stones without losing the sight to the whole. Every composition is like an architecture. As a teacher you show the structure, disassemble the work in his individual parts which the student can grasp and assembles together with

him again. The art of teaching is to disassemble in such a way that the student can recognize.

Last but not least: Learning by doing and *repetitio est mater studiorum*.

### **Common material**

Compared to the development of other instruments the history of the accordion is affected by a huge variety of systems. That seems to impeding a professional development. Often enough I regretted this, but the facts remain. However, this does not mean we have to work like amateurs.

The diversity can also be a strength. Important is the cooperation. By creating common material it is a matter of finding the smallest common denominator. The principles should be formed just universally. Our world is far enough developed to work professionally.

### **Standardization**

There is one wish on my side coming up through the last years: the tuning! Our classical concert instruments are tuned mostly (but only on order) in 442 Hz or 443 Hz. The musical life in Europe turns about this numbers. Does anybody know, which musical world beside the accordion orchestras are tuned in 440? So I would be very happy, the accordion standard tuning goes hand in hand with the symphony orchestra tuning, since I am convinced about a well sounding future for our instrument as a brilliant chamber music instrument.

Another aspect, for example, is the position of belts on the instrument. They should be fixed by the purchase of an instrument together with the player and not standardized.

There are certainly many facts to consider. Hence, to me it would be important to exchange informations, bundling up ideas, regardless of the variety of instruments.

### **Bologna process**

We have worked for many years in the Bologna process within the university. Much paperwork, more than really valuable structured results. The idea itself is good, but fails too often in fact of bureaucracy.

Structures should allow a healthy exchange and useful cooperation. On the other hand each university should also preserve their profile. There are already plenty of McDonalds.

Education must always be the foremost concern of a society. It is her most valuable property. In this respect I am glad that our country receives the access to musical education

for all people, a positive aspect. Indeed, and this is negative, the costs for it rise more and more and many schools are privatized.

Our cultural landscape is our rainforest!!

### **Motivation**

Every time has a certain challenge. Earlier it was perhaps the lack of ability to be achieved, today it may be the opposite. Too much informations for human atoms. So what to do? Just inhale the air of this time and do not forget to exhale. That means: utilize systems, but in such a way that you stay alive.

What is motivation? A theme for a new book. The networks of the modern era alone will not solve it. Just as music only can be realized in the interaction of playing and listening, lets say giving and receiving, everybody will determinate his destiny by how he uses the technology. The technologies will change, but there are values which remain (may be because the human is not as fast as he think).

### **Competition**

The competition should not have the last word.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813 – 1855): *The comparison is the end of the luck and the beginning of discontent.*

It is silly to compare the uniqueness of the person in art.

Nevertheless, there is one aspect I want to mention: All my students, who participate in competitions, have a higher level of play. Ultimately, good or bad?

My statement: For a certain period in life the participation in competitions may be useful as a kind of catalyst.

Who ultimately can not solve competitions, will acquire hardly freedom.

That's it.

*The Truth is polyphonic.*

Hans Urs of Balthasar (1905 – 1988)

Thanks to Claudio Jacomucci – for our instrument, the chameleon in living sounding.

## APPENDIX:

**Khalil Gibran “The Prophet”**

## TEACHING

Then said a teacher, Speak to us of Teaching. And he said:

No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness.

If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

The astronomer may speak to you of his understanding of space, but he cannot give you his understanding.

The musician may sing to you of the rhythm which is in all space, but he cannot give you the ear which arrests the rhythm, nor the voice that echoes it.

And he who is versed in the science of numbers can tell of the regions of weight and measure, but he cannot conduct you thither.

For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man.

And even as each one of you stands alone in God’s knowledge, so must each one of you be alone in his knowledge of God and in his understanding of the earth.

**John Cage “Some rules for students and teachers”**

RULE ONE: Find a place you trust, and then try trusting it for awhile.

RULE TWO: General duties of a student – pull everything out of your teacher; pull everything out of your fellow students.

RULE THREE: General duties of a teacher – pull everything out of your students. RULE

FOUR: Consider everything an experiment.

RULE FIVE: Be self-disciplined – this means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them. To be disciplined is to follow in a good way. To be self-disciplined is to follow in a better way.

RULE SIX: Nothing is a mistake. There's no win and no fail, there's only make.

RULE SEVEN: The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It's the people who do all of the work all of the time who eventually catch on to things.

RULE EIGHT: Don't try to create and analyze at the same time. They're different processes.

RULE NINE: Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It's lighter than you think.

RULE TEN: "We're breaking all the rules. Even our own rules. And how do we do that? By leaving plenty of room for X quantities."

HINTS: Always be around. Come or go to everything. Always go to classes. Read anything you can get your hands on. Look at movies carefully, often. Save everything – it might come in handy later.

Joachim Ernst Berendt – Third Ear: On listenig to the world

Claudio Jacomucci

ITALIAN ACCORDION ACADEMY

### **Mastering skills through body-mind awareness**

*What is the true function of an educator? What is education? Why are we educated? Are we educated at all? Because you pass a few examinations, have a job, competing, struggling, brutalizing ambition, is that education? What is an educator? Is he one who prepares the student for a job, merely for a job, for technical achievement in order to earn a livelihood? That is all we know at present. There are vast schools, universities where you prepare the youth, boy or girl, to have a job, to have technical knowledge so that he or she can have a livelihood. Is that alone the function of a true educator? There must be something more than that, because it is too mechanical. So you say that the educator must be an example. You agree with that? You will have to follow the truth of the matter, to go into it. When you go into it you will see the truth of it, namely, no example is necessary.*

Jiddu Krishnamurti, 1953

*Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.*

John Dewey, 1897

What I am about to tell you is my experience in the early steps of accordion teaching. I believe that every new teacher deals and struggles with similar issues and looks for practical solutions.

After my graduation in accordion studies I started teaching in Rome in a music institute. My class consisted of very different types of students: kids, teenagers, adults, seniors and professionals. I was quite unexperienced (I was then nineteenth) when I first experienced the “teacher frustration”. I was unable to motivate my students, I couldn’t get them to practice and I couldn’t solve their problems. Basically I could not fit my students into my stereotyped concept of learning.

During my studies I attended pedagogic courses and studied all bunch of subjects that should be supporting new teachers but I soon realized that this knowledge didn’t help me at a practical level. At first I was worried about pedagogic material. I realized that most of my colleagues teachers were using an outdated, amateur oriented, musically poor accordion methodology (which sadly is still used nowadays). Therefore I prepared every lesson, personalizing them to each student, carefully searching for exercises, studies and pieces. I basically used Scandinavian, Russian, German and French pedagogic accordion material and of course baroque and classical keyboard literature. At the same time I experimented with

exercises and practicing procedures. Some people even encouraged me to publish my personal notebook and so I did (Technique I, published by Bérben). For sure students were at least dealing with a more appropriate material but I couldn't understand why only few students were learning easily. All the other students had such bad habits, all kind of difficulties in learning skills and therefore a lack of self-esteem. I couldn't resign myself to this reality, specially because they really wanted to learn.

On the other hand, my girlfriend—also professional accordionist—suffered from tendonitis on her left arm. She used to spend long periods resting (not playing accordion) until her tendons got better but—as soon as she started playing again—she was back in pain. After trying all kind of therapies, rehabilitation and psycho-physical activities she felt completely hopeless. Until one day, by chance, she had an Alexander Technique lesson and understood that it was her habitual use of the body that caused her all those troubles. In few months, she could approach playing in a new way and didn't experience her difficulties again. I then had Alexander Technique lessons too; it was so useful and fascinating that we decided to go deep into it and we both became Alexander Technique teachers.

The Alexander Technique is only superficially associated with improving posture and dealing with pain and injuries. Actually it is a self-developmental discipline that supports any skill learning and it is specially useful in performing arts. We may give for granted that dancers, athletes, jugglers, martial artists learn skills with a particular attention to how they use their the body as their art is directly connected with the full physical dexterity. While musicians usually develop extremely refined listening and manual skills ignoring the rest of their bodies and the whole psycho-physical matter of coordination. They learn complex skills without any attention to how their body is actually reacting to their will. By systematically doing so, their bodies memorize wrong habits which gradually become an automatic, unconscious response to stimuli. Practicing tuns into a mere finger-training with whom they achieve more rigidity, interfering with balance and breathing, feeling insecure, suffering from stage-fright or pain. It is quite rare to see a coordinated student playing easily even the most complex works, capable of projecting sound and intention through space, breathing and establishing a spontaneous empathy with listeners.

What F.M.Alexander discovered at the beginning of XX Century was exactly the way of achieving this kind of freedom. The principles of this technique were compared with the



studies about the coordination of vertebrates by his contemporaries scientists and physiologists (Magnus, Coghill, Sherrington, Jones) but—as he was a pragmatic man—he dedicated all his life not only to write about his intuitions but he developed a way to re-educate and teach students how to teach his technique so that we can still reap practical benefits from it. Nowadays the Alexander Technique is taught in most of music academies all over the world.

Seventeenth years ago I was the only professional accordionist ever graduated as an Alexander Technique teacher so I had to find out everything about the application of the AT principles to the more specific accordion technique. I had to go against my own preconceived ideas about many aspects of playing. I realized how much music methods and teacher’s convictions are based on one’s personal habits, beliefs and preconceived ideas, not on scientific, ergonomic, anatomical and physiological principles.

First of all, I dealt with the basic issue of supporting the accordion, the only instrument that increase its size while playing. I have struggled to find an alternative and improved strap system. Standard straps are not conceived for big and heavy instruments but for hanging a light-weight instruments from the shoulders, or even from the neck. I have experimented with all possible, thinkable “wrapping” and “hanging” methods and I finally designed an ergonomic strap system which provides a greater mechanical advantage, freeing the performer from many physical constraints. Their firm support of the back allows a proper weight and force distribution, letting the neck, shoulders and arms free. They may prevent harmful effects which often arise using traditional straps: shoulders pushed forward and down, chest compressed down, floating ribs squeezed, pulling-down of the sides of the chest, sinking down in the hip, “getting heavy” in the lower back.

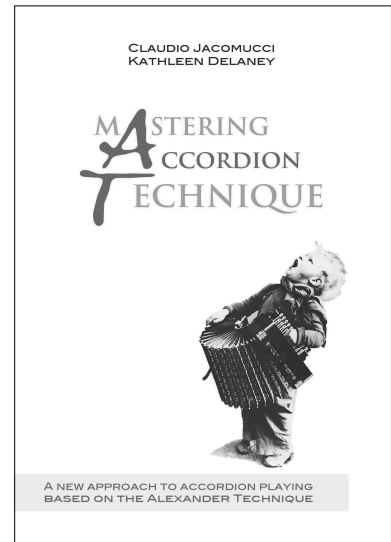


With the ergonomic straps, the base of the instrument is secured to lower back by the lower belt. The instrument rests on the thighs, with the bellows centered on the left thigh. The upper straps distribute the pressure of pulling and pushing in four bands. They connect the instrument’s mounting points (the upper hooks) with the back, at the low shoulder blades level: two belts wrap the thorax under the armpits and the other two pass beside the neck. Once the straps are tightened enough, the instrument does not joggle, it is

stable and firm so that the shoulders, arms and the hands are free from having to grip, support and control the instrument. Unfortunately mechanics is only the preamble to a more appropriate use of the Self. Knowing how to use a tool properly is important (specially if it is ergonomic) but it is how we use ourselves, how we react to stimuli, how we learn skills hand in hand with the improvement of our sensory awareness that really matters.

Years of teaching (bachelors, masters courses and masterclasses) at several european Conservatories and Academies of music and dance strengthen my conviction that there is an increasing need for an education based on the individual.

Since 2005, I run a special course for accordionists (Italian Accordion Academy)—together with my wife Kathleen Delaney, a dancer and Alexander Technique teacher—developing a pedagogy based on the principle of the Alexander Technique. Many of the conclusions drawn from the work on ourselves and on our students can be found on our book “Mastering Accordion Technique”—a practical guide for accordion students and teachers—which illustrates a new approach to accordion playing, passing by many aspects of its technique, including bellows and finger technique, tone production, articulation, and developing new concepts about daily practice, interpretation, phrasing and rhythmical skills.



The advantage of those students who approach the study of music and therefore learn instrumental skills with a profound sense of the Self, of the body, of the mental mechanisms, of the emotions are really tremendous. While academic education is going more and more towards an homologation of standards and means which—from an operational and organizational point of view—may also be a positive fact, we don't have to forget the importance of the individual development in a “real” artistic perspective. That is why we strongly believe that the Alexander Technique embodies a principle that ensure a lifetime growth.

Iosif Purits

MASTER OF MUSIC

## **A short review of some of the modern challenges of the early stages in accordion education**

The initial period of musical education by rights believed to be a foundation for the future development of musician. During this stage children grasp the basics of the musical language, absorb the main playing tools on the instrument, learn to comprehend and to express emotions, feelings and thoughts through the music. Therefore it is so important to start the process of musical education in a right professional way.

Unfortunately, we<sup>1</sup> can see that the primary accordion teachers level of professionalism often leaves much to be desired. Lack of knowledge of progressive methods, rather frequent absence of experience with the free–bass accordion, unwillingness to improve the own level of musical and pedagogical skills, neglect of the psychological element of education – are just a few problems to list. Naturally, the flaws in the teaching affects the children, produces a reluctance to continue musical education, dislike to the instrument, music etc. An important basis for the future development of the music students happens to carry the defects, which are much more difficult to be removed, than the wrong habits acquired in a more conscious age. It is widely–known that the power of the educational abilities of children has the unique properties, which are lost when the children get older. Hence, it is so important to give the right direction and correct skills at the very beginning of the musical education.

Someone might argue, that the significant quantity of students who got a primary musical education at school do not become professional musicians and hence they would not need the skills and qualities which are required for professionals.

The answer to this question would be the hierarchy of the goals, which we list:

1. Learning the language of music, which includes the overall development of the student's personality, extends his or her understanding of life and art, developing brain and assists in many areas of the life.
2. Learning of the musical instrument, that serves as a means to reach the purposes listed in

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<sup>1</sup> hereinafter - by 'we' I mean the thoughts expressed in the methodical works of Iosif Purits Sr, Natalia Purits, and my ideas. I.P.

the first goal.

We can see that the points listed above appeals to everybody who decided to start the musical education, not just professionally oriented pupils. It is also important to note that the young student usually sees the order in reverse. The desire to learn the musical instrument motivates the cognition of the musical language, hence automatically influences the whole development of student's personalty. The teacher should think more strategically than the student, keeping in mind the musical goal as the main one, he should also demonstrate the flexibility to switch the attention to the technical elements (but never forget about the music!) and back to the language of music. Otherwise it would cause mistakes, deadlocks in the educational process. The wide range of pedagogical tools, the overall high level of intelligence and musical development, the pursuit of new knowledge and self-improvement are the crucial qualities for any teacher and they would allow to avoid the mistakes, help to motivate the students, raise the level of primary accordion education.

Considering the common issues mentioned above, we can offer some hints for the solutions of a few problems, although it is important to say that it is only the whole complex of the pedagogical and musical skills, knowledges and talents can ensure the success.

The first keystone of the primary musical education is the musical material. The quality level of the musical works the teacher chooses is greatly influences the development of the student. We state that the academic music should play the primary role in the exploration of the musical language. The accordion is a young instrument, comparatively with the established classical instruments such as a piano, violin, cello... Despite the fact, that during the last 50, 60 years the professional repertoire had broaden remarkably and it continues the active growth, it is still slender, and it does not cover the different epochs of the music such as baroque, classicism, romanticism<sup>2</sup>.

The concept of the classical music included in the concept of the academic music as this definition is wider. The hallmarks of such music are the universal significance of the embodied ideas, the educational function. It promotes the spiritual development of the student, the formation of beliefs, moral qualities, aesthetic tastes and ideals, the emotional responsiveness, develops a manifestation of man's creative abilities in all spheres of life. It is also important to note that some high-quality works, which could be related to the entertainment section are also wear the hallmarks mentioned above.

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<sup>2</sup> *There are several examples of the original professional works written for accordion, which resembles the music of these periods, but such a tiny repertoire could not be a base for understanding of these musical eras.*

Unfortunately in a reality of an accordion education the grade of the chosen repertoire quite often happens to be low, approach to the selection of works is spontaneous and unsystematic. The choice of the pieces motivated not by the interests of the student development, but by the width of the teacher knowledges, by the prevalence of the pseudo-ideas about the entertainment nature of the instrument, by the presence of the large quantity of the low-quality accordions and by the indulgence to the momentary desires of the children.

The pedagogical professionalism is not to give the students what they want at the moment but to be able to captivate them with the repertoire, which will serve to the strategic purposes of their musical education and personal development. The teacher's keenness to the music and the deep knowledges about it, together with the thought-out plan of the one lesson in particular and of the general student evolution on the whole, readiness to improvisation and the ability to deviate from the plan if necessary, the accounting of the individual features of the student would be the solutions, which would help to motivate the children to play the academic music.

The repertoire conception which we covered above, follows the postulate which claims the necessity to start learning the accordion with the free-bass system. There is the range of evidence to prove the undeniable advantage of such attitude:

- 1) The small size of the instrument and its rather light weight contribute to the child's freedom of movement and economy of energy.
- 2) The development of the keyboard thinking is easier and more logical with the same structure of the keyboards for right and left hand.
- 3) The technical abilities of the right and left hands growing proportionally.
- 4) The development of hearing is significantly increased with the free-bass accordion rather than with the standard-bass.
- 5) The free-bass system helps to formate the polyphonic hearing of young musicians.

We can see that the complex of the qualities, which the free-bass system contributes to form are much wider and richer.

By and large, it raises the prestige of the instrument in the eyes of the child, in the eyes of parents and in general.

The criticism of beginning with the free-bass accordion is untenable and does not stand counter arguments. It is based on the pseudo-ideas that the free-bass system is more difficult, less interesting and could demotivate the child. It resembles the fable that the accordion is the folk, entertainment instrument and should be used only (!) in this

direction.

While the ignorance and inertia could be forgiven for parents and children because of the widespread non-acquaintance of the free-bass system advantages it could not be forgiven for professional musicians, which aim is to develop and enrich their students as wide as it possible using the language of music.

The modern methodic does not aim to terminate the performance of entertainment music, it aims to show the advantages of the academic music focused education on early stages (and it can of course include some folk and entertainment music as well)<sup>3</sup>. The academical music is the universe language and it covers contemporary music and entertainment music, while the students who lacked this language might never get a chance to understand fully the other genres and might never acquire the love to the music and understanding of its language.

This article format does not allow to fully disclose the issues mentioned, the purpose of it is to turn the attention of the music community on acute problems which exist in a children accordion education and hamper the development of the instrument, slows its approval at the academic platform and deprive children of the opportunity to learn the great language of music through the study of accordion.

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<sup>3</sup> *Such famous accordionists in entertainment genre as Richard Galliano, Frank Marocco also received an academic music school education, which helped them to perform later entertainment music.*

Matti Rantanen

SIBELIUS ACADEMY – UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS HELSINKI

## **Observations of accordion teaching at the Sibelius Academy**

### **The significance of Mogens Ellegaard**

I met Mogens Ellegaard (1935–1995) as early as the age of 10 when I played with my teacher Lasse Pihlajamaa in the Nordic accordion programme on Norwegian television in 1962. I got to know him and my other Nordic accordion colleagues—Lars Holm, Jon Faulstad and Anders Gröthe—in Germany, at the Klingenthal international accordion competition in 1974. That meeting resulted in an excursion to the Royal Danish Academy of Music the following spring. I wanted to know how the accordion is taught at a music academy, how to work in cooperation with composers, and what the role of pedagogy is in accordion teacher training. Mogens Ellegaard with his pedagogic assistant Lars Holm had successfully launched a programme that embraced all these elements. After less than two months in Copenhagen, I was so confident that I presented my quite detailed plans for classical accordion study requirements to the then rector of the Sibelius Academy. My plan was so convincing that, in the autumn of 1977, I was invited to teach in the Sibelius Academy's Department of Music Performance. Little did I guess that I would devote my working life to the highly esteemed Sibelius Academy.

In his teaching, Mogens Ellegaard stressed the importance of educating good accordion teachers. This aspect was also important for the Sibelius Academy, but my aim was also to focus on high-level soloist skills. This was partly influenced by the almost century-old Finnish tradition of virtuoso accordion playing with countless championship competitions. All Sibelius Academy accordion students were entitled to continue their soloist studies all the way to a diploma (current master's level), and the studies lasted approximately six years. The greatest representative of the virtuoso tradition in Finland from the 1930s to 60s was Lasse Pihlajamaa (1916–2007), with whom I had the good fortune to study. His virtuoso compositions—for example, *Bewitched Accordion* (1941), *Dance of the Wind* (1949), *The Dragonfly* (1949), and *Romanian Rhapsody* (1950)—led the way for Nordic accordion music. Lasse Pihlajamaa was the ultimate idol for both me and Mogens Ellegaard.

### **Training objectives: a teacher or an artist?**

But, of course, what we needed also in Finland was well-trained and qualified accordion teachers. Finnish music education started developing rapidly in the 1970s, and plenty of

meaningful work was available for qualified teachers at various music schools, institutes, and conservatories, which all had welcomed the accordion. From the beginning, Sibelius Academy wanted to attract students who were motivated not just for pedagogical studies but also for a high level of expertise as soloists and chamber musicians.

With the popularity of the accordion in Finland, superior students abounded. Various competitions for children and young people consistently brought out a potential talent pool. The best of these young talents may be accepted to study at the Sibelius Academy Youth Department, which is a programme for exceptionally talented youths all over Finland, when still at the tender age of 11 or 12. Some of them travel more than 500 kilometres on Saturdays to attend an instrument lesson at the Sibelius Academy. The aim of the youth department is to gather talented young people as early as possible to enjoy the best teaching and the musical atmosphere of the renowned music school. While not all of the students at the Sibelius Academy attend youth training before their degree studies, the youth department with its activities and high standards is an important example for all teachers in Finland.

At the entrance examinations, technical and musical talent can be emphasised (students are required to learn to interpret the most demanding repertoires in approximately 5.5 years). Two important things—the level of the students’ motivation and related diligence and determination—can’t be properly perceived until the studies have actually begun. I often feel that diligence and determination are more powerful than musical talent. In other words, the most “musical” of students will not necessarily develop into the most interesting artists.

In my teaching, I emphasise the importance of perseverance and mastery of extensive repertoires: first, we usually work on Nordic classics, Bach, and Scarlatti. I have also happily taken up contemporary Central European music for the accordion. In the 1970s and 80s, Russian repertoires were a significant part of the degree studies, but since, with the exception of Gubaidulina, traditional romantic–virtuoso repertoires from Russia have been found to be extremely useful for the youth department students. Repertoires at the master’s level, however, can be highly individual, displaying the students’ tastes and preferences.

### **The importance of knowledge**

I believe that I have been quite “tolerant” with my views of the master’s degree repertoires. I envy many of my colleagues, who are able to easily make the difference between good and bad pieces of music. However, I think that, at the learning stage, how to play is often more important than what to play. A work that is artistically less valued but technically more



interesting can be extremely useful for the development of a musician's technique. Furthermore, it is better to recognise a "bad" piece through one's own playing than by heeding the so-called authorities. In accordion music, the value of a composition is still determined by, for example, different schools of thought or the types of instruments at hand.

Ever since the first days of my career as an accordion teacher, I have been using the students' time to impart accordion knowledge, including the history of the instrument and its structure, repertoires and related social history. I also teach them how the instrument has evolved into its current form, how the repertoires have changed and how the accordion has been received in different music cultures. An accordionist and teacher must have a clear understanding of the history and current status of the instrument in order to create the future. Superficial and erroneous views often emerge if we lack a profound knowledge of the field.

### **About learning different styles**

I am delighted to often hear from international colleagues that Finnish accordion students are easy to teach in, for example, master classes. This is a fact that makes me extremely happy: it means that the students and their playing are characterised by a certain level of flexibility; they have not been guided to believe in one truth only. I also try to always make sure that, when the students are preparing a new piece, they listen to a number of different interpretations of the work in question. This way, the students obtain a clear understanding of the tempos, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, and their limits, which they either comply with or consciously exceed. What other ways are there to learn, for example, about styles than to listen to a variety of high-quality performances? With baroque music, it is absolutely vital to listen to the original instruments—of course, not to mimic (who would imagine "minicking" the harpsichord on the accordion?), but to adopt many of the parameters of music necessary to form one's own vision.

When a student is practising a work by a living Finnish composer, I always try to make the student and the composer meet. It would be good to always remember this possibility of a fruitful encounter with contemporary composers. We often think about what, say, Bach would have thought of the accordion and its expressive possibilities. The topic is certainly interesting, but the response to it is beyond our reach. But it is at least as interesting to hear the answers of our contemporary composers: what do they think about the accordion as an instrument of artistic expression?

### **Instrument skills - the basis of everything**

Instrument training is always a matter of two people coming together. Every new student has a distinctive personality. The students can have varied goals. Some of them are more interested in teaching; the others want to be virtuosos and omniskilled soloists. For some, it is about multi-disciplinary musicianship, mastering multiple genres (even jazz), improvisation and a whole host of practical musical skills also in popular music. All of these trends are, in my opinion, desirable and to be valued. They all have at least one thing in common: as perfect instrument skills as possible. Instrument skills only will allow the students to indulge in their chosen field of expertise as supreme instrumentalists.

### **About special talent**

I have taught at the Sibelius Academy for almost forty years. I have never met a bad student. All have been talented; with just a couple of cases, the problem has been in motivation or/and diligence. Among this multitude of skilled and musical people, there have been a dozen students for whom I would dare to talk about an exceptional talent. How are these individuals, then, different from other students? Often, already at the age of approximately 15, they show a passion for music that forces them to work extremely hard for long hours. As children and teenagers, their instrumentalism is characterised by a strong exaggeration of tempos, volumes and emotionality.

But just as often, at around the age of 17 to 18, these boisterous young players calm down; their expression reaches new levels of precision and their interpretations become insightful and detailed. These individuals arrive at the lesson well prepared, and they almost always have something new to play. The lessons become profound discussions between the teacher and the student, and the student would like them to go on forever. The students are amazingly familiar with repertoires and happy to propose material to work on. These students' interest in everything related to music is endless—be it new works, teacher visits, or pianists' opposing interpretations of Bach. Such passion to increase knowledge and skill makes practice a priority in daily life. International research has shown that international competition winners practise three to four times more than those who have not been successful in these competitions. However, not all of these talents build a significant career, maybe due to their personality features. An overly narcissistic or, on the other hand, modest personality and perfectionism are factors that prevent natural social activity and success as a concert musician.

## Coda

What happens in the classroom between the student and the teacher is always intimate, sometimes delicate and sometimes a very straightforward interaction. As a teacher, I am highly privileged to be working with and directing such gifted people. The best results of successful cooperation can be heard and seen at the magnificent and inspiring concerts by young artists, which are enjoyed by the audiences. After all, we do not study our instrument for the academy, for ourselves or for our colleagues; we study it, above all, for the concert audiences. I have been teaching the accordion for six decades, five of which at the academy level. The development of accordion players has been spectacular over the last few decades, and I have sometimes wondered how I can keep up with the new generations. There is one thing in which I am always ahead of my students: experience. From this experience, I have always wanted to share the secrets of accordion playing with the past, present and future students of the accordion!

Sergey Tchirkov

CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC OF MOSCOW TSCHAIKOVSKY CONSERVATORY

## **Issues of practicing for an accordion performance with electronics**

Technical prowess and the ongoing development of real-time systems of sound processing have contributed to the recognition and general use of electronics with traditional instruments in concert halls. Unfortunately, lack of confidence on the part of the performer still occurs in certain situations. In the tradition of acoustic music, the performer's fluctuations and versatility whilst engaging with musical notation depend essentially on information that is constantly received from the performance environment. However, technology is not able to respond in a similar manner. Therefore, the traditional competence of the performer is challenged and this can potentially result in a mismatch of interpretation. This article aims to examine differences between purely acoustic concerts and performances with electronics.

A key vision is to understand that the sound diffusionist is a chamber music partner who performs his part using soft- and hardware and puts as much efforts into maintaining sound quality as the instrumental performer does. By admitting this, we find no difficulty in comparing a performance with electronics with that of another chamber music formation. We can therefore develop appropriate practice strategies. Whenever we consider a duo with another instrument we question ourselves and try to determine at least the following:

- Whether we are able to read not only accordion part but also that of another instrument? Do we understand the way it is notated?
- Which are acoustic and dynamic properties of the instrument that we would perform with?
- Differences in tone production between the instruments.
- How do we address issues of interaction between accordion and the instrument?
- Working with the material.

Obviously, we cannot work out any universal guidelines which would be valid for every acoustic instrument that the accordionist performs with. Likewise, there is no point in attempting to find ubiquitous solutions for the performances with electronics. However, by considering the above-mentioned questions we are able to summarize the challenges that arise:

- The crucial question is that of notation and the material of the electronic part. Whereas we are not always able to read the score (if it exists at all – many electroacoustic compositions are scoreless), we may try to determine what kind of material has been used to produce it, whether it can be defined as *musique concrète* which is often the case with tape music, or the composer intends to use live–electronics, or there is a computer–generated recorded part. Will the sound of accordion be modified electronically, or not? Answering these question gives us information about possible timing, phrasing, articulation etc. Sometimes a simple tape can give much more than technical information only; the most famous example is the tape part of Arne Nordheim’s *Dinosaurs*, which consists of pre–recorded accordion performed by Mogens Ellegaard and gives a warm feeling like you actually play together with him.
- In electronic music the sound usually comes from loudspeakers. It does not necessarily come directly from stage but it can be placed around the audience. If not specified by the composer, accordionist should choose his stage position so, that the audience would be placed into the focus of resulting sound even if this does not look convenient for the accordionist himself. Since the position is found it is advised to adjust practicing conditions to it while rehearsing.
- If appropriate, the accordionist has to follow the attacks and decays of the electronic, especially if there is a recorded part. If the accordion is amplified, it is important to pay special attention to the microphones and always use them while practicing. The use of microphones modifies the performer’s perception of the sound produced on his instrument and one should practice to play with the amplification.
- One of the most important issues of chamber performance is that of coordination. Apart from works which do not require any synchronization or it can be very approximate, this question becomes vital. One solution to this issue is to use headphones with a click track to give either the tempo or audio cues. It is however very difficult to adjust the performance to the acoustic of the hall, especially in case of accordion, as the instrument has two different sound sources and the sound coming from the left side of the instrument will hardly be audible because of the headphones. Often, a visual metronome or visualized score can be used instead of click. Both these options give visual cue and allow the performer to follow music without being hindered by headphones. Another common practice is triggering pre–composed objects, switching the patches using a MIDI controller. In these cases it is the performer who cues the machine what to do and when to do.

The techniques of score-following and score-orientation has been largely used in performances with live-electronics, as the computer tracks the musician's activities in real time. Normally, the composer provides instructions on what kind of coordination is expected and how the performers synchronize with each other. To facilitate the performance one should use the same way of synchronization while practicing the work in studio or at the concert hall.

- Whereas a performance with live-electronics leaves a lot of space for imagination and teamwork, there is very little interactivity when performing with pre-recorded tape. However, it is still possible to provide a true interpretation even when the work requires extreme accuracy and precision. To do so one should study the electronic part just like we do when working on an acoustic piece of chamber music. Should we play a duo with cello or trumpet we will certainly check if we know enough about the range of instrument, its dynamic qualities, some basic performance techniques. The same must be done when working on electroacoustic work. It is not about turning an instrumentalist into programmer. It is about some general knowledge on how to set up interfaces, what to do with the patches provided, what are graphical signal-processing environments such as Max /MSP, PureData and object-oriented visual programming environment OpenMusic.

Any performance of even a very simple piece of electroacoustic music is very demanding; it requires more practicing, preferably in the venue or in a studio with the same technical and acoustic conditions and generally it takes much more time to get prepared for a concert. The results, however, can be very rewarding. Before the concert take enough time for the dress rehearsal and have someone to check the final balance. And remember that you perform in ensemble and that the electronic part is being performed, not just realized.

Sofia Ahjoniemi

MASTER OF MUSIC

## **Improvising with children**

Children often lack the inhibitions that adults have, which can make improvisation exercises a unique and exciting experience. However their young age can also mean that children lack the confidence to be creative and can lead to them feeling pressured and unenthusiastic about improvising music. The most important influences on their responses are a relaxing positive environment and the teacher's attitude.

Children should always feel valued, and any opinions or ideas they offer should be responded to in a positive manner. To increase the children's confidence, the teacher should make it clear that there is no such thing as a bad idea. Teachers should also use an appropriate level of language, in order to help build a relationship with their young students and create an atmosphere of trust. Once a strong relationship has been built, teachers will find it easier to create an environment that children feel safe in. This safe environment will in result in a relaxed and inspiring atmosphere in which the students feel free to become enthusiastic.

Teachers should be mindful that different children will often be receptive to different teaching methods. To unlock the child's musical potential the teacher should be prepared to vary their teaching style, and monitor which the child responds best to.

When I improvise with children I always ensure that my primary goal is for them to have fun and for them to leave the lesson having had a good experience. I hope that by improvising and having creative experiments with them, they gain confidence and the courage to not be afraid to make mistakes or unnatural sounds. In my personal experience I have found that the more I improvise with a child, the more natural the lesson becomes. As we listen to each other more, the interaction with the child grows.

With the accordion in particular I have noted that children often get very excited when they learn what kind of sounds can be made, and get a taste of the range of possible sounds available for them to improvise with.

I have made a short list of my favorite activities to be performed with children to help them learn to improvise:

### **Imitation**

The idea for this game is for the students to sit in a large circle and copy the sounds made by teacher. To start, the teacher knocks the mask and the children imitate. Then teacher can, for example, clap the bellows, scratch the mask, make a bellow shake, play a high note, low note, clusters or any other unusual sound. After a while someone else is picked to choose what sounds everyone else must copy and the game continues.

### **The Mirror Game**

In this game a teacher and student sit directly opposite each other. One person makes a movement and sound and other person's job is to mirror imitate it.

### **Hey-game**

This game is for larger groups where the teacher and students sit in a large circle. One participant makes a particular sound and the other group members imitate it. At any time any of the group members can shout "hey" and when they do, they then make a new sound which the rest of the group will then copy.

### **Emotion cards**

The teacher has a pile of cards all of which have an emotion written on them such as angry or happy. The students job is to figure out what sounds they can play or make which they feel best describe the emotion.

### **Dialog and storytelling**

For this game two students will require their instruments and the other students will listen. The two students each pick a card which has a character and a set of rules on it. Characters could include family members or people at work such as doctors or dentists. The rules could be only white buttons or only high notes. Finally the two students will pick a scenario card before trying to play out the combination of cards they have. With prompts and clues from the teacher, the other students have to try to guess the characters and the scenario.

Another similar game that students can play involves the teacher reading a story and the students playing sounds as the story unfolds. For instance students could be told to be certain animals or play background music for the story based on the mood.



Students could also try to carry out normal every day conversations using a topic provided by the teacher.

### **Hand puppet**

My favorite game requires some preparation, as hand puppets are used by the students. One student makes up or reads a story out loud. Behind them and out of sight of the first student, other students re-enact the story using hand puppets. A final student then improvises music based on the story and what the puppets are doing.

### **A composition**

This game requires a pen and paper. Everyone will “compose” a song where you can use whatever methods you want. For example: you can draw shapes, lines, notes, or other drawings. Then you take turns and play the composed song as you see the composition. The composer will also act as a conductor and add dynamics and tempo as liked.

### **Football game**

You will need two teams: The white-button team and black-button team. In this game the teacher will be the host, and will use their imagination to explain what is happening between the two teams. For example: “Now the white-button team is running faster towards the goal.” which means that the team of white-buttons should play faster. Teacher: “Oh, but the defender of the black-button team has just got the football and is trying to move it closer to the white-button team’s goal” and white-button team will make a sound which they think will suit the action. You will together decide which sounds could represent a goal etc. Usually there are more ideas than time to play!

### **Painting**

In the painting game the students are required to play the shapes and the colors of a painting. Everyone can choose where in the painting their improvisation starts from. After a while the teacher will discuss with the students what they were thinking when they played, which part of the painting they started, what happened in their improvisation and, for example, were there any differences when they played different colors.

### **Music with improvised rhythms**

This is a game where you need to be alert and focus on many things happening at the same time, and will help to make reaction times faster. Someone plays a song with an accordion, and everyone decides on a suitable rhythm for the song, each using a different way to make the rhythm, such as clapping their hands, tapping the bellow, or using their foot. The combination of all the different rhythms helps to create a fun rhythm orchestra. If there are too many people, the students can pair off, and choose their rhythm together. The teacher is the conductor and leads the dynamics of the orchestra. This is fun and educational for all; one student can perform a song from their repertoire and the orchestra can support the performer with their chosen rhythms.

Georg Schulz

UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS GRAZ

## **Pleading for a stylistic diversification in accordion's higher music education**

For a better contextualisation of my contribution I want to sketch my personal background first. Starting in my youth with the accordion as an amateur in Graz/Austria no professional higher education for accordion was in place in my country when I became 18 in 1981. After several precious encounters with Elsbeth Moser in Hannover, with Lech Puchnovski and Friedrich Lips in Poland, I had the luck to study with Mogens Ellegaard, who was employed at Graz Music Academy from 1989 on to his early death in 1995. After studying with him I became his assistant and stayed at the academy until today as a teacher.

From the early 90<sup>th</sup> the contemporary accordion experienced a boom in Austria; my colleague Alfred Melichar and I could motivate many Austrian composers to write for the instrument. In my case I introduced Georg Friedrich Haas, Bernhard Lang, Olga Neuwirth and Beat Furrer among others to the accordion and played in 1993 the first concert with accordion–chamber–music at Wien Modern. From 1995 on I was the standing accordionist at Klangforum Wien.

In 2000 I started with academic functions becoming responsible for Instrumental Studies, Jazz and Music Education – Voice and Instruments (IGP). From 2000 to 2007 I chaired all final examinations in IGP, became vicerector for study and teaching in 2003 and finally from 2007 to 2012 rector of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz. Nowadays I am serving as vice–president of the European association of conservatoires and work as an evaluator and advisor for conservatories and universities.

From the European perspective instrumental studies in higher music education are undergoing a slow but permanent change of orientation. Traditional career paths are vanishing (Gembris, 2014); many graduates are self–employed, working as freelance artists, combining various professional tasks in what is sometimes called a “portfolio career”. Together with the prevalence of “portfolio careers”, entrepreneurial skills have become more and more essential for alumni to survive. This was reflected by a three year project in the framework of Polifonia: Educating for Entrepreneurship (2011–2014) with a remarkable outcome which is worth detailed consideration (the details are published at [www.musicalentrepreneurship.eu](http://www.musicalentrepreneurship.eu)).

According to Ritterman (2010, p. 42) “Higher education arts institutions are now a much

more established part of the arts ecology... (and) acknowledged as major contributors to cultural life of the communities...". Creative Europe, an important Programme by the European Commission, has audience development as a main emphasis and Gembris (2014, p. 20ff) describes the career path of "Community Musician" or "Community Music Worker".

Popular music, mostly in form of world music, has become main study subjects in more and more European conservatoires and is no longer an unwanted activity of students outside of their "serious" studies.

Conservatories are responding to these changes in various ways. Some perpetuate the traditional education on canonical pieces as it was described unerringly by Nettl (1995) with "In the service of the masters". They argue this approach of the dominance of works by Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Liszt and Chopin (Nettl, p.16) with the paradigm that everything could be learned through the works by these great masters that can occur in a long life as a musician. Others search for new ways as for example the Conservatoire in Den Haag where an artistic research project serves as the core of the master-studies. Dejang et al. (2015) showed convincingly that the inclusion of artistic research at Master's level can combine the roles of gateway to the profession and bridge to the 3rd Cycle. This publication has shown a broad and very apt definition of the future profession of musicians. Curiosity and a reflective attitude help with so many crucial issues: developing an artistic personality, acquiring the entrepreneurial skills necessary for a sustainable career, enlarging the ability to evoke a comparable curiosity in audiences and other musicians, or becoming an inspiring teacher – to mention only some important aspects. To face the challenges of today in Higher Music Education in the United States of America Sarath et al. (2014, p. 2) suggested in a publication of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major, an activity of The College Music Society, a radical change in the undergraduate curriculum (equivalent in Europe: Bachelor) "The three pillars are creativity, diversity, and integration. TFUMM (Transforming Music Study from its Foundations) takes the position that improvisation and composition provide a stronger basis for educating musicians today than the prevailing model of training performers in the interpretation of older works... the need for students to engage with music of diverse cultures and the ways in which creative expression, including movement, underlie music across the globe...".

But are there canonical works in the accordion's repertoire? The development of such a canon started with transcriptions, when for example the competition in Klingenthal asked as a compulsory piece for a Prelude and Fugue out of a list from the Well-tempered Clavier. And there exists a small number of pieces that are considered as canonical like De

Profundis by Sofia Gubaidulina from 1978. Different schools of accordion's higher music education have developed their own canon consisting of the best new works premiered by the main teacher. This was the case among others with Mogens Ellegaard. And it is not surprising, because by first performances of important composers every accordionist can make the most reputable career as an artist and as an academic teacher. It was such a valuable endeavour by Claudio Jacomucci to foster exchange on this repertoire in *Modern Accordion Perspective #2* in form of a critical selection of accordion works composed between 1990 and 2010. It is undoubtedly crucial for accordion's higher music education, that students learn how to play these pieces and how to elaborate a first performance. In the observation of the author there are on the other hand accordion classes in Europe where the played repertoire is too constricted to a special aesthetic corresponding to the repertoire played by the main teacher.

I can understand this from a historical perspective. Even after 1958 when Ole Schmidt wrote *Symphonic Fantasy and Allegro, op. 20* for accordion and orchestra, which was considered by Mogens Ellegaard in 1990 "the first really serious work for accordion written by a good composer" he often mentioned that the first candidate for entrance examination at The Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen about ten years later played "La Paloma" with Stradella Bass. So he believed that accordion's higher music education has to foster contemporary composition for the instrument only and must not include forms of popular music. What was true in this time of emerging recognition of the instrument is from my point of view antiquated nowadays.

I must admit self-critically that I prefer to teach works that I have played myself because I know them very well. Or teach at least works that I like because I think they are worth practicing. But how can students develop their artistic personality through playing pieces suggested by their teachers only? The answer to this question sounds so obvious, but is tricky. Because it brings us to the question how teachers can ensure that students select works fitting for the development of their own personality. This question is considered by the whole European Higher Education System as can be observed by looking closer to the revised European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), approved by the Ministerial Conference in May 2015. Regarding student-centered learning, teaching and assessment the standard 1.3 states that "Institutions should ensure that programs are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process and that the assessment of students reflects this approach."

European comparison shows that in countries where students got used to decide on their own learning process by a modular system in high-school this endeavour is easier to follow

than in countries with a rigid high-school system. In any case teachers must act as mentors and show the students their possibilities. This must include showing the students the rich variety of works and styles including improvisation open for the accordion nowadays. And as an effect of implementation of the ESG assessment of students must not be limited on the canonical works only but should be open for contributions from a repertoire that reflects the students' artistic personalities. A great stylistic diversification – simultaneously to keeping the standard in the interpretation of contemporary pieces – will help the students to find their own successful path in the work life with their instrument.

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### **Accordion: new generation**

The accordion, as a recent instrument, doesn't naturally have a very significant projection in the history of music yet. Nevertheless, the artistic contribution especially of relevant personalities of the accordion in several countries, has allowed the instrument to acquire, step by step, a more prestigious status all around the world.

The evolution of the quality of the accordion teaching provided to children in conservatories, music academies, may be extremely important in the development of the visibility of the instrument in a near future. In my opinion, one of the most determinant aspects in this process will be a deep revision / update of the accordion official programs taught in music schools, bearing in mind the reality of the instrument today. In a general way the accordion teachers need to be more perspicacious in the research of methods, books, studies, works for the teaching of the instrument, not accommodating exclusively to material they already know or repertoire referred for many years. This type of conduct by the teachers implies a stagnation of knowledge in the student's academic course, which is not at all positive for the accordion class.

For the teacher it's very often difficult to obtain from his student a satisfactory musical outcome. Well, this is a common thing to all teachers. There's no such thing like lucky or unlucky teachers! You need to be patient and wait for outcomes. Every student has his own learning rhythm, and the role of the teacher here is fundamental. You need to know how to manage with sensibility the different age stage of the student. For instance, a very complicated stage is adolescence! During this period teenagers tend to study very little, because they are in a time of their life they haven't defined their way yet. On the other hand, the relationship between teacher and student may create some tension, due to a most complicated character of the student or even the teacher. In this case, it is the teacher's role to analyze all the aspects in a conscientious way, for the most important goal in this phase to be reached: that the student keeps the needed motivation to go on studying.

The level of exigency of work asked to the student is an essential factor for the development of his path. However we need to be a good example, a reference. We can't demand if ourselves don't make it. This attitude doesn't give us credibility and the student automatically loses faith in what we say or do. Especially the younger students, feel very

much the friendship relationship we create with them or not. If we can be an "idol" to the student we'll demand what we want!

The fulfillment of goals established in several moments during the year is preponderant for the evolution of the students. If there's no goals to reach it is particularly difficult to make any student to progress, even the most gifted. A regular participation in auditions, concerts, master classes, contests leads students to be always active and motivated, which implies regular study. This practice will make possible for them to be more ready to follow a musical path, if they decide so. I'd like to say I'm apologist for students to participate in competitions, since it doesn't jeopardize their academic path. Therefore contests can be an enriching experience to the students if they serve as a complement to the study of the repertoire they must do in academies, conservatories, superior music schools.

In my opinion there's two very important aspects in the study of the instrument: the musical reading and the technique.

In general the accordion students (or any other polyphonic instrument) have a big difficulty to reading at first sight. This aspect harms and quite demotivates the student, being directly related to giving up on the instrument. Due to the great difficulty to accomplish the program contents in conservatories, academies, it becomes impossible to transit the level/year. This gap is related to the fact that students usually study a few works/studies per year and the disorganized way they execute the musical reading. The accordion teachers themselves due to not being, a big part, active performers it doesn't allow them to evaluate the huge importance of this matter, being related to the professional future of the today students. Unequivocally the musical reading of our instrument is quite more difficult than of a melodic instrument. Thus if you don't care to develop the practice of reading at first sight since very early, it will be very complicated to make a professional carrier in the future.

On the other hand, the technique quality is preponderant in the musician's performance. Very hardly you can reach very good artistic levels if you have technical difficulties. This kind of conditioning might immensely affect the performance of any musician. So it is very important the research for works/studies aiming the development of specific technical aspects. For me, the technique must be developed since very soon, because it is in the earliest age this element can be substantially developed. By the natural characteristics of the human body, the technical level is more difficult to evolve in the adult stage.

Being a good musician doesn't mean clearly being a good teacher. But... in my opinion, an accordionist with professional experience as an interpreter can transmit to his students a group of fundamental requirements for success, as well as a larger vision of the music's professional world. Today the quality of musicians is bigger and bigger. It becomes essential



that the artistic level of accordionists develop, so that more often they integrate the professional market. As a consequence, the inclusion of the accordion in the agenda of important concert rooms, in prestigious music festivals, will be undoubtedly one of the most determinant aspects of the growing visibility of our instrument.

The message I would like to leave for accordion young teachers and interpreters is, above all, to have enthusiasm and being innovative, not conformist and to believe in what they do... The evolution of the accordion depends a lot on this kind of attitude! At this moment there's a new generation of accordionists with great value spread all over the world. If they all try to dignify the instrument, creating a new accordion generation, with accuracy, dynamics, innovation, I have no doubt that the accordion will be very soon in the circle of the most appreciated and recognized instruments.

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## **French Regards**

In this article, in regard to my opinion and experience, I want to explain at first some general aspects of the accordion, then answer a few questions which I think, are important to me.

The accordion in my opinion is an instrument which is constantly develop. The instrumental building and the different possibilities to play this instrument are growing every day. Even it may not be at the same technical level as the other music instruments, for instant as the piano, but it keeps improving. The previous generation had done such a great job with those composers and we are continuing their works as best as we can. Nowadays, I believe that the classical accordion is being well known as much as the other music instruments in our music world. Therefore, there is no reason to say that the accordion is behind other music instruments which is not quite well– known or else. Those negative perception don't help much in developing what we called as the « classical accordion ». For sure, the accordion is not as at the lowest level as what those may think, since its has been developing even better in every single moment. Other facts are that the accordion has lots of types which sometimes make people uneasy to understand what is accordion, especially to differentiate which is exactly the free bass accordion.

However, by working out with talented composers who have the great knowledge of the accordion along with the musicians who can show and teach us all the possibilities in playing, as well to the audience who are interesting about accordion, are the best way to understand it.

We can notice this aspect also while choosing the accordion for young players. In some cases, at the beginning, their parents might be a bit worried when they let their children take/decide their own preferences, however with a brief and clear explanation of its function together with some playing presentation, those parents are well understood and being excited to discover more.

## **Different problems and issues in teaching the accordion**

In regard to my teaching experience since thirteen years ago, I have been noticing in France, that there are only few modern accordion technical methods for free bass.

When I was young, I didn't do any exercise rather than the repertoire pieces, there was no teacher explain me about other technical exercises and I heard from the other musician colleagues in France their experience were the same, which it has been effecting the quality of technical performance in learning the accordion and I have noticed it also with my students. We have a few nice books with pieces and songs for children, with a good progression called «Premières comptines» by Corinne Micat, «Les expériences de Maître Lulu Berlu» by Simon Baggio. I have been using this methods, but I have noticed that it isn't enough in developing the technical aspect to be quick with the appropriation of the accordion, to muscle the fingers, for the sight reading etc.

Then, since 2014, I am writing a method focusing on technical exercises for young players with associated repertoire. During my teaching experience I have been applying this method towards my pupils, which gives me a proof that by practicing a lot of exercises added to repertoire, it has develop their skills in sight reading and technical level. Thus, it is necessary for us to pay attention and search the best method as like other music instruments, as much as I believe that we should write modern accordions methods for C system, since up to now in France we haven't had any for the children for free bass. While for the students until circa 14 years, I am using two methods for high level by Claudio Jacomucci «Technique I», by Germano Scurti «Tecnica», Alain Abbott «54 exercices de technique», which have supported the students in achieving their solid technique, to maintain their «endurance».

### **About teaching the contemporary music**

One of the most essential aspects and objectives for me is the ability to teach many types of music. Especially, by what method to teach contemporary music. I think the new music should be presented from the beginning until the end of the curricular according to the age of our instrument, a young instrument!

When I start with the young players, my first lessons consists of discovering the different sounds of the accordion through the most equivalent images. For example doing the bear with heavy clusters, imitating the bird with high notes, doing the telephone with middle loud notes with minor third... Afterward, the pupils are able to build up a story based on all those given examples, as much as they are being attracted and fascinated with the lessons. Meanwhile, at the same time they also have to learn the notes, to use correctly the bellow, pieces...and there is a break in between, until we say: "Now you are able to play 'Tears' by Ben Lorentzen..." when they are reaching the age of about 15. Then, my question will be: *shouldn't we waive out that kind of 'break'?*

### **Some possibilities**

I have been using some little modern pieces in the written method for accordion from Simon Baggio «Les expériences de Maître Lulu Berlu» likewise a very interesting piano's handbook edited by Monika Hildebrand with a lot of pieces by Helmut Lachemann, Rudolf Kelterborn, Thedi Wegmann, which the accordion learner can use right after a few months of their first accordion lessons. It is necessary to have that kind of written book much more, therefore we should work together with the composer to commission some pedagogical pieces. For example, in March I organized an event in Strasbourg called «project AccordeoNow», where the conservatory ordered fifteen new pieces for the children and the teenagers, thus they had the possibilities to work with the composers for their premiere and practiced the appropriate usage of the different music languages. As I mentioned earlier, I think it is very important to educate our young accordionists to the modern music because our instrument is new and we have a lot of modern repertoires for high-level learners, even though there are less for youth between the age of 8 and 14. Both are essential for the future of accordion.

### **The different repertoires for accordion**

There is a normal society phenomenon to play what we know or what we listen to one day. We have recognized that the repertoire of the accordion is particularly huge for high level. From decades lots of people all over the world have been working to make premiere and developing the repertoire (*such as: Inaki Alberdi in Spain, Teodoro Anzellotti, Hugo Noth in Germany, Mogens Ellegaard in Denmark, Claudio Jacomucci in Italy, Matti Rantanen in Finland, etc.*).

These days there is the new base of pieces on the internet called «ricordo al futuro» in which we can find all informations about 9200 pieces for accordion solo or chamber music all over Europe, amazing! Ironically, in many International competitions, we still find the same repertoire, while for the Music Chamber we mostly hear and enjoy the same pieces.

I personally believe that with the help of internet, some swaps and interchange in repertoire will broaden up our mind, as good as being constantly curious about what is going in the accordion world.

I am fully convinced that if we are working together, exchanging and sharing the updated knowledge likewise the renew information, as much as not just being interested in the number of our own premieres but then forbid the other musician to play the same pieces as ours, then we are going to be able to move forward. It is our duty to lead our young learners and students about sharing and developing our knowledge for the future of the accordion only by setting up a good way.

Anders Grothe

ACCORDION PEDAGOGUE / MASTER DEGREE IN COMPOSITION AND PEDAGOGY

## **Experience with a “new” left hand keyboard**

### **Historical background**

Until about 1960, very few accordionists played or knew anything about free–bass. However, during the following years, interest started to grow for this extended musical possibility among some young players. In Norway we had heard about the “fifth–converter” and had seen the Hohner Morino with three rows of “baritone” basses between the Stradella bass (or standard bass) keyboard and the bellows. We had also heard that some Italian brands made similar instruments. But at that time, Hohner had a good reputation as concert instruments, so for myself I ordered a Morino.

For a few years, I played on the nine rows in the left hand, but even after intense practicing, I was not satisfied with the performance possibilities on this free–bass keyboard. Hohner has always built the baritone rows on their button accordions in a mirror arrangement of the first rows of the right hand side. The idea is good. The human brain is constructed in such a way that the easiest method for our hands (and fingers) is mirror movements; think f. ex. about the conductor’s movements! So far so good. However, the problem is that on the nine–row instrument it is impossible to play with the left–hand thumb. Moreover, the four other fingers are also stretched out, which have a restraining effect on some movements; playing a good legato is difficult in many situations. With the intention of trying to remove some of these problems, a few years later I changed to a converter, which had become easily available in the meantime. This was considerably better. You could use the thumb on the first row, and the other fingers came in a better position.

However, after a while I was still not satisfied. We had now mirror arrangements of the buttons right/left, but it would have been so much better if we had been able to play every note with the thumb with the left hand as well, and if our keyboard had a shape that allowed identical fingerings on scales and other figures in both hands! In fact, the normal, flat keyboard is made for Stradella bass. Furthermore, it is uncertain that this keyboard automatically fits another arrangement of tones. So I started to design a new left hand keyboard.

### **A new keyboard experiment**

My first idea was rather extreme. I wanted to play about as free in the left hand as in the right hand. So I designed a bass part with button dimensions similar to those in the treble part, and the keyboard pointing forward, a few centimeters beyond the front of the instrument (1975).



The factory ORA in Castelfidardo built this instrument for me (1977). On this, it was possible to play practically everything like you could with the right hand. (*Almost* because you are, of course, a little bit restrained by the bass strap.) See fig. No. 1.

The response from the audience and the accordionists to this construction was rather bad. To be able to play sufficiently free with the left hand, it was necessary to have a long distance between the bass strap and the keyboard. Therefore, many people thought the instrument looked too big. Moreover, the accordionists thought this was no longer an accordion, but an entirely new instrument, and they missed the possibility of combining the single note keyboard with standard-bass. To avoid fighting for an

instrument without followers, I gave up this construction and started to think about other possibilities.

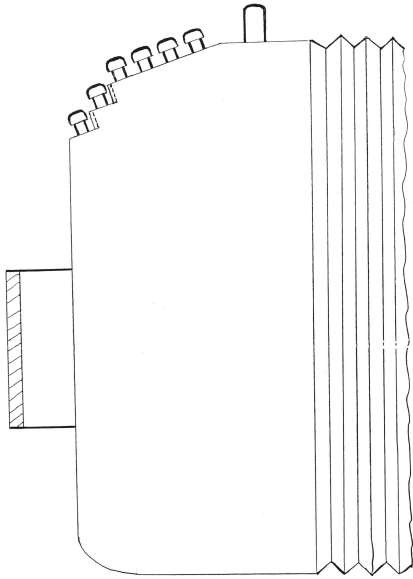
### **A compromise**

How could it be possible to design an accordion which looks almost like a “normal” one, but on which you can also play every note with the thumb of the left hand?

A long process of thinking then followed, combined with experiments with small models. The progress was about like this:

I now wanted to have the same button dimensions and distances as on the normal Stradella bass. I tried to observe the radius action of the thumb when the hand was in playing position on the traditional keyboard. It was easy to see that if the thumb was to reach more than the buttons in the first row, it was necessary to change the angle of the keyboard considerably, but much less if the button rows were placed in steps, like in the right hand, but with higher steps. (No exact measurements are given in this description). An undesirable consequence of this, however, was that the keyboard reached beyond the front of the

instrument, similar as on my first model, but not to the same degree, when you should have six rows of buttons. To move the keyboard more under the bass strap was no good solution,



because then, the fingers would be too restrained in their movements. How could this problem be solved? Yes, as a first basic fact, we can state that you have all notes on the three first rows, so it is sufficient to place only the three first rows in a comfortable angle and in suitable high steps so that the thumb can reach all of them. (A way of avoiding too long distances between the rows in the steps is to have mushroom buttons instead of cylinder buttons, which is important for optimum functionality of the thumb). Also in the right hand, it is very seldom that we need the thumb on other rows than the three first. Therefore, the further rows can be placed on the same level as the third row. This level then has about the same position as a normal accordion bass keyboard, but a little bit more slanted

than many brands usually have on their instruments. See figure No. 2.

### Six rows free-bass only or converter?

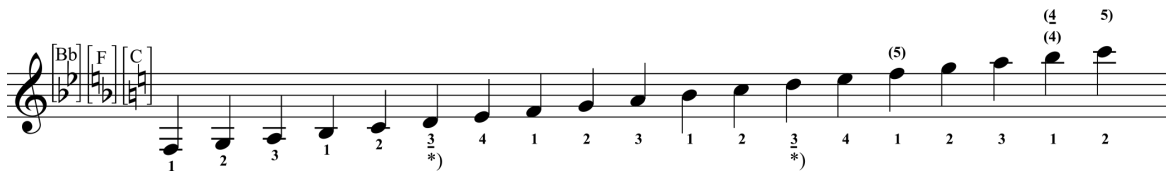


For myself I had planned to have only free-bass on this instrument. The first instrument I ordered was made thus. Zero Sette in Castelfidardo built it for me in 1981. On this I can play three and four-row figures in all keys without problems. In addition to this, I had the idea of having an octave coupling “8va bassa” on the three first rows. Then it is possible on this instrument to play f. ex. organ pedal notes with the thumb and “tenor” notes with the other fingers on the inner three rows. In the same way, quasi-standard bass accompaniment is easy to play on this keyboard. See fig. No. 3.

I think only three instruments based on this version have been built, which is one more indication that the accordionists under all circumstances want to have Stradella bass on their instruments. Free-bass must come in addition. Therefore I thought, apropos my last shaping of the left hand keyboard, that this also could give the possibility for the optimal

combination of standard bass and free-bass in one instrument (“converter”). I then ordered some converters in different sizes from Zero Sette to let some pupils start to practice on them. (In the meantime, some small children had started to play on only three rows with them, to observe the functionality in the teaching of beginners.)

## MAJOR SCALE FINGERINGS



On this converter keyboard, you can play much easier than on the flat keyboard. You can f. ex. play scales on four rows following the “positioning principle” with the same fingerings as in the right hand<sup>4</sup>. In addition to this, it is an extra bonus that you also have one more finger for the standard bass. This can be especially helpful for long jumps (F major/F – A7/E) and legato playing. Also, by combining low standard bass notes with free-bass notes, you have one more finger.

This keyboard has been a big success among Norwegian converter players, and also for free-bass pupils in the music schools (who start with only three rows). We probably have about 300 instruments (all sizes) with these steps circulating in our country. At least ten producers (in Italia, Germany and Russia) have built such instruments.

An instrument like my first model with buttons like those in the treble side demands a complete new construction of both the box and the mechanics by the accordion factories. However, in my last version, with “normal” bass button dimensions, only the keyboard plate with steps has to be made differently from other converters. The mechanics are practically the same. Therefore, it is no big problem to order such instruments from (some) factories.

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<sup>4</sup> Fingering underlined: 4<sup>th</sup> row. The same fingerings can also be used on three rows only, but it is more comfortable here for the longest finger to play these notes on the 4<sup>th</sup> row.



**Pedagogical aspect**

Some technical and pedagogical aspects are already mentioned. The two main advantages of this keyboard are:

1) It is easier to play technical figures like scales and arpeggios because the thumb can make a “bridge” between shorter groups of notes played by the other fingers, in the same way as in the right hand. One result of this can be that you will be able to play f. ex. pieces by Scarlatti, which are almost impossible to manage on the flat keyboard.

2) Because the tone arrangement of the buttons is a mirror of the buttons in the right hand, it is easy to learn the keyboard’s “tone-map”, and we can play scales and other figures with exact same fingering in both hands. After a short time with focused teaching, the pupil will discover this inherent orderliness, and when the teacher wants to show a new figure for the left hand, it is easier to show it for the right hand. Another skill, which is easier to manage on step keyboard, is playing legato polyphony, especially with two voices in the left hand, because it is much easier to put the thumb under other fingers than f. ex. the second finger over or under the third.

All the major scale fingerings for right and left hand on one staff only (– here C–, F– and Bb–major, but they can be transposed to every other key by moving the hand step by step up or down).

Herbert Scheibenreif

MUSICOLOGIST

## **Accordion and general music education**

As you know the artistic playing of the accordion has developed immensely during the last years. In various countries and at universities the accordion has been acknowledged as fully equivalent to other instruments, famous composers such as Sofia Gubaidulina have written parts for the accordion, and – last but not least – the quality of the instrument has been improved to a large extent. People celebrated this development euphorically, but very often they forgot the basic problems of the education of beginners: which instruments are apt for children? What about the repertoire – only original music or transcriptions as well? Is it better to begin with the Stradella bass or the baritone bass manuals? etc. Before dealing with these specific questions I would like to comment on some pedagogical and psychological questions concerning general music education, as the formation of many accordion teachers can be said to be rather unsatisfactory with regard to these questions.

Music education is part of general education. Singing and playing an instrument, listening and watching offer creative attractions, raise the fantasy and the capability of concentrating. This experience, to create something together, to feel joy and to gain the others' confidence, means a decisive experience in a young person's life. Music also influences the child in his emotional feelings. Music helps the developing personality, strengthens one's power of judgement and has even an important social function: it connects people – even where communication through language is hardly possible.

What would life be like without the movements of music, the breath of melodies, without rhythm and harmony? That's why music education has been one of the most important tasks of all music cultures. Music education begins with babies and in nursery homes, it's one of the most important aspects of teenager–education as well as the education of adults. Music education begins with the most simple game, with a simple song and it ends in the most difficult thinking processes. The whole music education, however, aims at happiness and joy. If a child can't be made happy with music there is no music education. If this education does not begin with music and lead to music in the end. Music and music education, when they are in the hands of good musicians and teachers, cannot be parted, they must form a unit, like for example man and life. Thus the musician is a teacher and the teacher musician.

The music schools represent an important fact in music life. The individual basic requirements and conditions of pupils demand a flexible and varied pedagogical and psychological approach of their educational process to gain the optimal results concerning the development, and encouraging their musical abilities and skills. The latter very often need a long time to develop, in an active study of the respective contents and the specific work of the pupil. They are basic requirements as well as results of this work.

The development of capabilities is different for everybody, but there are, for example, certain age groups showing particularly apt requirements for developing certain abilities. The pupil's abilities and will to achieve something play an important part and can be different from person to person. Movements which are already present in the child's motoricity should be developed very early. Experience shows that the growth of senso-motorial abilities (sense and feeling for equilibrium, balance and mobility) is important for playing an instrument and can only be learnt very hard later. Senso-motorial abilities are – above all – acquired and firmly established through practice of playing an instrument.

Research work shows that the manual or better said the senso-motorial abilities of a child are much higher as expected so far. The musical imagination of a child (singing, listening, rhythm) must not be ignored, either.

In addition to the pedagogical and cultural influence of our environment, especially by instructors and teachers, the pupil's own work is very important. To be successful he needs motivation, interest in learning and in the subject, as well as a lot of activity. The more he is motivated the better his achievements and results will be. Dealing with music must give the pupil joy, he must earn it, must identify himself with this joy, because this art only shows results if you work with it practically and emotionally. We must refuse a teaching that reduces the playing of an instrument to reproduction of correct sounds, to useful fingerings, movements or technical exercises. A vast general music education as well as the development of understanding of music on an aesthetic basis is essential. This aesthetic education can be reached by working on the oeuvre emotionally, understanding and reproducing it. This holds true for the forming of a simple tone, a melody, a folk song as well as high-brow oeuvres.

The development of abilities is part of the development of a person's personality, and that is also true for everyone's specific musical capabilities. General talent can be defined as the respective development of personality. The level of such a talent is determined by concentration, perseverance, availability, speed of psychic issues, fantasy, ideas and abilities to analyze facts. Talent can only be developed through hard work, that happens – above everything else – in a systematic and purposeful educational process. In its entirety musical talent appears as dominating quality of one's personality and influences the latter's behaviour

and interests to a great extent. Talent also shows itself in a pupil's productivity, in the numerous forms of sensuous and logical experience of music, of emotional, aesthetic and intellectual comprehension of contents.

A lot of pupils and students do not know how to approach an oeuvre, how and what they should practice. Whoever wants to achieve new knowledge and abilities must learn to be able to practice and must practice to be able to learn more. That also means that you have to learn what and how to practice. Practice is a specific form of learning, it also is new acquisition and development of abilities as well as the stabilization of these abilities. The better the results are the more one approaches one's aims, postponing them at the same time, that means that you have learnt through practice that you can learn even more and that you have to practice more. This circle – which leads to a higher level – is helped by constant learning. The success of practice and ability depends very much on the pupil's knowledge about aim and purpose, if he knows of his progress, that means in which way this practice is experienced by the learner. Practice must be more and more efficient concerning the time of practice and its results. Experience shows that success depends to a great extent on the pupil's willingness and it shows, as well, that willingness leads back to success. Concerning the memory, the knowledge of a musical performance

consists very often in the intensity of the first impression. We know that the practice of sensible contexts is much more successful and musical than practicing cut up knowledge. Small steps of learning should mark the success, first practice and repetitions are to be introduced soon after learning new parts. For the teacher it is important to change methods to increase the pupil's concentration, motivation and results, for practice does not simply mean a repetition of the same things. Mechanical repetition necessarily leads to monotony, it is boring and tiring. The teacher must find studies in which technical problems can be overcome quite easily. It is also very important that the program contains parts of various musical eras. By and by the pupil must learn how to practice an oeuvre even without the direct help of his teacher ( e.g. manual abilities like fingering, changing of the bellow, articulation, on a higher level he must be able to complete analyses of oeuvre with their philosophical and music–aesthetic background ).

The pupil's willingness to practice and to learn depends to a great extent on the teacher's pedagogical instinct, which shows that the teacher is highly responsible and a model for the pupil. We recognize, for example, the pupil's good will if the relationship teacher – pupil is based on frankness, honesty and willingness to work. Very important, too, is the right

motivation, as it helps the pupil to estimate and form all his learning. Throughout this practice the relationship teacher – pupil changes, which means that the pupil's independence increases in proportion to learning and domination of a certain subject.

Generally we can state a constant increase of self-education, as well as a decrease of the teacher's influence. All in all we have to encourage the pupil's creative abilities. Particularly talented pupils must be challenged! We can activate a pupil's independence by demanding solutions of certain problems, and he comes to know that solving a problem can give him joy. At the same time he learns to estimate and to value his achievements and his conduct, as well as to increase his level. Self-education and self-evaluation are necessary elements in the process of personal development – which is the target of all education, and therefore also of music education.

Another important aid for a pupil's artistic development are performances, for instance concerts or competitions. It is important to develop attitudes and engagement and the immensely valuable self-discipline. Competitions themselves are a certain means to increase achievements, however, we must fail to notice certain dangers: very often "music teachers" overstrain pupils by giving them too difficult oeuvres. This often destroys the development of musicality.

Every teacher is responsible for his teaching. The relationship between the teacher and the pupil should always be a basic concern, and this relationship must be dominated by the teacher's confidence in the abilities of his pupils. A teacher's optimism, his pedagogical ideas are important for a good atmosphere and therefore for the achievement of good results. That does not mean that we have to find excuses for difficulties or failures. On the contrary, we must find out the reasons for problems or difficulties to be able to find pedagogical or psychological methods to change and solve certain problems. It depends on the teacher's pedagogical skills to find an effective middle course between criticism and approval. Education in its contents is very much determined by the aim to offer the pupil solid knowledge, artistic abilities and to firmly secure them. Many accordion teachers are content to teach their pupils certain techniques, they neglect, however, the development of their musicality. Techniques should only be a means to convey the musical contents. The pupil learns how to control his instrument to turn outwards his "inner self". To reach this aim the lesson must be as interesting as possible, varied and exciting – simply a work of art! A music teacher is expected to teach his subject in an artistic way. A certain knowledge of basic physiological and psychological processes in learning and playing, an exact know-how of possible methods, and pedagogical well founded and individual application of this knowledge is required to attract the pupil also emotionally. Interest in and love of music, the basis of the pupil's motivation, which is so important for his professional development, are decisively formed after the model of the teacher. "Teaching must be his passion!" (as it is the pupil's passion to learn!). At the beginning sound patterns, musical memory and the wish to form something oneself can be aroused with simple means of improvisation. Onomatopoeic

presentations of children's themes, the "telling" of stories or legends creates a certain connection of life and music in the pupil's mind. At the same time a new basis for auditive teaching methods for beginners is created. The importance of sound patterns vis-a-vis instrumental techniques has already been stated. Unfortunately failures during early musical education, which are very important for a pupil's personality, can hardly be compensated at universities. Criteria for a teacher's authority are respect and appreciation, and they can to be constantly renewed. Authority is characterized by high professional knowledge and skill, firm ideological and moral attitudes, consequence, love of justice and the ability to offer the pupil an example for doing the right thing.

The search for optimal repertoires, instruments and playing systems represent basic problems in the teaching of beginners, and there are still no final solutions in sight. Music literature used for beginners should in any case correspond with the mentality, the talent and the interests of the pupils, and it should never be chosen according to competitions. Music renews itself constantly. A lot of oeuvres the sound of which was unpleasant for people of earlier centuries, are popular works of art today. Accordionists often lack frankness of new and strange things, which – in the end – also helps traditional music. For its further development the accordion needs the impulse of contemporary artists and composers, and that not only in the artistic field, but also for the teaching of beginners. Where are such oeuvres for the accordion like the one Schumann and Tchaikovsky wrote for beginners learning to play the piano? Studies and methods are numerous, but their profitable use depends very much on the pupil's qualification. ("The pupil is the method!") Good music for beginners is unfortunately very rare! If there were enough good original oeuvres for the accordion, there would not be the problem of having to use transcriptions.

For playing an instrument special anatomic and physiological conditions are very important. The anatomy of a musician, the structure of his hands (which can be measured) and their relation with the nervous system set natural limits. Today we can find out the possibilities of a player which are limited by his physiology, we can study his playing, we can show his mistakes and measure and bring out the ones which are not always to be heard. Thus there are bases for new teaching methods. Generally seen, a normal physical development is enough for the successful accordion player. No special body measurements, functions of muscles or processes concerning the nervous system are necessary. On the contrary, we must find such measurements which interfere with playing the accordion to advise a pupil against choosing this instrument. Unfavourable anatomical or physiological conditions can, however, be compensated by high musicality, strong will and mental flexibility. Laxity in movement is certainly an essential qualification for successful playing. The necessary fingerings should be reached without bracing, the player should have

developed a normal body size and a certain ability to open, move and stabilize his fingers. The absolute aim should be the often discussed standardization of instruments – correspondence of beginners' instruments, those of advanced learners, up to the concert instruments. The button accordion has gained its practical position in the artistic playing, but a similar development will certainly be necessary for the education of beginners. Today's participants in competitions will certainly influence their pupils towards this direction.

Similar to the problem of button or piano accordion there is also the question, if beginners should start with the Stradella bass or baritone bass manuals. One of the mistakes of accordion teachers is to discuss systems instead of creating the basic requirements for a musically incontestable playing. Today the accordion is – concerning the quality of sound, the technical possibilities, as well as those of expression – an instrument which meets all technical, musical and artistic demands.

Systems are only a means to an end, the music must absolutely be the dominating purpose: this holds true for the folklore and also for the artistic domain of all instruments, not only for the accordion. Modern accordion teachers have to face the difficult task of being ready for both directions. As artist he aims at an artistic appreciation of his instrument in concert, but at the same time he makes propaganda to gain more prestige for the instrument and he educates a not too small part of the audience. Finally, we need both, a great number of accordionists and top performances of some exceptional players. If compromises are out of the question for artistic playing, there are – however – different criteria for beginners: next to consequent work (forming of sound already starting with the first lesson!) the love of making music should be a central aspect!

Although time is high, a basic and solid development of the accordion will take its time (like any other instrument), and the realization of certain aims of today will be the task of oncoming generations of pupils and teachers. We must not be impatient! Even small steps towards a developing process are precious! If, however, we want to raise the level of top players, we will first have to raise that of the education of beginners. Even the best teacher is good enough for that!

Andreas Nebl

HOHNER KONSERVATORIUM TROSSINGEN / OSNABRÜCK UNIVERSITY

## **The core and fulfilment of good musical quality lies in the skill of listening**

My career as a classical accordionist started with the winning of the international competition of chamber music in Val Tidone, Italy in 2001. I went on to holding performances worldwide together with my brother Frank Nebl in the duo Nebl&Nebl and receiving numerous invitations to music schools, conservatories and universities to teach students and scholars in the art of playing the accordion as well as performing chamber music. I was employed in 2003 by the Conservatory of Trossingen. Since then many of my students have won national and international competitions competing as soloists and in ensembles. In addition I was invited by various national and international associations to work as a juror at significant competitions.

My pedagogical work as a teacher for accordion differs from others, essentially in my complex views on the cultural life of music, which I experienced in former periods of my life. From classical chamber music, Jazz, Folk to New Music – in the past phases of my life I've immersed myself into a real and vivid musical environment when making music for any length of time. As a young adolescent accordion player I underwent the Austrian–Slovenian world of folk music intensively. For five years I played in a quintette performing semi–professionally, in the German–speaking area. Although my teacher at the time taught music solely by playing off sheet music, in the ensemble we transcribed all pieces ourselves by listening to them on CDs. Because of this very practical method of using our listening skills we were able to adopt personal qualities and features of each player, formation and style. I understood for the first time what it means to experience music between the lines. With merely sheet music this would have been unthinkable. Notably it was a lucky circumstance to train our sense of hearing – unmethodically and drawn from life.

Later, during my 'phase of Jazz' numerous 'Jazz freaks' were among my friends of which several subsequently studied Jazz at various universities. We'd perform in pubs and officially in concert halls playing the Real Book through and through. I created arrangements for various formations up to the development of a Big Band. At that time we expected to know the records of the 'greats' and we were crazy about them enough to try to sing along all the solos of our role models while driving to concerts. This marvelous music with its freedom of improvisation and it's alternative conviction was very formative in that stage of my life.



Since my graduation two decades ago I have been living and working for example participating at concerts such as the “Würzburger Mozartfest” in 2014 or the “Internationale Bachakademie” in 2015, within the culture of classical music. And still today my fascination to explore music to its core is unbroken. Permanent engagements at the State Opera House of Karlsruhe, as well as concert series to Japan with my wife Naoko Nebl (née Takeuchi) are very inspiring fields of activity in addition to each time confirming my principle of continuous learning. Bach’s, Scarlatti’s, Haydn’s or Mozart’s music have become the emblem for aesthetic fulfilment. My belief that there are artistic perspectives for the repertoire of the accordion is strengthened by composers like Hosokawa, Gubaidulina or Tiensuu. When searching for clues about famous composers I began to understand, that it is essential to analyse the score very closely in order to interpret pieces adequately!

Even though I’m acquainted with the “accordionistically rose-coloured glasses” opinions of essential university and music school educators, I’m not wearing set glasses and of which I’m not opposed to. I’m not opposed to it because one principle has been there from the beginning. First and foremost it’s about the music we create not about the accordion. Hugo Noth as my most important teacher didn’t look through set glasses either. During my studies he hadn’t just been an excellent musician but a renaissance man with a spectacular education, profoundness, intuition and vision.

I only became acquainted with repertoire for piano at the age of 13. This took me aback when I considered the norms of musical content in addition to the form the education was given.

At the time the quality of making music was going through an evolution. That opened a totally new dimension for me in creating music, especially in emotional matters.

The most important goal of my educational vision and my own artistic work is the expression of music. This grows through the work by a colourful sound and when shaping clear musical visions. When playing the accordion it’s all about communicating to the audience the intent of the music rather than focusing on side paths such as demonstrating perfectly trained patterns. Although this might flatter one’s ego it’s not relevant when expressing the musical content. I’m convinced that in the end mastering techniques and a good sound aren’t enough, because both are mere means of a musical intention. They can solely be sub-goals on the way to a genuine and personal expression of music.

I try to show that a pure pitch might be lacking when it isn’t set in a clear relation to another aspect. I ongoing seek to create a bigger emphasis on the many musical languages because these pitches shouldn’t be accepted as a norm. Music needs to be understood as a whole – not just obvious parts of it. To reduce music to its pleasant beauty means to lose sight of it in the end.

In my lesson technical phenomena are developed intensively on one hand, yet they are always seen in relation to the players self. Technique without a concept of music behind it is merely loose noise and becomes simply void. When we don't learn to understand this, technique without concept, or take this to heart we are only able to counterfeit music. As musicians we should hold ourselves to higher moral values than to simply sell counterfeit music.

Musical expression and being able to show its relation to one another are alike to the body language of actors and dancers. Actors have to phrase sentences so the audience is able to understand at once and follow the plot. It has to be emotional distinctive – that is most important in my opinion. All utterances have to be felt and lived in order for the listener to notice and if so sympathise with these feelings. Therefore accordionists too should create music with their whole being. When this happens there are no deceptions and in turn no room for questions.

The core and fulfilment of good musical quality lies in the skill of listening. It is also the essential platform of communication where player and listener encounter each other. A basic principle of my education is to thoroughly challenge the listener. I mean listening in a larger sense of one's perception. For a musician it is important to walk through life listening, to observe all resonances of material in our environment and to learn to understand them. Only by actively listening to oneself play, it is possible to develop a good sound. In a strict sense the vision of music, to alleviate our work – we just need to allow it. Through observant revision step by step we achieve the ideal that our ear has previously heard.

A healthy coenesthesia is a very important and worthwhile condition when making music. For accordionists especially a healthy body particular a healthy spine is primarily significant. It is possible to develop conditions and improvements regarding playing an instrument through sport and yoga for instance. On the one hand one has to activate one's body, on the other hand one must be attuned to one's internal state, so it can truly fulfil its mental and musical purpose. In return every once in a while it is important to loosen internal blockades which one got due to one's socialisation.

I challenge and encourage my students to try to discover the music behind a piece themselves. It is about helping the student in finding methods that lead to the truth about their own musical identity. Through practice the student ought to learn to direct music themselves especially in areas of intuition, comprehension, and absorbability. Central aspects of my teaching include advancing physical possibilities, emotional abilities and imaginativeness. In my point of view to learn a musical instrument is an ongoing act of balance between responsibility to the artistic aspiration and assembly-line work. Yes,

assembly–line work, because practicing means repetitions, the act of doing something over and over again to achieve a ‘flow’– comparable to many rituals from spiritual nature.

Theories of education help to organise our methods, though to me they sometimes are too restrictive. In my teaching, I very seldom use such pre–made recipes. I believe in the intuition to react immediately to what is heard and mental, physical, spiritual and emotional situations a student is in. I try to make my students feel my respects to their humanness and to their efforts to understand music, independent to their skill or level, so that each and every of my students’ perceives an individual and genuine approach in developing themselves when studying the accordion.

Another aspect of my lesson is the preparation to learn independently once a student has graduated. Every now and then I point out that a steady obedient student, can be successful in school but might encounter some issues later in life once they are beyond the set system. Because at some point of time one must take responsibility to one’s active education. Another important aspect is a healthy balance between self–esteem and self–criticism. To the students who criticise themselves too much, I try to present the already achieved goals. Students who overestimate themselves, I attempt to put them into challenging situations where they can compare their skills with others and therefore higher their standards.

For each student there is a personal path that leads to one’s goal. The new generation of instrumentalists should accept to master established and emerged styles, at the same time every teacher should help to develop the individual potential of each student in equal measures. Goals set in the right direction are therefore needed, because the human stands in the focus of the education not the ideology relating to the instrument.

For more than 20 years I have been active at the summer course held every year. “Accordion Plus” organised by my treasured colleague and friend Karl Huber. Each year I experience an exemplary teaching at the music school. I was also able to see that students in middle and high school similar to students in college, university and conservatory can be taught at eye level, of course by varying the literature in technical matters, in response to their skill level. This is possible when they are taken seriously and when their level of education is shown and conveyed in everyday life. These children and teenagers wouldn’t accept ‘counterfeit’ music lessons. Because they can tell the difference between the two, the music and the counterfeit. They’d be simply bored.

The field of chamber music and accordingly ensemble play is another very important area of my teaching. In my opinion that field is obligatory, because to play in an ensemble means communicating with musical bodies and sounds. It has a big educative, common humanly, artistic and communicating value. It is always about a qualitative cooperation. The play in

ensembles is a form of free musical communication not depending on age or technical skills. People encounter other people, each with their own life, musical socialisation, different attitudes, and skills. This process of finding one another when playing fascinates me every time when working with ensembles.

When all participating musicians are able to lead and accompany, the ensemble has achieved a very good quality. Then the ensemble has got all possibilities to produce fields of tension and colours as they wish. Anyone who has experience in ensemble play knows that that can mean a

complex process of evolving personalities among the group. The outstanding literature that exists in that field is an additional motivation to play in an ensemble.

To conclude, the instrument accordion still has the chance to contribute valuable input to the yet so young 'collective memory'. Behind us there lies a field full of misunderstandings, meanders, and clichés. Together with my students I seek to contribute to the understanding of music as a whole in our environment through the cultivation of the accordion. The increasing diminution to formalities needs to experience a countermovement. We attempt that the original value of music comes back so music can be understood and taken as a whole pure sense again.

Elzbieta Rosinska

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## The development of the Polish educational accordion repertoire in 1970-2000

Since the 1970s, there has been an ongoing development in the original accordion repertoire in Poland. Remembering about the youngest musicians, the composers have written a number of pieces that combine high musical quality with a pedagogical aspect.

In the early 1970s, Bogdan Dowlasz wrote *Scherzino* and *Cztery rytmy folklorystyczne* [Four folk rhythms], his first compositions for accordion, published a dozen or so years later with *Osiem miniatur* [Eight miniatures] by Ludowy Instytut Muzyczny as *Zbiór utworów pedagogicznych* [A collection of educational pieces]. One of the reasons for the immense popularity of this edition is its versatility. The difficulty levels vary from the simplest arrangements of children's songs to polyphonic and extended forms intended for concert performance. Thanks to the frequent use of double fingering for the left hand, many of these pieces may also be performed on different accordion types such as the Stradella or free-bass manual systems.

In 1975, inspired by Teresa Adamowicz-Kaszuba, Aleksander Robert Szeligowski composed his *Koncert dziecięcy w starym stylu* [Children's concerto in the old style] for accordion and string orchestra. A unique phenomenon in the Polish accordion repertoire, the work, written for the youngest musicians similarly to e.g. the *Miniature Concerto* in G by Alec Rowley, has been performed frequently by primary school pupils.

In the second half of the 1970s, Bronisław Kazimierz Przybylski dedicated to the young accordionists the following collections of pieces: *Pory roku* [Seasons of the year], *Bajki* [Fairy tales], *Katzenmusik*, *Kleine Spartakiade*, *Miniaturen* and *Vögel*. The first one comprises twelve miniatures, a dozen or so bars each, related, in terms of the programmatic title, to the events or phenomena occurring in the subsequent seasons of the year. This cycle of miniatures inspired by popular fairy tales is the harbinger of educational free-bass accordion repertoire in Poland. Later collections with German titles were created in response to the need for such repertoire in the West.

The year 1983 marks the release of Andrzej Krzanowski's *Kalangra – 20 utworów dla dzieci* [Kalangra – 20 pieces for children] (published by Wydawnictwo Muzyczne of Agencja Autorska) as well as Grażyna Krzanowska's *Zabawy dziecięce* [Children's games] (published

by PWM) from the series *Z krasnoludkiem*<sup>5</sup>, discernible in editorial terms. The composers boldly introduce the young accordionist to the world of contemporary music through a dissonant harmonic language, use of polymetre, polyrhythm, clusters, vibrato and elements of new notation. Similar issues are covered in the collection *Gakkaj* by A. Krzanowski, which was released in 1990 by Agencja Autorska.

At the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, Krzysztof Olczak wrote his first compositions intended for young performers. At that time, there was great demand for cyclic forms required in accordion competitions. Olczak dedicated his *Sonatina no. 1, Letnia suita* [Summer suite], and *Zimowa suita* [Winter suite] to the pupils of Teresa Adamowicz–Kaszuba and Jerzy Kaszuba. These were pieces for free–bass accordion, introduced to the Polish music education system by the aforementioned pedagogues<sup>6</sup>. Later compositions – the classicist *Sonatina no. 2, Rondino, Rzępielnik czyli szkicownik z Pomorza* [Rzępielnik, or a sketchbook from Pomerania] – coincidentally addressing the shortage of such instruments in general circulation in music education are intended, first of all, for standard–bass accordion.

This collection of six miniatures of varying difficulty level introduces the young performer to the subtleties of contemporary music in a way much more gentle than the one proposed by the Krzanowskis. This is done by the material selection – original folk melodies and dances from Kociewie and Kashubia – that bridges the old and the new. The device array of the new language is equally rich: polyrhythm, aleatoricism, air sound, pitch bend, chords produced by pressing several chord buttons, as well as elements of new notation.

In 1990 another collection of pieces by Bogdan Dowlasz was published. His *Opus sectile* comprised four suites: Suite no. 1, *Robots' Dances*, Suite no. 2 *Opus Sectile*, and *Bajki na dobranoc* [Bedtime stories]. Following the awards in composition competitions abroad was the publication of new pieces by the ABC–Edition in Austria (two volumes of educational pieces, whose Polish editions were released by the publishing houses in Łódź – Polski Instytut Muzyczny and Astra) and by Hohner Verlag in Germany (*Die singenden Fische* for an accordion duo). Recent additions are the concert pieces *Toccata, Ballada, Sonoris* and *Fresk* [Fresco], in which the pedagogical aspect plays a minor role.

In the 1990s another composer, Edward Bogusławski, turned to writing for young performers by composing his volumes of *Etiudy* [Etudes], *Etiudy dziecięce* [Children's etudes] and *Miniatury* [Miniatures]. The latter collection, a study of metro–rhythmic issues, one of its kind, was published by Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa.

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5 This series also featured the collections by B.K.Przybylski – *Pory roku* and *Bajki*.

6 Cp. J.Kaszuba, *Metody nauczania początkowego dzieci gry na akordeonie* [Methods for teaching accordion to children in elementary education], F.Chopin Music University, Warsaw, 1996.

Yet another composer indefatigable in developing diverse repertoire for young accordionists is, without a doubt, Bronisław Kazimierz Przybylski. Special mention must be made of his chamber music and concertos with orchestra. Przybylski's music includes simple pieces for homogeneous instruments (2–4 accordions), compositions for accordion and guitar – *Aus einer Kindheit*, *Klingenthaler Impressionen* and *Metamorphosen* for accordion and string quartet, intended for more advanced instrumentalists. *Concerto polacco* for accordion and orchestra was created with the young apprentices of the musical art in mind,<sup>7</sup> a work within secondary music schools pupils' – both the soloist's and the orchestra's – capability. *Concertino na akordeon solo i 12 instrumentów* [Concertino for solo accordion and 12 instruments] broadens the repertoire so far limited in this scope, together with the work *RE–Construction* for accordion and orchestra performed for the first time in 1999 in the DO–RE–MI Festival of Contemporary Music for Children and Youth in Łódź.

Compositions for young performers were also written by e.g. Bogdan Precz (*Suite para niños* no. 1–6), Mirosław Niziurski (*Sonatina*), Łukasz Woś (*Mała suita* [Small suite] and *Sonatina klasyczna* [Classical sonatina] and Michał Moc (*Pięciu dzielnych Apaczów* [Five brave Apaches], *Sen rusalki* [Rusalka's dream] for two accordions and flute).

Inspired by Jerzy Mądrawski, other educational works were created by M. Niziurski, K. Olczak, Jerzy Szczyrba, Łukasz Woś, Andrzej Tuchowski and Marcin Bortnowski<sup>8</sup> and funded by the Committee of Scientific Research.

At present, young accordion apprentices in Poland have a broad and diverse repertoire. The interest in this area of composition is shown by the greatest composers writing for accordion. There are a good number of pieces that introduce the pupil to the world of new music. The latter is rich in terms of forms and genres: besides the predominant solo compositions, there is chamber music for various ensembles, as well as concertos and vocal–instrumental music. This music – to a much greater degree than concert pieces – is easily available thanks to numerous editions.

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7 From the author's original note in the publication from 1975.

8 *Zbiór utworów pedagogicznych i koncertowych na akordeon* [A collection of educational and concert pieces for accordion], Akademia Świętokorzyska, 2001

## INTERVIEWS

*What are, in your opinion, the most important issues in teaching accordion to children nowadays?*

**Marko Kassl:** Next to fundamental musical parameters of every kind that apply to any kind of instrument there should always be a consideration of posture from the very beginning. Also I tend to consider the bellow changes (also bellow stops) of high importance from the very beginning!

In my experience beginning with small free bass accordions in this aspect is more easy than with Stradella bass instruments. A lot of parameters make it easier:

- the instruments are more handy/compact in general
- fingers of both hands make the same or at least more similar kinds of movement
- less consumption of air than with Stradella basses – mostly the result of the structures being played in the elementary degree

But of course very often kids already have a Stradella bass instrument and want to start on this instrument which is fair enough. All parameters apply to both kinds of instruments!

**Guillaume Hodeau:**

- Help kids go beyond their limits
- Learn how to learn
- Develop their brain, ear, voice
- Be able to be multitasking
- Focus longer than other kids
- Be different
- Respect the teacher with a one to one lesson
- Interact with other kids who play another instrument (social aspect)

**Raimo Vertainen:** First: to get them to play an accordion, to get them LIKE playing the accordion. Nowadays there are so many different kinds of hobbies that didn't exist in the past. Computers, smart phones...the world has totally changed. Nowadays the general



mental attitude is *I have to get it right now!* Not little by little, year after year, step by step. Second: it's about music styles. We should be open to every style, jazz, hip-hop, rap, folk, pop. Classical and contemporary music are only a part of the whole. Let's look at instruments and think about the didgeridoo; it was totally unknown 20 years ago and now it is very popular. So, catching the children to play our instrument, that is the point.

**Patrick Busseuil:** Well I think it's like education in general: a spirit of openness, discovery, a spirit of initiative. You have to give a taste, good taste and the desire to excel and discover the musical gesture.

**Viatcheslav Semionov:** In my opinion, the artistic development of the students should be the priority; the teacher should be aiming to open intellectual and spiritual receptors for the art perception. The interconnection of visual, acoustic and motional principles is very important. This will allow to perceive emotional and intonation basics of music of all styles and genres in the future.

*What are the basic things that many years of practical experience taught you, and what important suggestions would you give to a new teacher?*

**Marko Kassl:** Of course it's crucial to have a good insight into methodology of Your instrument. A lot of how You deal with pupils one can't learn from the methodology teacher/mentor – as our characters are very different every teacher has to find his/her own approach to teaching which comes with years and experience! Very important in my opinion and experience is to have a big repertoire of songs (also with lyrics in the elementary degree), pieces, etudes and exercises to choose the right material for every pupil from! There are always different things that work for different pupils – and in order to react to those personal needs You gotta have a big variety of music to draw from.

**Guillaume Hodeau:**

- Develop the accordion class (buy instruments for students, play as much as possible in the conservatory and town, talk to colleagues and director about accordion...)
- Interact with other classes in the conservatory as much as possible
- Try to understand/know each student
- Advise the right instrument for the student (size) and make sure the position is good
- Always think about what you can improve in your teaching
- Adapt the repertoire to each student (style, level)
- Propose free–bass and standard–bass repertoire
- Be positive but realistic with your student
- Use humor to make them come back the following week after a difficult lesson!

**Patrick Busseuil:** To a new teacher? The same thing to children: openness on the directory, the spirit of discovery; it takes energy, and learn to adapt to each course.

**Raimo Vertainen:** Think practically, once you have achieved your diploma or finished your studies, the real world is waiting for you, but it's different from what you think. Bach did not always hire the best players he would like to, he used what he had in the particular moment. I am trying to say that teaching is not only about notes and melodies and practicing hours...(or let's say minutes if we talk about young students). It also involves the

whole community; parents, relatives, situation changes in a life, divorces, marriages, good days, bad days. Remember that you can be very important, socially and mentally for a child. Sometimes children see more often teachers than parents.

*In the past, graduated accordion students become professional educators without a specific pedagogic training. The knowledge of elements of psychology, cognitive neuroscience, sociology, aesthetics, body-mind awareness is an essential tool for teaching young children? What are the basic skills that a teacher have to master to be a good music educator?*

**Guillaume Hodeau:**

- Human body and different techniques (Alexander Technique...)
- Great skills on the instrument
- Know the repertoire (always keep up to date), performers, schools, teachers
- Be curious of everything
- Study the human development (especially 5 to 20 years-old)
- Be very demanding with your students but at the same time kind and reassuring
- Read all studies about brain development and music

**Marko Kassi:** Well – actually personally I think that of course all those elements listed in the question are very important. On the other hand there are a couple of things that no accordion student can learn in the study! One's personal approach and contact to young children is crucial for transporting all that know-how. So if a teacher has all the knowledge in the world but can't reach and touch the child where it is he will not be able to transport that knowledge! So one of the most basic skills in my opinion is to know what Your "teaching character" is and to use it in the right way – this knowledge one gets only by teaching and trying – learning by doing.

**Patrick Busseuil:** This is a very difficult question, experience shows me that there is no rule, we encounter very graduated people with poor education and also opposite! Of course, the teacher who has taken courses in several areas more likely to be a good teacher. It is first necessary that the teacher thinks he has continued to be a student for life!

**Raimo Vertainen:** As wide as possible; psychology, cognitive neuroscience, sociology, aesthetics, body. Well... is one life long enough for this?

**Viatcheslav Semionov:** The musical learning of a child should be conscious from the very beginning, that is, the student should understand the tasks, and the teacher should

guide and help to solve them, unlike the average training methods (exercise, repeat without understanding what you are doing) that makes learning process kind of sports training. In this way nobody will be interested in these trained students in the future because they have nothing to say, due to the fact that they don't have spiritual advance and intellectual development.

*The influence of educational methods such as Suzuki, Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze is relevant in pedagogical accordion literature? Can you make some example?*

**Viatcheslav Semionov:** I think it is useful to get acquainted with different pedagogical systems. In some cases it can help to achieve good results, but the scientific erudition does not guarantee the achievement of pedagogical heights.

**Raimo Vertainen:** There are surely lots of different methods. I don't believe in the one and only solution. There are a lot of ways for students to reach a goal. If you have 30 students, there can also be 30 methods.

**Marko Kassl:** First of all I think that there are no methods which are sufficient or universally applicable by themselves – that's not the case only with accordion but with any instrument. One should always draw material from different sources and not rely exclusively on one method! Of course You can build on one certain method but should build in also other pieces to deepen and intensify certain learning steps.

**Patrick Busseuil:** All these methods are good and less good, in the spirit of openness, it is important not to focus on one method. The principle of the method is relatively closed nature. Each brings a lot of things in a domain; rhythm, body, singing, etc. The best is always to relate these principles to real music, the music written by composers...

*In many countries, teachers claim that the modern accordion methods are insufficient or not universally applicable and therefore they use an old methodology (often amateur-like or not appropriate for professional training). What is your opinion about?*

**Marko Kassi:** I think there is quite a lot of very good material one can use in the beginning education. Good accordion schools both for Stradella bass and free bass instruments are available to a good amount. But indeed very often still old Stradella bass methods are being used which are outdated in every sense – be it their methodical approach, layout or the choice of songs / pieces. Also quite a big number of newly published methods (for Stradella bass) are not better at all – they only bring the same old material with a new design. That kind of methods are put together to fabricate "folk/varietè accordionists" as their use of the accordion doesn't go nowhere beyond that! (Of course also this field is existing out there but should not be in the center of attention in this questionnaire.)

**Guillaume Hodeau:** I wrote my own methods for the 1st and 2nd–3rd years of study. They are not perfect for each student/teacher but kids love them.

Learn more at: <http://www.lepetitaccordeoniste.fr>

This year, I made the first free–bass accordion method on the iPad (<https://itunes.apple.com/US/author/guillaume-hodeau/id273141233?mt=11>)

It is translated in 5 languages and uses button accordion (C–griff).

**Patrick Busseuil:** Teachers accordionists have much to learn from the history of music, especially with the other instruments. Again, this is not a question of multiplicity model instruments. There is a literature that is out there, which is to expand and diversify, we must learn to use and motivate.

**Viatcheslav Semionov:** This is a really topical problem, so I published "Modern School of Playing the Accordion" where I expounded in details my point of view how and in which order the teacher should form the future musician–accordionist and also the principles of intonation, phrasing, articulation and performance technique.

**Raimo Vertainen:** Accordion education is young if we compare f.e. with violin and piano education through the centuries. We are now looking and finding the best methods for our

activity. We have to keep our minds open to find the best solutions, but we must be careful: after teaching years and years we could easily walk along the same path. Changing, improving and developing is difficult! We have to be aware of this danger.



*In the 1990s, one of the issues dealt with by the International Accordion Society (IAS) was the standardization of pedagogical instruments. After 25 years, the big variety of types, models, keyboard systems, features of the instrument is still perceived as a problem? What is the situation in your opinion and what should be done about?*

**Marko Kassl:** Well – of course the big variety of accordions makes it more complicated in many ways – especially in elementary teaching! But on the other hand this diversity is also part of the big richness of the instrument! Mostly there is an "regional emphasis" on at least two or more different types which a teacher has to deal with. So it's just part of our know-how and our daily routine as teachers to be able to make convincing fingerings for any kind of system and to deal with other characteristics of a certain instrument (registers, range of manuals, etc.). I don't think that it makes sense to try to standardize neither pedagogical instruments nor concert instruments as they are connected anyway and there is nothing like the "best" system or the "right" system...

**Raimo Vertainen:** Is it clear, that we need to go further with standardization. We have achieved things, but it is absolutely not enough, maybe because factories are so different one to each other as well as national accordion cultures from East to West. If we gave something up, then we all could share more. We all could have benefits from standardization in future. I don't believe in the standardization of keyboard systems but the one of notation, for example. Why do we still use M I, M III, free-bass, B.B... too many different terms.

**Patrick Busseuil:** Things have advanced, leave time to time, as in other instruments, this can not be done in a single generation. We must focus more on some basic points: range of educational tools, registration available, sound quality and sound balance, etc.

**Guillaume Hodeau:** Nationally, I don't see a problem for teaching. I've been advising my students to buy convertor models so they can play any style of accordion.

On the international level, I don't know if we could set one model to make it more efficient. It's part of accordion history.

I also play a lot of bandoneon and we have the same problem with the chromatic model.

**Viatcheslav Semionov:** Now the problem of standardization of our instruments is practically solved. The best factories in Italy and Russia produce many types of instruments in accordance with students' age. The main problems are still the weight, price and quality.

*What is your opinion about the organization of studies after Bologna Declaration? And what are the most positive aspects and the most negative ones of the official music education in your country?*

**Guillaume Hodeau:** High level studies have been tremendously increased since Bologna. Students can go abroad to study with someone else and finish in France or keep traveling. I have one student that is now in Helsinki and her diploma will be acknowledged if she wants to work anywhere in Europe. I studied in the USA in the late 90's and my year of studies there didn't count at all when I came back in France apart from my Curriculum–Vitae.

**Raimo Vertainen:** We are part of the E.U. So, naturally we need Bologna Declaration. European Union, Asia and United States: this is the triangle which affects the most of economy and culture. It will take time, because the countries inside the EU are so different. The positive aspect concerning my country is that we can be IN an European process which is developing.

**Patrick Busseuil:** This is a complex question. It is especially necessary to draw the consequences of a world that is changing very fast, and not in a good way. So regardless of the statements, and the curriculum places starts, the musical situation of future professional teachers of music can quickly become dramatic.

**Viatcheslav Semionov:** Regarding the Bologna Declaration – it is characterized by the fact that the Bologna system has two stages) of music education while Russian music education system has traditionally consisted of three stage – School–College–High School (Conservatory or Academy). This is connected both the age and the psychology of the students' development. I believe this system is the best, this opinion is proved by the results of Russian musicians and pedagogical Schools: piano, violin, wind instruments, and the last half century the accordion School as well. The positive aspects of the Bologna system, I can say, are in its benefit for the experience exchange between teachers and students all around the world.

*How do you approach the issue of motivation of students in the modern era of social networks?*

**Raimo Vertainen:** Every day the people will load more and more accordion music from Youtube. I think that nowadays it is the best accordion music library we have. Once one of my students played soundtrack of Rocky. He simply took his phone and listened to some tracks. Very practical. On Youtube you can listen to very good performances, but also bad ones. The problem is that students are drawn by their phones, sitting one next to each other and communicating via the internet. Why don't they talk to each other?

**Guillaume Hodeau:** Try to keep my activities on Facebook.

Don't know if this is really helpful to develop motivation on students...

**Viatcheslav Semionov:** Social networks are useful to get information and also for communication – exchange of knowledge, notes and records. But this should not be abused.

**Patrick Busseuil:** When I started my musical studies, the phone was not very present, as well as on TV, the medias, and of course any social network! The problem of the accumulation of all this wealth of information is to drain the energy to quiet constructive learning. The also is a complex issue, but I see too many student tired!

***How do you consider the role of the competitions in music education?***

**Marko Kassel:** Competitions as well for children as also for students are a nice enrichment for the music education – not more not less. Every pupil learns a lot in the process of preparing a long and demanding program to perform on a certain date in front of an audience and jury. The sheer practicing effort that most pupils put in when preparing for a competition is bigger in quantity – also the teacher is forced to put attention to a lot of small details that he might not think about if there was no goal like a competition. Very often the working process on a piece is finished just in time before a competition – a process that without this deadline might have taken much longer...

So the good thing is that the pupil learns to concentrate on the chosen competition repertoire and to practice it with a big attention to detail.

On the other hand one shouldn't be lost too much in the competition circus as this takes a lot of energy from the time that could be used to learn new pieces, make chamber music etc.

My personal experience with the German music school competition "Jugend Musiziert": there are three rounds – the regional competition takes place around January, the federal state competition around March and the national competition around May. Only the best pupils get to the third round – but if they get there, very often they have been playing their competition repertoire for such a long time that they need a break from competitions after that!

**Raimo Vertainen:** Competitions are too dividing. For very good students they are possible, for the average ones they are absolutely unnecessary.

Teacher's role is to see which way is the best. This is a serious thing. If you, as a teacher, take the wrong decision, the consequences can be bad. So, to go or not to go? Both good, it depends of the student.

**Guillaume Hodeau:** Great help for good students especially the best of our classes so they can hear and come back with better motivation. National competitions are dying in France.

Private schools and public conservatories are not on the same level of interest by competitions.

**Patrick Busseuil:** I think the human mind may need to be put in competition with others, you just do it in a good balance, it reenters a problem of education and teaching. See the excellent film "Whiplash" about it!

**Viatcheslav Semionov:** Regarding the competitions I think this is an especial question, which may be the subject of the entire conference. How to prepare the students for the competition? Whom to prepare? And what is the purpose to do it? In any case the preparation for the competition should not be an end in itself, and the prize student can get is not always objective and does not always represent real artistic level of the musician.

## APPENDIX

The following list contains the suggested pedagogic material (books, methods, compositions) that some authors have enclosed.

### Paulo Jorge Ferreira

#### Methods, books, anthologies:

Helmut Quakernack: Akkordeon Etüden  
 A. Sudarikov: Etudes for Bayan  
 Alain Abbott: Les Secrets de la Technique  
 André Astier – Max Bonnay: Manuel d'Initiation  
 Bronislaw Przybylski: Maskerade – Kleine Etüden in variations form  
 Waldemar Bloch: Minicordion 3  
 Jerzy Madrawski: Pedagogic works for accordion  
 György Geszler: Studies for accordion  
 James Wilson: Studies in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Idioms  
 Claudio Jacomucci: Technique I for button accordion (C-griff)  
 Jan Meisl: The Beetledrive Studies for bayan op.11  
 Anatoli Biloschizki: Three Character Studies

#### Pedagogic works:

Jindrich Feld: 4 Intermezzi  
 Pierre Max Dubois: A La Tuilere  
 Russ Messina: A Trip to the Moon  
 Hugo Noth: Aisthanomai  
 Hans Luck: Alte und neue Spielstücke  
 Helmut Reinbothe: Aria und Tanz  
 Anatoly Haidenko: Bilder  
 Pavel Trojan: Capriccio  
 Norbert Sprave: Drei Bagatellen  
 Jan Truhlar: Eisenbahn  
 Escapade – Karen Fremar  
 Vladimir Bonakov: Etüden – Tokkata  
 Georg Katzer: Five Pieces for accordion  
 Petri Makkonen: Für Knöpfe (Band I, II)  
 Nikolai Tschaikín: Humoresque  
 Vladimir Zubitsky: Impressions  
 Anny Poltz: Invention en Mi  
 Patrick Busseuil: Karpathine  
 Jan Truhlar: Katzenmusik  
 Albin Repnikov: Kindersuite n° 1, n° 2  
 Viatcheslav Semionov: Kindersuite n° 1, n° 2  
 Chris Sandner: Klabautermann Knorke

Vladimir Merkushin: Kleine Suite  
 Bronislaw Przybylski: Little Preludes  
 Matti Murto: Little Suite for Accordion  
 Jindrich Feld: Moment Musical  
 Oleg Gorokhov: Mosaic of Reminiscences  
 Yuri Schamo: Préludes  
 Robert Fleming: Puppet Pantomime  
 Thomas Mergel: Quest  
 Ralf Jung: Reminiscenz  
 Bernd Bauer: Sieben Fingertänze  
 Leopold Kubanek: Six Sonatinen  
 Yuri Schamo: Sonata  
 Petr Fiala: Sonatina Facile  
 Torbjörn Lundquist: Sonatina Piccola  
 Wilhelm Bernau: Sonatine  
 Alexander Sapalov: Suite für Kinder n° 1  
 Vladislav Zolotaryov: Suite n° 4, n° 5  
 Bogdan Precz: Suite para Niños n° 3, n° 5  
 Igor Jankowski: Three impressions  
 Anatoly Kussyakov: Three Miniatures  
 Bronislaw Przybylski: Three Pieces  
 Anders Grothe: Tre Nocturner  
 Ernst-Günter Rosenetzki: Zwei Sonatinen

#### Pedagogic works by Paulo Jorge Ferreira:

Acordeão Infantil – 1° vol. (Stradella Bass)  
 Acordeão Infantil – 2° vol. (Free bass)  
 Escalas /Arpejos (Free bass)  
 24 Estudos – 1° vol. (Free bass)  
 Pequenas Peças (Stradella bass)  
 Pequenos Estudos (Free bass)  
 Técnicas de Fole – 1° vol. (Free bass)  
 Pequeno Concerto (Stradella bass)  
 Dança Divagante, for two accordions (Free bass)

### **Anders Grothe**

Anders Grothe: Let's play the Free Bass Accordion, part I (B, C-griff and piano system)  
Anders Grothe: Let's play the Free Bass Accordion, part II  
Anders Grothe: Let's play the Free Bass Accordion, part III  
Anders Grothe: Vi spiller trekkspill, Bok 1  
Anders Grothe: Vi spiller trekkspill, Bok 2  
Anders Grothe: Den viderekomme trekkspill, Bok 1  
Anders Grothe: Den viderekomme trekkspill, Bok 2  
Wolfgang Eschenbacher: Musik und Musikerziehung mit Akkordeon, Bd. III  
Wolfgang Eschenbacher: Musik und Musikerziehung mit Akkordeon, Bd. IV  
Romald Fischer: Studien zur Didaktik des Akkordeonspiels  
Friedrich Lips: Die Kunst des Bajanspiels  
Lasse Thoresen: Emergent musical forms. Aural Explorations

### **Claudio Jacomucci**

Claudio Jacomucci–Kathleen Delaney: Mastering Accordion Technique  
Frederick Matthias Alexander: The Use of the Self  
Aldous Huxley: Means and Ends  
Theodore Dimon: The Elements of Skill: A Conscious Approach to Learning  
Pedro De Alcantara: Indirect Procedures  
Jiddu Krishnamurti: On Education  
John Dewey: Human Nature and Conduct  
John Dewey: My Pedagogic Creed  
[Movement, Music and Alexander Technique \(facebook page\)](#)

### **Marie-Andrée Joerger**

Corinne Micat: Première comptines  
Simon Baggio: Les expériences de Maître Lulu Berlu  
Claudio Jacomucci: Technique I for button accordion (C-griff)  
Germano Scurti: Tecnica  
Alain Abbott: 54 exercices de technique  
Monkia Hildebrand: Piano's handbook

### **Luka Juhart**

Johann Nikolaus Forkel: Ueber Johann Sebastian Bachs leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke  
Alfred Duerr: Das Wohltemperierte Klavier  
Paul Heuser: Das Clavierspiel der Bachzeit  
Alex Ross: The rest is noise  
Derek Bailey: Improvisation—its nature and practise in music  
Vinko Globokar: RES/AS/EX/INS—PIRER  
Slavoj Žižek: Living in the end times



**Herbert Scheibenreif**

Hans Bachl: Musikerziehung

Cesar Bresgen: Musik – Erziehung?

Friedrich Lips: Die Kunst des Bajanspiels

Eberhard Preussner: Allgemeine Musikerziehung

Hans Sittner: Musikerziehung zwischen Theorie und Therapie

Komponist und Musikerzieher. Anregungen für den zeitgemäßen Musikunterricht. Herausgeber österreichischer Komponistenbund, Arbeitskreis für Musikerziehung, Nr. 1–5

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