



LUND
UNIVERSITY

MALMÖ
ACADEMY
OF MUSIC

Learning by ear

And its place in classical music

Scottish tune set:

Da Day Dawn - Trad Shetland Air

79th Farewell to Gibraltar - John Macdonald

The Wee Man from Uist - Trad Strathspey

Tongadale Reel - Farquhar MacDonald

Charlotte Naden

Supervisor: Francisca Skoogh

Lecture Recital, 24 May 2023

Musikhögskolan i Malmö

Charlotte's life story and issues...

Borrowing aspects from another genre - Folk and the Suzuki Method

Suzuki - to learn to play before you learn to read (*Comeau, 2016*)

Performance anxiety

Goal to have the same feeling I have playing folk music from memory when performing solo on the bassoon

Learning by ear = memorisation



Project Aims

Can I increase my self-efficacy by learning by ear and performing by memory?

- Learn by ear
- Use principles of the Suzuki Method and Folk music to learn and perform classical music
- Reduce Music Performance Anxiety



Learning by Ear - Method

Suzuki Method - playing along with your teacher or recording

- Singing parts to remember the sound of intervals and make musical phrasing and breaths
- Muscle memory, trusting the body

Folk music - Playing along with teacher, listening, and copying in sessions or recordings

Learning by Ear - Method

Bassoon repertoire - act like my own teacher by singing or playing short sections, then copying by ear

- Playing along with recordings (both solo bassoonists and orchestra excerpts with the orchestra recording)

Multiple practice sessions throughout the day to enhance productivity and long term memory. (Boucké, 2022)



(Mozart, W.A. 1990)

Self- Efficacy (SE)

Not the actual result, but the way I believe I can handle a specific situation.

Personal beliefs about how you can learn and carry out a skill (McPherson, 2006)

“Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behaviour, and social environment.” (Bandura, 1997)

SE example A: I have high self-efficacy when playing violin in folk music settings.

SE example B: I have low SE when playing the bassoon alone or with piano and in some orchestral situations.

I would like to have higher SE in situation B, to trust in my body that I have practiced enough and am capable of physically playing the bassoon, by borrowing features from situation A.

Deliberate Play and Deliberate Practice

Deliberate Play:

- Practice in a relaxed way where the brain does not need to focus 100% on playing the (right) notes.
- Gives the freedom to focus on the music, trusting the body to play
- Mimics the distraction of a performance = test how you will perform
- It is okay to make mistakes

Ericsson, (2016)

Klickstein, 2009).

Deliberate practice:

- Takes very high levels of intense concentration
- Cannot be used for long periods of time
- Practice specific skills to work towards specific goals

Boucké, (2022)

Kageyama, (2022)

Holmshaw, (2020)



Variation on Learning by ear - Stravinsky Wind Octet

- Learning the rhythm and beats by ear
- Helped me to understand the music and remember how it goes, when the melody is confusing to follow and remember



https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gNt_2KJIraefVYLMdGTpu5bNMTx9odqo/view?usp=sharing

(Stravinsky, 1952)

Fagotto I

Sinfonia

IGOR STRAWINSKY
1923 – New version 1952

Lento (♩ = 76)

The image shows a page of musical notation for the Fagotto I part of the Sinfonia by Igor Stravinsky. The score is written on a single staff with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Lento' with a quarter note equal to 76 beats per minute. The dynamics range from *sfp* (sforzando piano) to *p* (piano). The score is divided into four measures, each marked with a circled number (1, 2, 3, 4). Measure 1 starts with a *tr* (trill) and a *sfp* dynamic. Measure 2 continues with a *tr* and a *sfp* dynamic. Measure 3 starts with a *tr* and a *p* dynamic. Measure 4 ends with a *p* dynamic and a final note marked with a '1' above it.

Potential problems

The image shows a musical score for Bassoon I part, measures 268-280. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/8 time signature. Measure 268 starts with a rest, followed by a measure with a fermata and a '5' above it. Measure 269 begins with a 'Solo' marking and a 'pp' (pianissimo) dynamic. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations. Measure 270 has an 'espress.' (espressivo) marking. Measure 271 has a '9' above it. Measure 272 has a 'Solo' marking and a 'pp' dynamic. Measure 273 has a 'morendo' marking. The score ends with a double bar line.

• Tschalkowski, Peter. *Sinfonie Nr. 4 f-Moll, Op. 36*. Miami: E.F. Kalmus, n.d. Bassoon I part.

(Tchaikovsky, 1933)

- Too much 'play' and not enough 'practice'
- Effective for learning the music, but not technique
- Need to be careful to still focus on the music, not just playing correct notes
- Be open minded - playing right notes from memory does *not* = success

(Green, *The Inner Game of Music*, 1986)

- Practicing by memory and then performing with music is dangerous!

Conclusion

Learning by ear is an efficient learning method

- Best used in conjunction with other practice methods

Performing from memory reduces my Music Performance Anxiety

- But slow to prepare thoroughly enough, so not practical for all performances



References

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