

# **Praxial Visions for Classical Music Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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## 1. Introduction

To be honest, at first, I didn't believe in researching music and music education. My skepticism about this subject was overwhelming my realization of the world I was living in. The thought was that truly good teachers teach, others write researches – childish, isn't it? But behind this realization sits a big issue that defines my post-soviet education, and actually not only mine but many of the musicians from Eastern Europe, and not only. After a year of intense lectures with teachers from different parts of the globe, analysts with extraordinary backgrounds in researching methodologies overseas changed my world entirely, what a discovery was to find out how many researchers are out there who did gigantic amounts of work to find answers for questions we ask ourselves every day.

The overarching aim of this study is to explore how teachers, in different sociocultural contexts, understand the purpose of their work in contemporary music education. Drawing upon praxial approaches to music education, understanding teaching as demanding something more than just being a specialist in a particular music field, or a virtuosic performer. Similarly, education is more than simply transmitting information from one person to another. More than that, conducting qualitative or quantitative researches, making more suitable curricula, improving lesson plans or even attending *maestro*'s teaching won't necessarily provide all the required knowledge to what we do. And the answer is that all these are ever-changing and fundamental concepts. Placing music as a central abstraction to which refers listening, performing, educating, learning, composing, improvising and many others - all are and will be ethically, socially, politically, emotionally, philosophically idealized. When we choose a path to follow that might seem to be *the* right one, which is also approved by society, experts and institutions there will still be a wide range of criticism and individual approaches. Art will always be questioned, traditions followed and annihilated, remembered and forgotten, that is the essence of human beings' nature. Our beliefs, thoughts, interpretations, assumptions and actions are all linked, inexplicably dependent and influenced by one another. Therefore, as teachers we must be aware that all our actions are followed with decisions taken in the past, present and in the future, will affect our interaction with the student. Learning-teaching act has its impact on students from all our conclusions, commitments, concepts and beliefs about questions as who, why, how, when, where, what, whether our teaching is ethically correct, effective, professional enough, good, fair, democratic and how to apply these all into what we do. "This is for you to decide according to your skills, your understandings, and, most

important, your own critical thinking and critical reflection”. (Elliott, 2015, p. 10) Thus, in this study I look at teachers’ own stories of their work, their visions of good teaching and sense of purpose.

## 2. Literature review

Classical music and classical music education are being in a way artificially exclusive, even though there is tendency of bringing culture in all the layers of society. Ticket prices are expensive, which means that many times students and people with low income won't afford going to classical music concert. It is much more likely that they will chose to go to a pop/rock concert where music is simpler to understand and affordable. It was well stressed by Hess

liberal notions of equality and sameness fade in favor of recognition of difference and inequity. What is significant in this education is not only the recognition of structural inequity, but the engagement of teachers in countering such injustice. (2014, p. 244). People who haven't gotten education in music might feel that they don't belong to the *high society* of music – the whole expression is ridiculously synthetic. This musical exclusivity, in my opinion, is very old fashioned and doesn't belong in the era of equity. Very well mentioned is Vaugeois’ definition of *social justice* where “work of undoing structures that produce raced and gendered oppressions and systemic poverty as well as the work of challenging discourses that rationalize these structures.” (2009, p. 3). Music was and is part of our everyday life and has to have nor race, nor gender, nor class preference. This concerns also people with disabilities, spoken language, religion, skin color or sexual orientation, music can be and should be for to everyone with no exceptions. Thus, in this study I look at teachers’ own stories of their work, their visions of good teaching and sense of purpose. Everyone has its own music in themselves, our main goal as future music educators is to bring it out to the light and brighten up people's souls,

teaching is improvisatory, situated, responsive and, ideally, playful, but without a theoretical orientation, this responding in the moment does not necessarily further the work of social justice as undoing structural oppression – work I consider intrinsic to any notion of radical music education. (Hess, 2014, p. 247).

Music education nowadays is on a crossroads of change, while most classical music teachers come from institutionalized backgrounds with national traditions, most knowledge is acquired from examples of famous representatives in the field; it is based on equality and sameness such as students' success, school curriculum, preserving traditions. Green (2005) suggests that teachers should students space to experience the reality of creating music in some real-life situations – healthy interaction between human beings is vital in our society, especially now in the era of technologies. Music is around us, learning from our environment happens unconsciously and meets the artificiality of the school. The efforts in bringing the *outside world* inside are applaudable, but again, it is an artificial attempt to “appropriate the strategies and tools of the radical exterior into the institution”. (Hess, 2014, p. 235)

Why practitioners should use theory as a background for their methodology? Musicians are divided into theorists and practitioners, and there is always a misunderstanding in this academic standpoint. As Westerlund & Väkevä pointed out in their article “it is not that theory and practice are two life-fields apart: if good scientific work is taken as a model, theory can support practice and vice versa.” (2011, p. 39) In my opinion, any methodology has to have a backup in the theoretical knowledge, one cannot exist without its other half. Education which is approached holistically will be the driving force to the praxial environment. The essence of being a young teacher gives a lot of pressure, especially nowadays when undergoing through educational changing processes. In the past years the overall tendency is rather positive, studies that had been conducted are showing that researchers and musicians are searching more for the musical identities rather than instrumental technique or social skills rather than a bibliography. One of the researchers that had undergone the same topic but in more holistic way is Jennifer Overton (2006) where she analyzed teacher's identity and their power in the context of learning. She described her own observation through the vision of 8 school teachers from different institutions in Tanzania, their effectiveness and commitment to the work through conducted interviews and own observations. “The literature review reveals that teacher identity as a topic in educational research is largely ignored.” (Overton, 2006, 2). While looking for fundamental principles of education in music, ethical frameworks, cultural diversity, assumptions and prejudices in the arts field made me discover Soltis observation in one of his books “Perspectives on learning”,

understanding something about the culturally shaped assumptions, practices, and value of students will enable a teacher to be more effective in promoting learning, but will also make the teacher to be more sensitive to his or her own deep-seated cultural

assumptions and how these might be shaping the attitude that is being adopted towards students who seem to be 'different'. (Phillips & Soltis, 2004, p. 64).

What makes a teacher's profession so important is the obligation to nurture and then elevate each student, to have a holistic approach no matter how unconventional they are.

While looking for the multitude of praxial education, I questioned the holistic idea of teachers' identity. It might seem that understanding the content and developing own visions of what teaching is about belongs to psychology, nevertheless it definitely plays an important role in creating a healthy educational environment. This makes it important to investigate teachers' own understanding of good teaching. These understandings are referred by Karen Hammerness (2002; 2006) as *teacher visions*. She argues the holistic concept of visioning and disillusioning the reality of teachers' decision making. Finding the balance between own perspectives and compliance to the institution, frustration and motivation, understanding the equilibrium between teaching for results and educating a healthy generation is the key in establishing own perceptiveness. Even though her work isn't music oriented, but serves as a good dose of awakening reality that educators face when choosing their career. When analyzing the structured idea behind the concept of learning concludes that we connect the new information to the one we already knew, then evaluate and interpret it the way we understood it. That is why *visions* are at the same time so similar and different at the same time. Assuming that each teacher, especially novice would build up their own identity and through time would influence future educations shows that changes happen now. The culture of knowledge comes through different aspects and unveils the connection between previous competencies and knowledge, practical teaching and the *vision* itself. In music education, Thorgersen, Johansson and Juntunen (2015) discuss the meaning of *visions* in the context of qualitative research of teachers from Sweden, Finland and Norway. Their findings about an ideal graduate, good music pedagogy teaching, research and reflexion-based teaching, curriculum and programme showed wide range of thoughts - some teachers found research as unnecessary part of teaching-learning cycle, or that curriculum isn't quite corresponding to their own visions, or, student's success is determined by their technical progress compared to the other students, which is not exactly the meaning of learning. This raises questions as to what teachers themselves consider the purpose of their work.

### 3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical frame for this research draws upon the Praxialist tradition in music education as described in the work of Elliott and Silverman (2015) and *Teachers Visions* by Karen Hammerness (2006).

#### 3.1. Praxialism

Praxis as concept, and praxial music education is multidimensional. “To Aristotle, praxis means active reflection and reflective action for the positive transformation of people’s everyday lives and situations.” (Elliott & Silverman, 2015, p. 43) Praxis can be interpreted in many ways, some address to it verbs as “to make” or “to do”, but they are misunderstanding its main concept which is a holistic approach to the idea of learning. Indeed, learning music through all its forms as composing, improvising, conducting, arranging opens up the philosophic where-what-why-where-when. Elliott and Silverman (2015) explain this clearly through arguing that music is not a “thing” but a verb, “to music” is to be part of the multidimensional and multilateral action. As regarded by Small (2011), because of the Western music education where classical music exclusion separates it from other genres, it mistakenly makes it passive. But the truth is that any musicking just as murmuring a song, playing a rock concert or attend a chamber music performance gives music the power to be an actual action “... to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing, or by dancing.” (Small, 2011, p. 9).

But beside this all, the true concept of musicking materializes through experiencing satisfaction, worthiness, pleasure. Praxial philosophers as Regelski, Reimer aboard the ideology in a different way, they discuss the holistic meaning through debating and criticizing each theory; but what connects them all is that without passion, hard work and self-realization there won't be any social-cultural realizations.

### 3.2. Teacher Visions

The concept is called ‘teacher visions’ — it is a concept from outside of music education, it has its roots from general education, but in my opinion, it accurately describes what I am discussing about — teachers’ visions of best practice and what they think themselves good teaching is. The main scholar writing about visions is Karen Hammerness, she had published numerous articles and books dedicated to this subject. The four main subjects seen as most comprehensive when talking about teacher's qualities were identified as the depth of the content knowledge, pedagogical skills, social and political values and the last but not the least the consistency of student's success. Another basis of the vision formation is connection and impact that teachers have upon their students and co-workers. Those with stronger personality might have the biggest effect on the whole teaching experience in their ambiance, they are the ones who will make the biggest impact on the society.

At times, *vision* was and still is misunderstood with *organizational visions*, it is an unfortunate reality that, especially novice teachers might face when joining an institution. Another way to understand vision is to approach it holistically – to create a prosper future we must remember the past. Even though it may seem that finding own pedagogical vision is to look in the future, some might find answers in the bygone knowledge. Knowing and being aware of the downsides of someone’s vision is as important as developing our own. Teachers who are trying to accomplish unrealistic expectations might fail recognizing realities and imagined future. Another negative form of vision is exclusivity, stereotyped and suppressed alternative.

## 4. Methodological approach and research questions

### 4.1. Research questions

This study aims to investigate teachers' own visions about education in music. The specific research questions that addressed this aim were:

1. How do teachers narrate the purpose of their work?
2. How do teachers narrate *quality* in music pedagogy?
3. How do teachers narrate their relationships with their students?

### 4.2. Methodological Approach: Narrative research

A qualitative research method was applied, because, in my opinion, understanding the schooling system while being part of it, be creative and open-minded takes a lot of deep study in the matter. The emphasis will be on both emic and etic issues, this way would be easier to trace my findings through the interviewees and other researchers. My goal is to showcase different social issues, discuss them with the reader and share my findings through the prism of the qualitative descriptions. My aim is not to prove one or another concept, but to share my vision of possible challenges and issues as one may find obvious, another irrelevant. As well mentioned by Bresler and Stake "... there is no reason to think that among people fully committed to a constructed reality all constructions are of equal value." (1992, 76) Music education and cultural sciences need striking and explanatory studies.

Within the qualitative research paradigm, I have selected narrative methods. As noted by Giovannoli (2000) "Webster's Dictionary (1966) defines a narrative as a 'discourse, or an example of it, designed to represent a connected succession of happenings'" (p. 1503). Bruner (1990) associates narrative research as how protagonists interpret ideas, understanding social interactions and concluding experiences throughout a vision of a story teller creates a bond between the researcher and its readers. This means that story is a way to understand the world and communicate it with others. I find this approach the most suitable for this study because it allows a holistic approach to complex phenomenon, but also an effective way to understand social interactions and share others' experiences in an effective way.

### 4.3. Data collection

Data was collected over a period of two months in 2017, through face-to-face interviews with three teachers, selected because their background vary within different social and educational environment, citizenship, religion, instrument of teaching, gender which would have given a wider understanding of my coeval colleagues. With the idea that teachers from different backgrounds might share different visions or stories has given me an opportunity to have a broader view into the subject I am researching.

Interviews were semi-structured and gave the interviewee the freedom to speak freely about matters that seemed important on that moment; as noted by Drever (1995) these interviews suit best low-scaled researches with small numbers of people. Each dialogue lasted approximately 30 minutes and was recorded with the “Recorder Pro” App. After listening to each interview a few times, I transcribed them and checked with every one of the interviewees if my interpretation of their words was correct. The interview was a traditional face-to-face, in addition to that, we had a meeting beforehand to discuss the purpose and theme of the interviews. In my opinion, knowing the subject makes the interviewee more relaxed and in a way prepared, it gives an idea of a certain security.

### 4.4. Research Participants

The three participants chosen for the research vary by gender, instrument of specialization, teaching background, country of birth and residence. What they have in common is that they all are novice teachers with just a few years of experience in the field. To make them less recognizable I will substitute their names with pseudonyms as John, Mary and George.

John is a male teacher, in his mid-20s. He has been teaching for a few years in Moldova, primarily focusing on individual and chamber music lessons to children. He graduated with a Bachelor in Music from the Academy of Fine Arts, Chisinau and currently studying pedagogy as a Master’s degree student in the State University of Moldova.

Mary is a female teacher from Australia, actively working as a private and group sessions teacher in Helsinki. She is in her 30s and teaching brass. At the moment, she is a graduated with Master's Diploma in Solo Performance and Pedagogy from Sibelius Academy.

George is a male teacher, in his 30s and plays multiple string instruments. At this moment, he is studying pedagogy in Sibelius Academy, part-time teaching in different schools around Helsinki, free-lancing and gigging around Finland.

#### 4.5. Ethical considerations

I intend to keep the names of the interviewed novice teachers anonymous. To make sure their identities will not be recognized, their interviews won't be transcribed in the research and their personalities will be hidden under an analytical analysis of their thoughts. As a proof, has been made a contract with which was acquaint and signed each of the researched teachers. I kept them informed with each step of my progress that included their interview. I do not aim to reveal their identities in anyway but try to communicate their experience as clearly as possible. Nevertheless, aim of this research is to show the wide range of differences and similarities between the teachers and that requires me to disclose their country of origin. This way, my thoughts will be easier to formulate and share my findings with the reader.

## 5. Findings

While formulating the concept of the research, I looked for the most individual, non-identical teaching situation. Since, being a novice teacher myself in a foreign country I realized that I do not know how would it feel teaching in my own country, so I started looking up for a foreign teacher with experience in educating in own motherland and abroad. Then, I needed to find a comparison to that educational context and I looked for a Finnish teacher working in Finland and a Moldavian teacher working in Moldova, neither of them had thought foreign students. In my opinion, this was the most diverse combination of pedagogical experiences and backgrounds. For getting a more individual approach I needed to create more of a trusted relationship with the interviewee and that is why I asked to describe their childhood and the reason why they became musicians, later on educators.

### 5.1. John's story

Jon's musical youth was an ordinary one, when a child is able to choose to play the instrument he likes and is encouraged by his parents and teachers. When he came to his first lesson, failure almost made him quit, but luckily his teacher asked him to give it one more try and – it worked! The reason why he wanted to become a teacher is because of his love for the children and a need to share his knowledge with same young enthusiasts as he was one day, and by the way, still is. Even though kids and their lifestyles are different nowadays, the technologies and even music what they listen at home is unlike from his youth. While having a break from teaching, he usually joins his little pupils for a “hide and seek” or other games, being adult doesn't mean he couldn't feel young again. He tries to create friendly relationships with his students, when implying gadgets or other electronic devices he hopes to grow their interests to the instrument beside molding hands and body position, or develop a pleasant sound. Some of them might record a song or come with a YouTube video and ask to learn the tune so they could show off for their friends. One of the hardest part of being a teacher he finds in developing a trusted relationship with each pupil and trying not to disappoint them. Becoming more sensible, knowing when to push and when to stop, sometimes even might have to use the method of *good policeman, bad policeman (laughs')*. Depending on the age of the child, his teaching style will change, for example when having a lesson with a 7 years old it means more playing around, making up stories, learning from different games or activities,

even checking their homework. The child gets excited and tired much faster and needs regular change of activities, while a teenager might need more stricter approach. Together with the students, he tries to learn from them as well, with some it is enough to ask once, with others it is never enough to repeat 100 times, some need competitive feeling to actually try and learn something: “... *there aren't stupid children, there are teachers who don't know how to explain...*”. When asked about collaboration with other teachers, the answer was uncertain. There are as open-minded, as very closed off cases. Some teachers are willing to collaborate even with different ensembles, others have a totalitarian attitude. Trying to break the rules and innovate the already worn out system might become a dilemma. Respecting elders is important, but implementing new methods must be as critical and essential. Just as in any other institutional organization, there were cases of corruption and nepotism, but now the situation is stabilizing. In his opinion music should go apart from religion or politics to avoid any precedents. When talking about implying methodology in practice, he found hard to choose a method to follow. In his opinion, it all has to go hand in hand with the needs of his students. But the most difficult in the educational profession he finds the financial structure. Schools and teachers are poorly payed, the equipment, instruments and entourage is old. Young teachers have a dilemma of either choosing following their dreams of becoming professional educators which with strong patience and time might give a possibility to settle and have a family, or moving abroad and make a living with other type of work as builder, cleaner or else.

When asked about his own opinion about changes that need to be done in the field of music education the answer was to raise the salaries<sup>1</sup> because young specialists instead of pursuing their dream in the chosen field are forced to put survival as a priority. There are a lot of hardworking teachers with outstanding potential, and they are in a big need especially in the small communities but because of the inadequate income, they cannot afford doing what they were meant to. Nevertheless, an important duty that people of art must pursue is to try to create qualitative products, no matter of the field because out there on the market unfortunately predominantly is quantity over quality.

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<sup>1</sup> Average net salary of a Moldovan teacher is approx. 3,448\$ a year. Average net salary of an Australian teacher is approx. 51,414\$ a year. Average net salary of a Finnish teacher is approx. 54,581\$ a year. Data from averagesalarysurvey.com

## 5.2. Mary's story

Mary had a similar childhood and musical experience as John did. Love for the music and parents who were sensitive to their child's desire helped her step on the road of becoming a musician, even though the instrument was chosen for her. Dream of becoming a teacher came from her youth when educators in primary school usually ask what would we like to become when we grow up; for her, teacher is associated with somebody people want to look up to, the meaning of teacher was the ability to help others to learn. The biggest satisfaction comes from the ability to see own pupil learning a beautiful tune or piece. Mary would love teaching musical skills to her students but she finds it rather difficult before they learn the technical part of the instrument. When describing her teaching style, she chose to do everything the other way around because her teacher thought first to read and then play the music. Mary finds this type of learning not as natural as first listening to sound and then producing it: "... *my goal is to find the music which is already in the student*". When describing her teaching style and her students, in a way, she finds it easier to teach children that don't speak English much easier because the vocabulary isn't so vast and needs a proper analysis of what words to use and how, the students are simply mimicking her movements. Teaching in two different languages opened her eyes to a different perspective, when spending too much time on talking about how things should work it might push away the pupil. Moral of the story would be: "*Stop Scaring Kids!*".

When collaborating with other teachers Mary talked a lot about the importance of having more meetings and discussions about the educational process, because every educator has its own style and if students have lessons with multiple teachers in the same music school, they should somehow feel the logical line from all of them together. While teaching in multiple international schools of Helsinki, she had an opportunity to work with 4 different group of children and teach them an instrument one month, and after, they would have another teacher who would teach them some other instruments. It was definitely a unique experience, a bit experimental but definitely worth trying. When discussing about differences between teaching in Finland and Australia, her opinion is that teaching in Finland gives children more freedom and responsibilities than to the ones in Australia, who's activities and schedules are being under a complete control of their parents and educators. In her opinion, the biggest challenge nowadays is lack of resources or the access to them. Finding students without having an instrument to offer is a difficult task, neither every parent would agree to do such

investments in a hobby. To improve teaching education in future, would be good to combine theory with practice. Becoming a good teacher doesn't mean to know a lot, but to learn how to use the knowledge in actual practice, be reflective and sensible to each individual: “... *sometimes I don't feel like I am a teacher, I might not know what am I doing and making things up ... but, I realize that I do know and over time I am gaining more and more experience which makes me a better teacher.*”

### 5.3. George's story

George thinks that he didn't had a choice than becoming a musician since his whole family plays an instrument. Music was always a part of his life he enjoyed, especially when he is payed well (*laughs*). The reason he became a teacher is because making a living as a musician is very difficult and unstable. Permanent job as a teacher gives a steady income and excludes the need of traveling around the country for doing a gig or two. In his opinion, satisfaction in pedagogy is to see enthusiasm in students' eyes in the lesson, to share the knowledge and seeing the progress. Fulfillment comes also from challenging students to realize things by themselves, to find and solve problems, to have fun. Keeping a relaxed, friendly atmosphere is the key. The difficult sides in his job are mostly group lessons and keeping the motivation high. Being partly a student and partly a teacher means that the schedule can go up to 12 hours a day. Teaching children and adults bring very different experience, while kids are mostly brought by their parents to the class - mature students are elevated to come to the lessons by themselves. Also, the realization of success is different – when explaining to a child that for progressing he must practice, grownups have the responsibility of their own choices and results.

While teaching, he doesn't collaborate with other teachers, only in the pedagogy lessons when discussing a new methodology or idea “... *we might just share about 'what a horrible day we had', but we won't brainstorm situations like 'how could we do it better'...*”. When talking about pedagogy in music, it can't be compared much with other school subjects as for example math, where, if you follow the theorem you will always only one right answer even if you do it every time differently. But in music and arts in generally there are no right answers. The difference between education 20 years ago and nowadays is that back in the days teacher was always right and only in higher educational institutions pupils were allowed to discuss things. These days children have much more freedom in expressing themselves which might

lead to victimizing teachers: if the parent won't see the result it is the teacher to be blamed. That is why when working with adults there is more understanding why certain things won't work and how to vision progress. On the other hand, there are teachers who are empowering their supremacy which may lead to suppressing students, creating the inevitable fear of failing. There should be found the desirable middle ground between these extremes.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. Similarities

Nevertheless, every interviewee had a different childhood, what stayed similar was their passion for music and encouragement from their parents. These might be the key elements in the healthy relationship between future educator and student. Just as our relationship with our parents' influence, for example, our decision about having a family of our own or not, the same way is our perception of different social relationship in the community we are living in. Healthy environment is critical to the process of cultural communication, in the end it all leads to educate a generation for the "... needs of global corporations and for success in free market economics." (Elliott & Silverman, 2015, p. 142). The concept of social praxis about education, teaching and learning, cultivating and facilitating claims that all institutional subjects, experiences and aims has to pledge students' life values and goals. Being different and having an individual approach for each student is another important factor. Fair Play, sincerity, keeping motivation high, choosing wisely everything what's said in the class play an important role in education. As observed through the interviews, at times these are difficult characteristics to keep on with. Even adapting to a new class, new student, new environment might affect teachers approach.

### 6.2. Differences

An interesting fact was to observe how interviewees childhood experiences and surroundings where they grew affected their personalities and attitude towards teaching. Those whose responsibilities and freedom was restricted tend to give it to their students, and the other way around. This psychological context comes from bringing the change into an already lived experience with the hope of getting the progress going.

Politics and religious aspects seemed not to affect those who are not personally exposed to them. While John is sensitive about these particular topics because they influence his living and even income, George and Mary feel more secure about their financial situation and are looking for pleasant, affluent working space. Their thoughts reflect more the need of self-education, experiencing education at fullest, concentrating on their professional growth. Nevertheless, particularly difficult position in the society pushes teachers from such countries

as Moldova to not give up on their dreams, keeping up with all the changes and keep on sharing the joy of music with their students. This brings us to Elliott's recapitulation

... educators of all kinds and at all levels should start and continue to search for the aims and values of education and music education where they are: in the nature of personhood, people's interactions with each other, and individuals' musical and educational desires, felt needs, dreams, and musical-emotional experiences, both personal and interpersonal. (2015, p. 189)

### 6.3. Research assumptions

Balancing between the two extremes of being passive or either dominant when teaching - is another subject appealed by the interviewees. Arising questions about when to behave in a way or another and how to learn that without harming the pupils will follow each individual who ever tried educator's profession. While being teacher myself, I was told multiple times that there is no other way than some pupils are meant to be "training material" where teacher can practice their skills. I found this ideology very offensive, trying to boycott such reality. And the reality is that I am not the only one. "Yet for those who feel that the gap between vision and what they are able to do in their current context is too vast, the distance can lead to tension, doubt, disappointment, and feelings of failure." (Hammerness, 2006, p. 8) I found beautiful, in a way relieving realization that Mary, and probably many teachers like her are not afraid to unveil their fears as not knowing what to do, but using them as a driving force to learn and become better.

What I found interesting is that, even though my research involves teachers from different countries teaching either at home or abroad while Overton conducted a research in the same country, but different schools and was reflecting about changing pedagogy, we both concluded that "the data, though, revealed a much broader range of changes than was initially anticipated. The interconnection of these kinds of changes was also evident." (2006, p. 322) The difference in keeping the rhythm of being flexible with the reality we are living in is difficult, but what I find inspiring is that no matter if progress is visible or not, enthusiasts will find a way to make changes work for themselves. It shows that no matter where we are born, or what and who surrounds us, we tend to imply changes into the system we work. Changes and education must go hand to hand because progress is *the* word of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the question is, are we quick enough to advance in the same tempo as the universal society does?

## 7. Conclusion

There are a few reasons why I chose the topic. Even though the overall level of education has improved significantly in the past years, there are still quite many cases of teachers who don't acknowledge the real meaning of their profession.

Of course, there is no universal ideal type of education, and everybody comes from different background. Taking in consideration few notions as teachers' culture, religion, country and their own education, it is possible to create an approximate image about the pedagogues' teaching methods. I don't mean by saying that there should be same teaching style or rule, but it would be useful to create a sort of a toolbox for novice teachers to be able to develop their teaching skills, use creativity, be innovative and still have visible results with their students.

In my opinion, lately has been put a lot of pressure on the notion of being a *teacher*. Yes, it is a stressful profession and a responsible one, it can either flourish or, the opposite, kill the music inside the student. All the expectations of what is important to teach, what learning approach to use, what method might become overwhelming. We all know that all these varies from a student to student, but, the question is how to be aware enough of what is happening in your pupils' mind. It is very easy to start taking daily lessons as routine, even progress is a relative perception. For somebody success means to remember a song and for another is to perform on stage - how to set own pedagogical goals to make each student feel special, talented, worthy. In a way, we all tend to teach the way we've been thought. These reflections throughout the whole research brought up even more questions to be asked - even if a teacher is interested in learning different philosophies, how to put them in practice and how to use them for the students benefit? How to not let our own background, culture and education diminish our openness towards new *cultural prophecies*?

Another, not least important thought is about teachers influence on their students and how it may affect their social values of music. Being an educator in a basic music class where pupils grasp their first knowledge of music, a theory class or even an orchestra rehearsal includes teaching in a group. The information comes in very general frames, given so that the majority would understand and describe somehow differently for those who missed something. Through this teaching method students usually get more raw information than the teachers' personality, and even when it comes to asking questions the subject might get more

personal and the teachers' words will be subjective through their thoughts. But when we talk about instrumental lessons or lessons where there are only one teacher and one student - after some time - the lessons become more and more personal. The characters and behaviors are better emphasized and the views on certain things will influence in detail. Especially if we talk about a teacher who has strong opinions and has less need in learning than teaching.

While being professional musicians, we often tend to forget that out there are much more people who do play music for the sake of the musicking itself. Improvising, or learning a tune from YouTube, or conducting a church choir, or any other music making has its first meaning as to do 'music'. Of course, it defers depending the country, culture, religion and it brings the social values into the process, but the main reason stays the same - people use music for themselves to enjoy, to heal, to share and in rare cases it may go to its radical side - torture. We as professionals should be aware of this aspects since our little *professional world* can be overwhelming, we should not forget that people are simple and not everyone understands music as we do.

Theory and philosophy stand on the basis of all the practice we use nowadays, even those music educators who claim that productive teaching should be mainly practical don't always remember that methods they use were developed through the years by theorists, philosophers and critical teachers who dedicated their lives for the purpose of defining the impetus of culture.

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