

GIUSEPPINA LA FACE
Bologna

ITALIAN MUSICOLOGISTS AND THE CHALLENGE OF MUSIC PEDAGOGY

In this paper I would like to provide an overview on the project, which a group of Italian academic musicologists has been working on for a decade now in the field of Music Education. Obviously the topics I deal with should be considered in light of the Italian and, more generally, European context. I cannot say whether they are, thus and simply, relevant to the US educational system, too.

For us Italians, the conceptual starting point is the awareness that musicology runs the risk of becoming self-referential if it does not open itself to a vital relationship with the ‘political’ aspects of education, and especially if it does nothing about the impoverishment of the culture and history of music; if it loses control over the transmission of knowledge, the contents to be transferred, the most suitable methods, and the goals to pursue; if it loses touch with primary and secondary schools. On the one hand, it is essential to build, step by step, a scholarly sound musicological knowledge, what we refer to as ‘learned knowledge’ (establishing texts, reconstructing contexts, analyzing scores, looking into the mechanisms of patronage and reception, and examining theoretical and operational systems). On the other hand, this learned knowledge (*savoir savant*) should filter through education, as well as nourish it. It should permeate a rational approach to the didactics of the discipline, so as to turn into effective ‘didactic knowledge’ (*savoir enseigné*) in the school setting.¹ In this perspective, music pedagogy and music didactics are not separate disciplines, detached from musicology, but branches of the same tree, from which they derive their strength.²

¹ I draw the notions of ‘*savoir savant*’ and ‘*savoir enseigné*’ from Yves Chevallard and Marie-Alberte Johsua in *La transposition didactique: du savoir savant au savoir enseigné* (Grenoble, La Pensée Sauvage, 1985).

² This longstanding issue has been especially debated in German musicology: see for example *Musikpädagogik und Musikwissenschaft*, ed. by Arnfried Edler, Siegmund Helms and Helmuth Hopf (Wilhelmshaven, Noetzel, 1987). Unlike in Italy, already in the 1970s some eminent German musicologists – Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, Rudolf Stephan and Carl Dahlhaus, to name a few – devoted themselves to issues on music pedagogy. In North America a similar trend began in the past decade. I am thinking in particular about three collections of musicological studies which tackle issues connected to teaching music history from different perspectives: *Teaching Music History*, ed. by M. Natvig, Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2002; *Vitalizing Music History Teaching*, ed. by J. Briscoe, Hillsdale, NY, Pendragon Press, 2010; *The Music History Classroom*, ed. by

Let me add a brief note to clarify my use of these two terms: in Italy we distinguish between ‘music pedagogy’, the discipline that studies human education through music, from ‘music didactics’, which deals with the issues relating to the transposition of musical and musicological content. To put it bluntly: the object of pedagogy is human beings themselves in the process of their education, while the object of didactics is knowledge, and the ways to pass it down from teacher to learner.

I shall now briefly describe some of the areas on which we are focusing our attention, in our effort to encourage a more intense relationship between Musicology and Music Pedagogy, for the purpose of a fruitful education, at school and university level. These areas are:

1. political-institutional relationships;
2. University/School relationships;
3. scientific research;
4. music history teaching in Universities;
5. didactic systems and methodologies.

1. Political-institutional relationships

For years we have tried to build and develop political-institutional relationships. In Italy, a country with a very centralized administration, the situation is particularly problematic: the Parliament, Government and Administration have always chosen Conservatory educationalists as their preferred partners for music education at school level.³ In many cases these colleagues – not everyone of them has a background in musicology (or pedagogy) – have pursued an ideal of education that centers on “music making”, paying little attention to knowledge and ‘musical comprehension’. Now, I would like to point out that Italian musicologists do not view ‘historical-musical comprehension’ as a mere accumulation of data, notions, and information about historical facts, but rather as the “reading of a text”, the ability to master the overall structure of a music piece (starting from simply listening to it), to place the composition in its context of production and consumption, shed light on its social and intellectual functions, identify its connections with other fields of knowledge, and unearth its meaning.⁴ In our

J. A. Davis, Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2012; review by Maria Rosa De Luca on pp. 151-155 of this issue).

³ I am referring to the so-called “Scuole di didattica della musica” introduced experimentally in Conservatories from 1965, and officially established in 1992.

⁴ See G. LA FACE BIANCONI, “Il cammino dell’Educazione musicale: vicoli chiusi e strade maestre”, in *Educazione musicale e Formazione*, ed. by G. La Face Bianconi and F. Frabboni, Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2008, pp. 13-25; EAD., “La musica e le insidie delle antinomie”, in *La musica tra conoscere e fare*, ed. by G. La Face Bianconi and A. Scalfaro, Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2011, pp. 11-18.

schools, on the contrary, the teaching of music has focused mostly on performance (often at a basic, ordinary level), leaving out any reference to history and culture and, except for a few cases, it has never focused on developing effective listening strategies that can actually contribute to a structural, intellectual and cultural appropriation of the music heritage.

For years we have criticized this approach, aimed exclusively at a 'practical' learning of music. In interacting with legislative, governmental and administrative institutions, we have tried to explain that music education cannot possibly do away with culture and history, unless it wants to isolate itself from the other school subjects, and be reduced to mere entertainment. We are starting to see some results, but it has been a long, uphill struggle.

One of the most significant steps that have been taken in this direction concerns the so-called *Indicazioni nazionali per il curricolo della scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo d'istruzione* [National guidelines for pre-school and primary education] issued by the Ministry of Education, University and Research in September 2007 and reviewed in September 2012. This document establishes, in general terms, a set of "goals for the development of competences" and "learning goals" for school subjects, targeting different age groups, from 6 to 14. Italian academic musicologists, through the ADUIM (Association of Italian Academic Music Teachers) and the association "Il Saggiatore musicale", directly contributed to the writing of this document, trying to mediate among the many strong 'music-centered' demands coming from both Music Pedagogy, as promoted by the "Scuole di Didattica" in Conservatories, and from sectors of the Ministry. In particular, we managed to add the following statement: "the learning of music consists in practices *and knowledge*", and we also defined six main "educational functions" performed by music learning: cognitive-cultural; linguistic-communicative; emotional-affective; identity-shaping and intercultural; relational; and critical-aesthetic.⁵ Besides this, in 2009-10, when the new "Licei musicali e coreutici" (upper secondary schools addressed to students who may choose to pursue their studies at a Conservatory or at the National Dance Academy, or take musicological courses at University) were instituted, an eminent member of "Il Saggiatore musicale", vice-president Lorenzo Bianconi, was asked to join the Ministerial committee that formulated the *National Guidelines* for the teaching of music history.⁶

⁵ On the origins of this system of educational functions, and its implications, see G. PAGANNONE, "Le funzioni formative della musica", in *Musica Ricerca e Didattica. Profili culturali e competenza musicale*, ed. by A. Nuzzaci and G. Pagannone, Lecce, Pensa MultiMedia, 2008, pp. 113-156.

⁶ The first public competitions for the discipline of Music History in upper secondary schools were announced in 2016. Lorenzo Bianconi, along with Piero Caraba, Franca Ferrari and Renato Meucci, was a member of the Ministerial committee, which formulated the questions for this discipline.

2. University/School relationships

Yet working at the level of legislation, government and administration is not enough, if we fail to give school teachers a cultural motivation. We are promoting direct relationships between University and schools through research and training courses for teachers in service, organized in several Italian regions, with the aim of initiating a process that gives school teachers direct access to both musicological and educational-musical content, which musicologists have developed at university level. It is therefore up to teachers to turn the scientific content we provide into didactic knowledge.

In order to facilitate this process, the Arts Department of Bologna University and the association “Il Saggiatore musicale” have constituted a special group, the “SagGEM” (Group for Music Education). It includes School, Conservatory, and University teachers, education science scholars, and school heads. The “SagGEM” rests on four pillars: (1) focus on art music, without holding any prejudice about other musical genres and traditions; (2) create the necessary synergy between university, conservatory and school for a harmonious development of music education; (3) create a connection between music education and other school subjects; (4) refer to ethnomusicology for an intercultural perspective.

Intensive relationships between University and School teachers are significantly helped by “SagGEM”, which promotes special meetings to discuss our respective experiences. What is becoming increasingly important is also our ‘first aid’ online bibliography, which has been particularly successful with teachers (<http://www.saggiatoremusicale.it/home/biblioteca-elettronica/testi-di-pedagogia-musicale/>). It is not an exhaustive bibliography, but a practical, basic tool that provides reading suggestions for Italian teachers in search of useful cultural and subject-specific hints. Conversely, our relationship with school colleagues gives us university teachers great advantages: the opportunity to do field research on the phenomenology of music teaching and learning; to test the effectiveness of our scientific research in Music Pedagogy and Music Didactics; and to evaluate the validity of the methods we propose.

To allow school teachers to more easily acquire the knowledge that is being built in Universities, we are also working on a formula of simplified distribution, through periodicals especially addressed to teachers. One of them, *Nuova Secondaria*, often includes, since 2013, an article by a musicologist, which presents domain-specific knowledge that may be didactically useful, in a plain, conversational style and with the help of listening examples. In the past, the periodical used to publish only articles about other subjects (Italian, mathematics, Latin, foreign languages, geography, etc.): music was all but absent. We therefore contributed to change this approach, receiving very positive feedback from both readers and the editorial board of *Nuova Secondaria*. The articles have addressed a variety of topics, from *ars nova* to

Kurtág's *Játékok*, from Schumann's *Papillons* to 16th-century madrigals and 17th-century oratorios, down to 19th-century opera. We have asked university professors, but also PhDs and PhD students, and Conservatory colleagues to contribute their articles to the periodical.

3. Scientific research

In the past few years, also thanks to “SagGEM”, Bologna has become a place of reference for musicologists interested in issues of musical knowledge transposition. I shall only mention the main forms which this reflection has taken.

(a) *Symposia*. – In Bologna we have organized a series of conferences aimed at better defining some of the key topics in the pedagogic-didactic debate. In 2005, the symposium on “Educazione musicale e Formazione” (Music education and General Education; proceedings; Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2008)⁷ had three main purposes: (1) encouraging musicologists to engage in a discussion with education science scholars; (2) leading them (pedagogues and educationalists, researchers on didactics, psychologists, anthropologists) to define the issues that specifically pertain to musical knowledge; (3) urging musicologists, as well as educationalists, to share their views with music teachers from schools. In 2008, the symposium on “La musica tra conoscere e fare” (Music between Knowing and Doing; proceedings; Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2011)⁸ addressed the necessary connections between intellectual comprehension and the practice of music. In May 2014 the symposium on *Musicians and Musicologists as Teachers: How to Construct Musical Comprehension for Students* came back to this topic; some of the papers from the conference have been published in issue V, 2015 of *this* periodical; my keynote was published in English in the periodical *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* (V, 2014: “Musicology and Music Pedagogy: An Unnatural Divorce”).

(b) *Musica Docta*. – We have founded a specialized, peer-reviewed online journal, *Musica Docta*. Its mission is to reinforce the relationship between academic musicological research, the conceptual contribution from education science, and the methods of school teachers. *Musica Docta* includes articles, reviews, and other contributions by Italian and foreign scholars. It introduces both theoretical and field research. It also suggests ‘teaching applications’ (*percorsi didattici*) which, by illustrating in detail the transition from scientific to didactic knowledge, provide school teachers with ready-to-use models. *Musica Docta* publishes its texts in five languages: French, English, Italian, Spanish, and German. Some of the contributions come from scholars who have worked for years on Music Pedagogy and Music Didactics. But the journal also encourages ‘pure’ musicologists, too, to confront the challenge of knowledge transmission,

⁷ See note 4.

⁸ See note 4.

by reflecting on the mechanisms of learning and teaching, and addressing the epistemology of the discipline (including its inter-disciplinary relationships) for the purpose of didactic transposition.

With the Opinions and Reviews sections ('Interventi' and 'Recensioni') we intend to stimulate discussion about foreign colleagues who, in positive or negative terms, seem worthy of attention. We also aim at offering these reviews and opinions in an English translation, in order to ensure a wider circulation and broaden the scope of debate. For example, in issue IV, 2014, we find an opinion by Antonio Serravezza, an in-depth discussion of the conceptual premises of the book *Transforming Music Education* by Estelle R. Jorgensen (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003). In this particular issue, Lorenzo Bianconi discusses the vanishing of the very notion of 'history' from the policy documents of the International Society for Music Education between 1996 and 2006. (Incidentally, the musicological journal *Il Saggiatore musicale* also has articles about the transmission of knowledge, as a way to underscore the close connection that exists between Musicology and Music Pedagogy.)⁹

Musica Docta also contains the end results of another project, jointly promoted by the association "Il Saggiatore musicale" and by the Arts Department at Bologna University, the so-called "Gocce", or drops. "Gocce" is a "political" online column (<http://gocce.dar.unibo.it>), which also addresses the transmission of musical (in some cases also extra-musical) knowledge. In 3000 strokes, each 'drop' discusses one issue, or one aspect of it: contributors to this section include musicologists, researchers in various disciplines, professionals from the cultural sector, young scholars, and teachers. The 'drops' are aimed at arousing doubts, debunking common myths, and encouraging discussion. Scholars from other disciplines will get an overview of specific issues relating to musical knowledge, and music enthusiasts will discover problematic aspects and affinities with other fields. Everything is presented simply, step by step,

⁹ Among the strictly pedagogical-didactical articles that have appeared on *Il Saggiatore musicale*, we should mention at least the collective contribution "La musica nei programmi della scuola secondaria superiore" (I, 1994, pp. 377-391); the project for a national programme in "L'educazione musicale nel riordino dei cicli scolastici" (V, 1998, pp. 111-121); N. STAITI, "'Tutto è zuppa'? Musica, interculturalità, educazione: una prospettiva etnomusicologica" (X, 2003, pp. 135-149); D. SABAINO, "Musica, discipline musicali e formazione degli insegnanti. Note a margine d'una questione culturale" (XI, 2004, pp. 143-155); P. GOSSETT, "Insegnare l'opera lirica all'università" (XV, 2008, pp. 81-96); C. CANO - F. FINOCCHIARO, "Sulla pedagogia della musica di François Delalande" (XV, 2008, pp. 281-293); see also the whole issue XII, n. 1, 2005, pp. 3-236, which contains didactic strategies of Mauro Casadei Turronei Monti, Paolo Fabbri, Lorenzo Bianconi, Giuseppina La Face Bianconi, Paolo Cecchi, Stefano Melis and Nico Staiti, as well as the Italian translation of two major pedagogical-didactic writings by Carl Dahlhaus and Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht.

with studied *nonchalance*: in the words of Ovid, *guttae cavant lapides*. We invite and incite foreign colleagues, too, to contribute to this section.

(c) *History of musical knowledge in schools*. – What we also need to do is reconstruct the history of music teaching in Italy. One remarkable contribution on this is the monograph by Anna Scalfaro, *Storia dell'educazione musicale nella scuola italiana: dall'Unità ai giorni nostri* (History of Music Education in Italian Schools: From the Country's Unity to Today; Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2014). The author outlines the history of legislative frameworks, policy documents, methodologies, and contents, and discusses the inexplicable absence of 'pure' musicologists from the domain of general music education: the picture that emerges is rather worrying. Scalfaro's book gives us a concise, vivid picture of the disasters brought to Italian School by a self-declared music pedagogy that developed in the absence of any intrinsic relationship with musicology.¹⁰

(d) *IMS Study Group*. – I have already mentioned this. In 2012, in Rome, the 19th Congress of the International Musicological Society saw the launch of a new Study Group on "Transmission of Knowledge as a Primary Aim in Music Education". The group aims at motivating musicologists to not only continue to develop their discipline day by day, but also to feel responsible for its didactic transposition, both in universities and in schools. After the Rome meeting in 2012, and the one held in Bologna in 2014, we are pleased to have been able to organize this meeting in New York, today, with the generous participation of our North-American colleagues. We are working on the project for an international conference to be promoted by the Study Group, and to be held in Bologna in 2018. It will have to include not only musicologists and scholars, but also teachers and other representative figures of the school world, since the topic of discussion will be how to establish connections between the college and university levels, as well as the extremely sensitive issue of how to select the contents to be transmitted in schools and in basic-level university courses. Again, this is a particularly sensitive issue. I will briefly discuss it.

Excursus: Content. – We know that, according to the principles of General Didactics, teachers have the task of drawing from *essential* knowledge in order to promote *significant* and long-lasting competence. This means that they should highlight what is "essential", the structural elements, the building blocks of knowledge, and hence identify core elements which, once acquired, allow students to develop a system of notions which, if well connected, will help them master vast fields of knowledge.¹¹ Concerning music, for example, this

¹⁰ See also Anna Scalfaro's article, "L'Educazione musicale nella scuola italiana dalla metà degli anni '50 ai '70", *Il Saggiatore musicale*, XXI, 2014, pp. 123-148. The subject of "La Musica nella scuola italiana: storie, metodi, prospettive" was discussed in a panel moderated by Anna Scalfaro on 24 May 2016 in Bologna, at the Arts Department: some of these papers will appear in *Musica Docta* next year.

¹¹ On the notion of 'essentialization', see B. MARTINI, "La dimensione progettuale del curriculum. Saperi, competenze, pratiche", *Pedagogia più Didattica*, II, n. 1, Jan. 2009,

essential, core knowledge includes elements of theory (such as the notions of scale, chord, consonance, modality/tonality, etc.), morphology (the sonata form, the rondeau, the *da capo* aria, the so-called *solita forma* in Italian 19th-century opera, etc.), genres (symphony, quartet, madrigal, etc.), poetics (Romantic music, the Classical period, Symbolism, etc.). Humanities teachers – and music is an essential part of the humanities – are assigned a further task: they should motivate students to confront the great ‘unifying’ themes of the humanities, which for centuries have inspired literature, the visual arts, and music. Failing to acquire them would deprive students of the tools they need to participate in the culture they are immersed in, to understand the past that shaped it, and to imagine the future that could result from it. In our culture, these themes are (to name but a few) the Last Judgement, the Trojan War, the myths of Orpheus, Faust, Don Juan, etc. Teachers will therefore have to introduce students to these themes, and encourage them to use narration and research to approach the related topics. For the visual arts, for instance, students would observe *The Birth of Venus* by Botticelli or Caravaggio’s *Conversion of Saint Paul*, either after having learned about their subject and underlying story through literary texts first, or the other way around, i.e. arriving at some knowledge of the corresponding myth after having analyzed the paintings first. The result is, in both cases, a close knowledge of the work of art, which in turn leads to reflection, and to establish connections between different fields of knowledge: this helps develop organic, well-structured knowledge. As for music, it is filled with myths. Some of them cannot possibly be overlooked, such as *Macbeth* or *Othello*, two subjects of Shakespeare’s theater which have been turned into famous Verdi operas. Both are relevant in epistemological, historical-aesthetic, and ethical-social terms: this means that they are ‘strong’ contents, which can contribute to the development of the student’s mind and personality, and are therefore highly representative of the so-called ‘principle of axiologization’.¹² However, for any discipline, and whatever the subject, it is up to teachers to reflect on the internal structuring of each disciplinary content, to ask themselves *how* to convey the different contents, which learning processes to promote, which competences to foster, which educational and didactic goals to pursue. Teachers should therefore take responsibility first of all for *what* they choose.¹³ I do not want to dig up again

pp. 117-122; the article can also be read at <http://www.cat.saggiatoremusicale.it/saggem/attivita/2008/musicatraconoscerefare/martini.php>; see further B. MARTINI, “La programmazione didattica delle discipline”, *Riforma e Didattica tra Formazione e Ricerca*, X, n. 4, Sept.-Oct. 2006, pp. 21-26.

¹² The ‘principle of axiologization’ refers to the selection of content in regard to its educational value and its ethical and social relevance: see MARTINI, “La dimensione progettuale del curricolo” cit.

¹³ This is the focus of the article by Antonio Serravezza which I mentioned: “Educazione musicale ‘dialettica’: un modello per ogni situazione?”, this journal, IV,

the vexed question of the canon.¹⁴ The question we have to ask is not which opera is best suited to explain the opera buffa genre, whether *Le nozze di Figaro* is better than *La Finta giardiniera*, or *Il barbiere di Siviglia* is preferable to *Il signor Brusolino*. The question is: can an educated citizen, whether she or he is a musician or not, get along without knowing about *Le nozze di Figaro* or *Il barbiere di Siviglia*?

(e) *The network*. – Most recently we have officially launched another project, which may contribute to spark the debate on the pedagogy and didactics of music in Italy: we have created a Network of nine Italian Universities – Bologna, Catania, Chieti-Pescara, Ferrara, Pavia-Cremona, Roma Tre, Sassari, Teramo, Torino – which focuses on Music Education, and hence on the study of Music Pedagogy and Music Didactics. In this way we aim at increasing the attention of Italian university musicologists to the domains of pedagogy and didactics, for the purpose of an “enhanced” transmission of musical knowledge, and hence of a quality music education that fosters the intellectual, cultural and human growth of young people. The task of this network will be to organize conferences, support didactic and domain-related research, and promote scientific publications. From the very beginning, the project has also seen the involvement of the association “Il Saggiatore musicale” which, being recognized by the Ministry of Education, University and Research as an institution for the training of teachers in service, will be able to maximize the practical results of the network in the school field.

4. Music History teaching in Universities

Let me tell you something from my own life experience as a teacher of music history and music pedagogy at Bologna University. In the past few years I have taught to students of different origins, drawing much food for thought from this experience. I would like to mention in particular three emblematic cases: Chinese, Italian, and German students. The Chinese, and the Asian students in general, are sent to Bologna by their Governments on a mission to acquire the contents of European musical tradition, of which they know very little: they are eager to learn, primarily about Italian opera, but also about the

2014, pp. 107-113 (Engl. version, “‘Dialectical’ Music Education: A Model for Any Situation?”, this journal, same issue, pp. 115-121). Serravezza discusses the essays included in E. JORGENSEN, *Transforming Music Education*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003.

¹⁴ See some of the contributions to “La storia della musica: prospettive del secolo XXI”, in particular those of Harold Powers (“The Western Historical Canon”), Wilhelm Seidel (“Über den musikalischen Kanon”), Renato Di Benedetto (“Canone enigmatico”) and Iain Fenlon (“Albion’s Dilemma: Teaching Music, Teaching Culture”), which appeared on *Il Saggiatore musicale*, VIII, 2001, pp. 51-61, 89-97, 99-102, and 103-112.

great masters of the Renaissance and of 19th-century German music. In spite of the language barrier, they are passionate about their studies and make remarkable progress in absorbing knowledge. In most cases the young Italians who arrive at our University do not have musical competences worthy of this name. This should be no wonder, given the low quality of music education in many schools of our country. The most surprising, though, are the German students. They are just as ignorant as the Italians: I have met students who know absolutely nothing about Beethoven's Fifth or *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. This may strike us as odd, as we usually think of Germany as a country that is very concerned about preserving and passing down its historical music heritage, which after all constitutes an essential part of Western musical culture. Today it is no longer like this. It seems that many young Germans are increasingly losing touch with the tradition of art music. So on one side we have Asians who are eager to learn everything about Western musical culture. On the other hand, young Europeans are getting more and more ignorant about it (and often do not have any knowledge of other musical cultures, either: what they only know about – superficially – is commercial music).

Something clearly went wrong. I wonder if, from now on, we should come back to good old political correctness, but in reverse to what we have done in past years. Let me explain this: we need to make sure that the knowledge of our Western art music heritage does not vanish from the conscience of young Europeans, both in its immaterial form (music as a work to perform and listen to), and in its physical manifestations (the importance and function of books, treatises, scores, instruments, buildings devoted to music, etc.). In order to avert this danger, we should keep on promoting and passing down our Western heritage, using the right methodologies, and of course without ostracizing other music genres. Young Westerners should not, and cannot, afford to know nothing about a heritage which was built over centuries of history and civilization, and which not only possesses an intrinsic value, but is also key to interconnecting several sectors of knowledge: linguistic-literary, artistic, historical-philosophical, logical-mathematical, and scientific-technological. Failing to understand this would mean condemning it to oblivion – and this would be detrimental to the general education of citizens and to their ability to understand the world around them.

This is the reason why, back at our Department, we are insisting on having both frontal lectures and seminars that focus on the music history of the so-called “canon”, but also on the Middle Ages and 20th century, right down to today, without however disregarding jazz, the history of opera, paleography, aesthetics, and the philosophy of music. I would like to point out that all this is not affecting our constant, in-depth exploration of other musical cultures. At the Department, a large and significant part of our long-term research projects has focused on the music of the Roma people of the Balkans, the female music

traditions of the Mediterranean, the music of Moroccan brotherhoods, the oral traditions of Uganda, and so on.

Incidentally, I should mention that students of Italian, German, and other nationalities, when exposed to Western art music, approach it with great enthusiasm, no less than Asians. Why then should we deprive them of this knowledge and pleasure?

Let me mention another serious issue, concerning the teaching of the history of Western music. It has to do with a difficulty inherent in the subject itself: unlike literary history textbooks (which are complemented by anthologies containing a selection of annotated texts to be read and analysed), and art history textbooks (which contain reproductions of individual works of art), music history textbooks must necessarily develop their discourse without being able to provide learners with a significant number of scores and listenings of the works discussed. In the case of Italy in the past four decades, what emerges are at least four intellectually qualified attempts at condensing historical-musical knowledge into textbooks addressed to university-level students.¹⁵ However, in practice these textbooks (especially those adopted in triennial university courses, where the technical competence of students is generally lower than in Conservatories) show difficulties that call for a continued, systematic mediation from the teacher, which is hard to achieve in the fixed slots of lesson timetables.

Excursus: The verbalization of musical discourse. – Our work on art music develops in the three traditional stages I have mentioned at beginning of my speech: (1) considering the work's structure as it emerges from listening, and subsequently examining the score;¹⁶ (2) placing the work in its historical-cultural context; (3) identifying the meaning the work acquired at the moment of creation and in the course of its reception. In regard to this, I would like to emphasize a particular aspect, in which we are putting a great deal of effort, both in academic teaching and, thanks to the teachers who follow our projects, also in the didactic transposition we bring to schools: the *verbalization* of musical discourse. We aim at encouraging the acquisition and use of language that can capture the specific features of a music piece, while always connecting

¹⁵ *Storia della musica* ed. by Società Italiana di Musicologia, 10 vols. (Torino, EDT, 1976-1982; new edition in 12 vols., 1991-1993); E. SURIAN, *Manuale di storia della musica*, 4 vols, Milan, Rugginenti, 1991-1995, and various subsequent editions; M. CARROZZO - C. CIMAGALLI, *Storia della musica occidentale*, 3 vols., Rome, Armando, 1997-1999; *Musica e società*, ed. by P. Fabbri *et al.*, 3 vols., Milan, McGraw-Hill Education, 2012-2013 (vols. 1 and 2); Lucca, LIM, 2016 (vol. 3).

¹⁶ The approach that introduces the reading of a score has also been tested with primary school children, as well as with older, musically illiterate children. Some reflections on this experiment can be read in G. LA FACE, "Didattica dell'ascolto: 'indizi' e lettura della musica", in *Scuola d'ascolto, scuola in ascolto*, ed. by S. Chiesa, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 2011, pp. 123-133.

the perception of discourse structure to meaning, thereby accounting for each and every definition, image or name used to describe the piece. We believe that a rich, exact language, even if not entirely technical, can help develop a form of high-level diffusion of knowledge that can allow even non-specialists to comprehend a music work. Of course the specialized lexicon should be learned as well. But whether we are popularizing or working on didactic transposition, technical terms can be avoided to some extent, or converted into notions, adjectives, and turns of phrase drawn from other fields than music – for instance rhetoric and literature, psychology, science, and so on, which may be easier to understand and master for learners who do not have strong musical competence.

This lexicon, both technical and connotative at the same time, concerns both musical terminology (*quaver, grand pause, tonic, etc.*), and the quality of sensorial and emotional experience (*sweet, clear, somber, garrulous, melancholic, etc.*), but also notions that condense complex cultural meanings or contain references to apparently distant domains of knowledge (*heroic, epic, cosmic, vivid, etc.*). A language, then, which translates the work into words, alternately capturing, for each segment of it, the prevailing atmosphere, the development, or a salient detail (a specific cue).¹⁷ There is much to be done: we will need to look at eminent models (the masters of music criticism, but also of literature and the visual arts),¹⁸ and adapt them for didactic purposes. At the same time, we will need to make Language Education teachers in schools aware of this aspect.

This construction of musical knowledge, achieved through controlled and appropriate language tools, is the exact opposite of a teaching method that was fashionable in Italian schools in past years. This method was based on a reflex response: asking students, after a listening activity, which images, feelings, and emotions a certain music piece had aroused in them (“what comes to your mind when listening to this music?”). Such an approach gets learners used to only experience the musical item in a *projective* mode, reinforcing the idea that

¹⁷ An example of this can be the description of a short extract from Mendelssohn’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in G. LA FACE BIANCONI, “La didattica dell’ascolto”, *Musica e Storia*, XV, 2006, pp. 511-541: 528-535.

¹⁸ On this topic, readers should refer to what can be regarded as a manifesto in the domain of art criticism: R. LONGHI, “Proposte per una critica d’arte”, *Paragone*, I, n. 1, Jan. 1950, pp. 5-19 (the author advocates a “critical discourse that can both establish direct contact with the work and evoke the prevailing taste that surrounded it”, in an attempt to search for the “‘verbal equivalence’ of a work of art”; pp. 13 e 7). On the visual arts and their verbalization see also the following collections of essays written by two prominent literary critics: C. SEGRE, *La pelle di san Bartolomeo. Discorso e tempo dell’arte*, Turin, Einaudi, 2003, in particular pp. 68-79 and 80-108; P. V. MENGALDO, *Tra due linguaggi. Arti figurative e critica*, Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 2005.

music can only be something personal, immediate and ephemeral, and that it is wide-open to *any* subjective interpretation. On the contrary, the kind of verbalization we advocate entails considering the musical item *objectively*, with a degree of critical detachment: it “gives shape” to the knowledge that students build, and consolidates it. We have also taken our experimental verbalization projects to primary schools, thanks to the enthusiasm of some teachers who skillfully convey what we have developed in our scientific research.¹⁹

5. Didactic systems and methodologies

Besides reflecting on which musical and musicological content we want to pass on, we need to ask ourselves which didactic and methodological approaches are preferable. In Italy we are focusing on three didactic approaches; each one has a different object, but they are all interrelated: Listening didactics, Production didactics (performance, composition, improvisation), and Music History didactics. Today I will only address Listening didactics, which in our view is the indispensable foundation of the other two. I would like to remind that some of our Italian colleagues have also been working on the other two didactic approaches, with significant results: I am referring in particular to the work of Carla Cuomo, Maria Rosa De Luca, Giorgio Pagannone, and Stefano Melis.²⁰

¹⁹ A good example can be the way in which a class of seven-eight-year-old children recently described Papageno’s aria *Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen*: “The aria begins with a sort of musical box, like the sound of chimes: it is called glockenspiel. The piece divides into three main equal parts: *A-A-A*. Each *A* in turn divides into two smaller parts: *a-b*. You can hear the separation between the two parts because before *b* begins, the voice goes away and you can hear the glockenspiel chimes again: *a* = the music is staccato, it zig-zags, moves by fits and starts, half-low, half-quick and half-loud (at times softer); *b* = the music is quicker, more jerking and staccato. The third repetition of *A* is a bit different. In the introduction we no longer hear only the glockenspiel, but other instruments, wind instruments in particular. The orchestra is fuller and the section ends with an orchestra-only piece that was not in the other parts: it closes the whole piece”. I would like to thank Silvia Cancedda and Daniela Baroncini, teachers for classes II and III C at Scuola primaria “Raffaello Sanzio”, Bologna.

²⁰ See for ex. B. MARTINI - C. CUOMO - M. R. DE LUCA, “Trasposizione didattica del sapere musicale: aspetti di contenuto e di metodo”, in *La musica tra conoscere e fare* cit., pp. 123-156 (also *Pedagogia più Didattica*, III, n. 1, Jan. 2010, pp. 91-118); C. CUOMO - M. R. DE LUCA, “La trasposizione del sapere musicale nella formazione intellettuale”, this journal, III, 2013, pp. 17-38 (Engl. version, “The Transposition of Musical Knowledge in Intellectual Education”, this journal, Special Issue, *Transmission of Musical Knowledge: Constructing a European Citizenship*, 2014, pp. 17-39); S. MELIS - G. PAGANNONE, “Il ‘filo’ e l’ordito’: dall’ascolto alla teoria musicale e ritorno”, in *La musica tra conoscere e fare* cit., pp. 89-106.

(a) *Listening didactics*. – The specific goal of Listening didactics is to develop the ability of students in what we call “reflective listening”, a practice whereby they appropriate the structure of the piece, zero in on its connecting elements and turning points, build a mental map of it, and, through constant historical contextualization, reach the final goal: a semantically and historically founded comprehension of the work. A kind of listening, therefore, which helps ‘read’ the musical text by decoding and recoding its different elements – a kind of ‘reading’ that allows to glimpse, on a cognitive-emotional level, a whole tangle of ramified cultural implications, which is what we usually do in other disciplines, when we analyze a Dante canto or a Shakespeare monologue, a Rembrandt painting or a Le Corbusier building. Reflective listening encourages listeners to adopt an *active* attitude. Listening, too, like playing or singing, is ‘doing’, a true ‘experience’ (in the sense of John Dewey) and, on the level of didactics, it simultaneously produces knowledge and is the product of knowledge. It also contributes to the general process of education by improving cognition and meta-cognition, stimulating a critical attitude, refining sensibility and taste, and encouraging active participation but also control over emotions, reinforcing the sense of belonging to a tradition, and teaching respect for other cultures. In a word, it promotes democracy. The practice of instrument playing and choir singing, therefore, should always be combined with the listening of quality music and historical-critical reflection, in a virtuous circle that leads from performance to listening, and vice versa. Both of them, in combination, lead to ‘knowing’ and ‘understanding’.

(b) *The model of Irène Deliège*. – In order to give Listening didactics a sound theoretical foundation, we turned to Music Psychology. Among the many directions, the model developed by Belgian researcher Irène Deliège seemed appropriate to guide students through their first experiences with the musical work of art. Deliège conceives of musical listening as a process of *schematization* of the perceived music material, a process of simplification and reduction that exploits elements captured on the surface of musical discourse. These elements remain impressed in the listener’s memory due to their prominence and frequency, leaving a “print” on it: they are *indices*, or *cues*, which function as the invariant core of musical discourse. Taking these as a point of reference, listeners apply principles of resemblance and difference in order to gather, evaluate and compare the old and new elements they listen to, and then store and sort them. Around these points of reference of music processing, listeners build (consciously or unconsciously) a representation of musical form in its temporal development. Given these premises, teachers in a didactic setting will be able to guide students, on a case-by-case basis, in their search for at least some of these cues (particularly prominent, or frequently repeated, elements),

so that they can organize their listening experience around them.²¹ The elements that can function as *indexes*, as *cues*, are individual motifs, acoustic, timbre, and metric-rhythmical parameters, or even formal patterns.²² The use of *cues*, if carefully guided, allows to activate cognitive processes of the first and second level, to fathom the musical structure, and “to build knowledge”.²³ We have tested this model of listening psychology with students of various age groups, and we have obtained encouraging results also with primary school kids.

(c) *Segmentation and selection*. – Listening didactics, as we all know, involves at least two initial difficulties, which are related to the very nature of musical discourse. As a temporal art, music takes “shape” in time, it flows through time, so it can never simultaneously be present (except in our memory stream), and hence cannot be condensed into just one trait. It is also scarcely denotative, that is, it does not hint at external reality referentially, and if at all, it does so in an evasive, elusive manner. Both of these aspects make the experience of students with the work of art difficult, unless we have recourse to the score as an aid: this, however, presupposes advanced technical competences.²⁴

Today I shall only focus on the first difficulty, which has to do with the stream of musical discourse. In order to approach this issue, and make students grasp the development of a whole piece, we have tried to activate attention and memorizing processes, as well as second level mental processes such as “knowing how to analyze and sort”, “correlate”, “identify analogies and differences”. We help learners build themselves a ‘mental map’ of the piece, as

²¹ See in particular I. DELIÈGE, *L'organisation psychologique de l'écoute de la musique. Des marques de sédimentation – indice et empreinte – dans la représentation mentale de l'œuvre*, diss., Université de Liège, 1990/91, pp. 135-160 and 169-173. The author subsequently specified her notions of *extraction d'indices* and *formation d'empreintes*; see in particular “Prototype Effects in Music Listening: An Empirical Approach to the Notion of Imprint”, *Music Perception*, XVIII, 2001, pp. 371-407. The notion of ‘perceptual saliency’ was proposed as an Italian equivalent by G. PAGANNONE, “Carmen spiegata ai piccoli (scuola primaria)”, *Musica e Storia*, XV, 2006, pp. 663-671: 668.

²² I have discussed the notion of *cue* introduced by Deliège, suggesting a possible application of it to a salient morphological element (the strophic form of the Lied), in my essay *La casa del Mugnaio: ascolto e interpretazione della “Schöne Müllerin”* (Florence, Olschki, 2003); see in particular pp. 62 ff. (German ed., *Das Haus des Müllers: Zur Interpretation von Franz Schuberts Liedzyklus “Die schöne Müllerin”*, Vienna, Praesens, 2013, pp. 38 ff.).

²³ For an application of this notion, see G. LA FACE BIANCONI, “Le pedate di Pierrot. Comprensione musicale e didattica dell’ascolto”, in *Musikalische Bildung. Erfahrungen und Reflexionen / Educazione musicale. Esperienze e riflessioni*, ed. by F. Comploi, Brixen/Bressanone, Weger, 2005, pp. 40-60.

²⁴ On the notions and functions of segmentation in music see my article “La didattica dell’ascolto” cit., pp. 513-523.

it were – which should allow them to dominate the piece from above, gaining an overview of the cross-references between different sections, and getting involved in an intriguing “play” of multiple analexes and prolexes, which progressively generate a “memory synthesis”.²⁵

The temporal nature of music also involves a further problem: the comprehension of long, elaborate pieces. Of course the answer is not to let students listen only to short pieces: on the contrary, we need to find specific listening strategies for longer pieces. The basic procedure is to segment the music work, break down its linear structure into shorter segments, in such a way as to conform to both the constructive principles followed by the composer and the laws of perception.²⁶

We know that any musical construction, even the shortest one, can be said to have been understood if the listener has been able to discern its constitutive parts. Unwittingly or deliberately, when listening to a music composition (just like a speech or a poetry reading) we divide the piece, or the speech, into sections, periods, sentences, digressions. This *segmentation* is a mental operation, which helps the competent listener grasp how the speech is organized by observing the articulation of its parts in their mutual functioning. In a didactic setting, starting from an accurate segmentation, students will be exposed to a targeted *selection* of episodes or excerpts, which can be isolated and listened to partially, but can still be taken as representative of the whole work.²⁷

‘Segmenting’ and ‘selecting’ are *not* synonyms of ‘fragmenting’: on the contrary; they are subtle operations, in which musical competences and the designation of didactic goals are closely tied. A given segment of an opera will turn out as didactically effective if it “carries meaning”, that is, if it leads to a better comprehension of musical structures, but also sheds light towards semantic comprehension.²⁸

²⁵ The notion of ‘memory synthesis’ is discussed, with regard to narratology, by C. SEGRE, “Analisi del racconto, logica narrativa e tempo”, in his *Le strutture e il tempo*, Turin, Einaudi, 1974, pp. 3-77: 16 f.

²⁶ Some of the problems associated with segmentation, as far as opera is concerned, are addressed in L. BIANCONI - A. POMPILIO - G. PAGANNONE, “RADAMES: prototipo d’un repertorio e archivio digitale per il melodrama”, *Il Saggiatore musicale*, XI, 2004, pp. 345-394 (see in particular Giorgio Pagannone’s contribution: pp. 363-388).

²⁷ Concerning opera, consider the argument of Lorenzo Bianconi in “Parola, azione, musica: Don Alonso vs Don Bartolo”, *Il Saggiatore musicale*, XII, 2005, pp. 35-76: 47 ff.; ID., “*Il trovatore* di Giuseppe Verdi”, *Nuova Secondaria*, XXXII, n. 10, Jun. 2015, pp. 56-60.

²⁸ On this issue see LA FACE BIANCONI, “La didattica dell’ascolto” cit., pp. 513-523 (on the fifth movement from Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*); EAD., “Saperi essenziali e conoscenze significative: il ‘Largo concertato’ nel *Macbeth* di Giuseppe Verdi”, in *Insegnare il melodramma: saperi essenziali, proposte didattiche*, ed. by G. Pagannone, Lecce-Iseo, Pensa MultiMedia, 2010, pp. 145-173.

(d) *The laboratory.* – We believe that in schools, but also at the lower levels of academic education (at least in Italy), an effective strategy to combine our three didactic approaches (listening, production, and music history) could be the laboratory experience (as defined in the works of John Dewey, Lev S. Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, and Jerome Bruner). I view the laboratory as a cultural space/time that integrates epistemological and poietic aspects in view of a deeper musical comprehension; in which, thanks to the ‘practice→theory→practice’ model, doing merges with knowing, and musical knowledge (both linguistic and historical) is combined with technical-practical aspects. In a laboratory, students take the musical *text* apart, dissect it, analyze its technical features, establish relevant interdisciplinary links, and finally put it back together. In this context performance, composition and improvisation are not an end in themselves – they are tools, which help students experience *from within* the musical structures they identified during the listening activities. If adequately learned and practiced, these structures can lead to an “insider”, “technical” comprehension of the musical information. In the laboratory experience, listening, performance, composition, historical analysis, and an interdisciplinary vision can be tightly connected, and we can build *heuristic knowledge*, knowledge that is open to constant investigation, problematization and re-building. Performing vocal and instrumental pieces solo or in a group, and producing simple music compositions with a controlled procedure, helps learners understand the functioning of a musical artifact and the syntax it is based upon; it activates basic creative and compositional skills for producing simple musical forms, whether modeled on historical examples or (insofar as possible) produced from scratch.

In the sphere of production, laboratory activities (by which I mean instrumental and vocal performance, and composition and improvisation) presuppose difficulties. Performing music, even at just an acceptable level, so as to give performers themselves a modicum of satisfaction, still requires technical abilities that can only be acquired through constant, tiring exercise – and this can only happen in institutions that provide professional training, such as Conservatories. It is therefore indispensable that teachers in schools or in basic-level university courses, when addressing performance, but also composition and improvisation, set themselves circumscribed, clear, relevant and coherent goals, and know how to keep a balance between student engagement and the results they intend to achieve. The risk is loss of interest on the part of students, which would reduce laboratory activities to pointless exercise.

(e) *Kinetic approaches.* – One last thought. Working side by side with school teachers, we have also come to consider, with all due caution, approaches based on kinetic methods, which instruct learners to recode what they have

heard, “dramatizing” and “performing” it through gesture and movement.²⁹ If employed sensibly in specific contexts, these methods can sometimes be useful. I am thinking especially about the rhythm model of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, which certainly offers productive ideas. It should be pointed out that, in pre-school and primary school, the use of the body, if correctly taught, can contribute to the understanding of structural and semantic aspects of musical phenomena. While this model, which is referred to as “directed gesturing”, does not necessarily coincide with the dramatization of the piece, it can sometimes provide a starting point even for creating actual choreographies. Generally speaking, however, these methods, which are advocated both by Anglo-American and Italian pedagogy, are bound to be more successful with pre-school and primary school children, whereas we think that they are less effective with adolescents.³⁰ As is well-known these students, who face the distress of transition to adulthood, do not have an easy relationship with their bodies. By contrast, they already possess fully-developed cognitive abilities, which allow them to deal with the musical discourse intellectually, without having to go through the recoding of their listening experience by means of gesturing or movement. In any case, the kinetic methods, although targeted at younger age groups, should be applied by teachers in close collaboration with professionals who are expert in dance, or in gymnastics, and cannot certainly be left to immediate, unscripted improvisation.

giuseppina.laface@unibo.it

²⁹ I would like to mention at least one outstanding study in this domain: C. SINTONI, *Quando il Suono diventa Gesto. Un laboratorio su “Pierino e il lupo” di Sergej Prokofiev*, Rome, Aracne, 2009. It contains, among other things, some insightful methodological and didactic considerations about the sterility, and the risks, associated with an unreflective application of motor and play practices to the learning of music.

³⁰ See for example the review by an eminent US expert in music didactics, Keith P. Thompson, of Jody Kerchner’s book, *Music across the Senses* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2014), *Music Education Research*, XVI, 2014, pp. 371-374, DOI: 10.1080/14613808.2014.912869.