

Intuition and Analysis in string playing and teaching

GOETZ RICHTER (GOETZ.RICHTER@SYDNEY.EDU.AU)



Intuition ... Analysis

- ▶ What do we mean?
- ▶ **Intuition:** a wide term with several layers of meaning...
 - ▶ Sense intuition (concrete presence and evidence...)
 - ▶ Mental performance.. Knowing something we cannot explain?
 - ▶ Directing action... knowing what to do and finding the reasons later. Orientation to the future.
- ▶ **Analysis:** having done something, explaining it, taking it apart, separating the constituting elements, finding solutions for problems, etc.... "Experience is... when we have done something wrong for 30 years..." (Gerhart Hetzel)
- ▶ What's the relevance to string playing and teaching? -> thinking of string playing in engineering terms, we tend to rely on analysis. Analysis is perceived as "helpful"...

Limits of Analysis

- ▶ Analysis is evidently important -> many areas of life where this is clear. (Science)
- ▶ Analysis helps us to organise our thoughts. What matters... what does not. Where is the “solution” ?
- ▶ Confronted with a “problem” ... we analyse (.. “what are the reasons...”?)
- ▶ But: does the solution necessarily arise from an analysis of the problem? How are “solution” and “problem” related... family resemblance.
- ▶ Thesis: ***Analysis is not creative but reactive. It cannot “overcome” the problem. It will ultimately serve the problem. That means: Analysis perpetuates the problem.***

Justification...

- ▶ Analysis is only possible when we have a view towards something that is in front of us...
- ▶ Music: **Nothing** is in front of us... Music is pure intentionality.. Music is “What is about to happen” (*Energeia* not *ergon*)
- ▶ Analysis meets its limits in the realm of intentionality.
- ▶ In music and musical performance (as in life...), analysis only grasps illusions: The concepts informing analysis do not have ontological correlates that are fixed sufficiently to allow identification....
- ▶ Conclusion: String pedagogy is like ornithology or whale watching... We might be able to predict the behaviour of the flock but we will always be surprised by the fate and development of the individual. -
> Flesch's “normality”

Intuition and Music

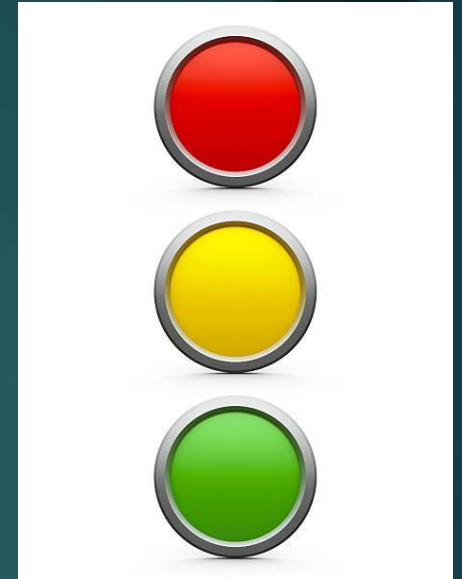
- ▶ Sense perception and intuition... tactile and musical “this-ness”
- ▶ Ascertaining the meaning of music -> interpretation and intuition.
- ▶ Music includes many phenomena beyond analysis... inspiration, expressiveness, spontaneity, etc.
- ▶ Teaching music includes understanding of thinking, disciplines of thinking (eg. music), methods of thinking, feeling...-> method
- ▶ Methodology: We tend to conceive methodology along analytic lines (“plotting”) but is there an “intuitive” methodology? If there was... what would it need to entail?
- ▶ **Finding the way to play.** Reaching beyond functional definitions of performance technique.

Finding the way we play...

- ▶ Surprise: There is no technique.... why:?
 - ▶ Ontology: making music is no production process but a “doing”
 - ▶ Artistic: Interpretation and performance are achievements of original and individual imagination
- ▶ Implications: There is organisation. -> organisation of imagination, movement in time
- ▶ Expressive ear (Kirnaskaya)/ tone is first
- ▶ We seek for direct connection between expressive ear and hands/movement
- ▶ The teacher assist in the conditions of this search (scaffolding...)

Fundamentals of playing

- ▶ (Tension) Free upper body (posture, shoulders, abdomen, breathing, etc) in rest position and while moving
- ▶ Green light (-> the fundamental importance of the amygdala and signals of “stress” to the brain... yellow and red lights). Tone to be associated with green light
- ▶ **Left:** free, unimpeded movement, intuition, leisure, temporal priority (“**material**”), “just there” -> “Happy left hand”. (NB: no punishment, anxiety, etc about left hand).
- ▶ **Right:** intentional, conscious, (“**form**”). Impulsive, dynamic, sensitive, etc. (Feeling through fingers/hand, arm movements contribute to playing); definition of sound through articulation, intensity, movement energy (Dynamic)



The role of attention in performance

- ▶ Attention directs learning
- ▶ Attention directs memory and memory cues, etc
- ▶ Attention has temporal dimension: -> attention to what happens/ has happened = perception. Attention to what is about to happen = anticipation. Manifold integration of the modes of attention through imagination
- ▶ Practice = Balance, integration organisation of attention and the modalities of attention
- ▶ Organisation:
 - ▶ (i) green light
 - ▶ (ii) happy left hand, prepared, allowing anticipation. Singing into the hand
 - ▶ (iii) active, alert to life of music (articulation, intensity, enlivening of sound). Phrasing organisation. "structural rhythm". (*Grossrhythmus*)

Methodological consequences

- ▶ 1. Conditions of playing: Green light fundamental. Importance of active relaxation exercises, practicing rest position, limiting reaction. Relaxation maintained through movement.
- ▶ 2. Listening: distinguishing between imagination and perception here. Strengthening imagination/ anticipation (Singing). Direction the information gathered through perception towards improved action.
- ▶ 3. Moving: practice of left hand without sound. Leave the left hand alone
- ▶ 4. Practice of structural/ **characterful** movement of right arm/hand in tone production (no mechanic bow exercises, but exercises in movement and feeling; practice of bow patterns [forms, character] valuable)
- ▶ 5. Development of differentiated contact feeling in bow hand/arm: articulation, intensity, life/dynamic -> artistic attention largely on bow hand
- ▶ 6. Rhythmic Organisation
- ▶ 7. Autonomous Learning -> silent/mental practice
- ▶ 8. From the ear to the hands (no interference, no technical construction)
- ▶ 9. Metaphorical thinking -> enhances character, develops unity of intent and expression.

Importance (primacy) of intuition

- ▶ Playing and teaching is largely intuitive process
- ▶ “Finding” the playing extends our intelligence in ways that analytical activity can never accomplish. Intuition gives us fundamental knowledge (already evident in clear sense perception)
- ▶ The ability to use our intuition in a purposeful (directed) way gives musicians unique abilities.
- ▶ It is possible to develop intuitive thinking/ listening. The development, however, is indirect (by creating, enhancing conditions under which intuition works best)
- ▶ Developing intuition improves our alertness, connection, ability to communicate, organisation of internal life.