

GOOD TASTE IN THE ART OF MUSIC

On the relationship between tradition and musician.

Music-making is an activity based on traditions. Music-making in Western European style is an activity based on traditions remaining from historical time. To become a part of the tradition, the musician must gain familiarity with the conventions of performance practice related to the music. In the middle of the eighteenth century several tutors on instrumental playing were published by Leopold Mozart (1985/1756), Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach (1949/1754), Johann Joachim Quantz (1985/1752) and Francesco Geminiani (1969/1749), to mention a few of the most influential. These tutors, or manuals, mainly contain instructions on instrumental matters, but they also provide information on musical conventions of general concern, as described by Quantz in his *On playing the Flute* (1985/1752) and by Geminiani in his work *A Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick* (1969/1749).

My overarching interest in the current study is the musical conventions behind the expression *good taste*. The aim of the study in progress is to look into how good taste in music is taught historically as well as implemented contemporary. The first part of the study focuses the historical background from a culture-psychological perspective. Against that background the investigation will continue with a present-day perspective on the conventions of good taste as being part of a music-cultural heritage, and it's implications on practical music.

Apprenticeship has for centuries been a common model for learning within different kinds of craftsmanship. The craftsmanship of instrumental playing is historically and contemporary predominantly learnt as similar forms of apprenticeship, especially within conservatories and music academies (Nielsen and Kvale, 2000). Students often choose to study at a conservatory where a teacher of special interest is teaching. This teacher serve, by being an instrumentalist and a performing artist, as a role-model for the student. With the teacher as role-model, the student is learning the tradition of the instrument and the music by imitating the technique and sound as well as the musical expressions demonstrated by the teacher. Apprenticeship is here to be seen as a cultural practice, where the lessons are given their form and intention by the relation to historical traditions, but also as a social practice, where the social interaction in the instrumental lesson is related to the creating and re-creating of context (Nerland, 2000).

Already at an early age, the student have the teacher as a mediator of the culture and traditions connected to the music. The conventions connected to the musical traditions are presented by the teacher and the learning process is situated in the social practice of the instrumental lesson. Source-reading is not common until the student reaches a higher level. At a higher level of education the student can verify the music-cultural conventions given earlier in the education, by studying the original texts on performance practice in the sources. For a present-day student, the instrumentalists and composers who wrote the historical methods still get the position of original masters. This gives the apprenticeship model a dual shape: the historically informed apprenticeship with the written instructions from the ancient masters, and the contemporary social practice situated in the instrumental lesson with the interaction between the present master and the student.

When adapting familiarity of conventions in a musical performance, several cultural tools are being used. The term *tool* (Bruner, 2002, Säljö, 2000) is in this study connected to material as well as immaterial aspects. The material aspect is represented by the physical instruments required to make music sound, and by the printed sheet music and the books containing instructions of musical performance practice documented in historical time. The immaterial aspect relates to the accumulated knowledge and intellectual awareness of the conventions of the music and the music style; the musical culture.

Interpretation is a central part of music-making within Western European tradition. As a student, the interpretation process is initiated by the teacher and involves a social experience. The focus on notation in this tradition makes the interpretation process closely connected to the printed score, as examined by Hultberg (2000). These different forms of interpretation can be seen in terms of orality and literacy (Säljö, 2000, Ong, 1992). Source-reading represents a historical aspect of the literate culture of music. The music student has against this background a complex interpretation process to handle; the interpretation of the teacher in the instrumental lesson, interpretation of the music notated in the printed score and interpretation of the written information given in the source.

Language represents an extraordinary powerful mediating tool when it comes to creating of knowledge, since language has a possibility to transfer information in time and space (Säljö, 2000). The information given in the sources is transmitted to present time by the text, with the language as a mediating tool. The term *mediating* is indicating that people do not stand in an immediate, direct and un-interpreted context with our environment. On the contrary, we are dealing with our environment with guidance from different physical and intellectual tools in our social practices. Interpretation of the message when reading is taking place under other communicative conditions than when communicating face to face. Säljö claims that language is on the same time a collective, interactive and individual cultural tool. Language can because of this work as a link between culture, interaction and the individual's own thinking (ibid., p. 87).

In the field of musicology several studies have been made based on historical sources, but in the field of music pedagogy the topic is very little investigated, despite the fact that the tutors mentioned above represent a treasure for instrumental teachers, since the information given in these works are remarkably accurate even today. Previous studies on related subjects has been made by Hultberg (2000), who examined interpretation processes with the printed score as a mediating tool, with several references to historical sources, by Weman Ericsson (2008), who studied historically informed performance practice based contextual musical ontology and by Johansson (2008) who studied contemporary organ improvisation as an activity based on historical tradition.

The starting point for my interest in this subject is my background as a baroque musician and as an instrumental teacher. This background I am uniting with the scientific framework of culture-psychology, which hopefully can make my experiences useful in the research process.

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