

“This-with-That”: A Dialectical Approach to Teaching for Musical Imagination

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Among the various approaches to music education, my dialectical and epistemological view offers a way of thinking about music and education and deciding how to go forward in teaching and learning music.¹ Here, I show how this particular philosophical perspective can play out in teaching for musical imagination in a particular musical piece, specifically, in the case of Johannes Brahms's Intermezzo, op. 118, no. 2. Three questions lie at the center of this analysis: What is meant by my dialectical approach?² How is musical imagination implicated, for example, in a performer's reading of this Intermezzo? How ought one teach for musical imagination?

My response to the first of this trio of questions is predicated on my previous writing, most recently in *Transforming Music Education*, and an essay, "Four Philosophical Models of Theory and Practice."³ My response to the second applies Mary Reichling's model of images of imagination to a reflection on my approach to this Brahms Intermezzo—a piece I have played over a musical lifetime—with reference to a few of its more obvious features.⁴ And my response to the third builds on my extension of Vernon Howard's analysis of learning in *Transforming Music Education* by drawing on Alfred North Whitehead's elegant model of teaching and learning formulated almost a century ago in his *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*, again with reference to the self-same piece.⁵ In addressing these questions, I show how my dialectical approach can work practically and how the various tensions between aspects of imagination can play out in opposite, even paradoxical, modes of teaching for musical imagination.

What is meant by my dialectical approach?

In choosing a "this-with-that" approach rather than *both/and* synthesis or *either/or* approach to the choices between alternatives in music education, I recognize that in the

phenomenal world, educational decisions (as with decisions in other areas of life) are often difficult to arrive at and problematic in their outcomes. I see dialectics as seepages and tensions that arise between alternatives viewed comparatively.⁶ These alternatives are not always logically compatible, equally feasible, or easily reconcilable. Rather, resolutions are made on the basis of incomplete information, consequences that flow from decisions are often unexpected, some things are easier to meld than others, and constituent value judgements are sometimes dissonant, even impossible to reconcile logically and practically. My interest is in describing the epistemological quandaries in which musician-teachers and their students sometimes find themselves practically speaking. I do not seek a “one-size-fits-all” approach because it is impossible to realize practically even if it could be shown to be desirable. Music instruction takes place in the phenomenal world—a world of sometimes messy or fuzzy categories in which the teacher’s and student’s interests often lie at the margins where one thing seems to become another⁷—and I seek to describe my own approach to tackling the sorts of practical dilemmas in which I find myself as teacher and student. As such, I am preoccupied with the question “How does one decide what to do as a music teacher or learner?”

For me, the best angle from which to address this question has been from a dialectical perspective. I came to this position as I reflected on my experience as a music teacher.⁸ Things in the phenomenal world were never as simple as the theoretical models upon which I drew supposed. I was often faced with choices and these choices were sometimes easily made and sometimes not. This practical experience resonated with that of others on a similar journey. For example, I. A. Richards remarks that Socrates enjoyed the friendship of those who were able to see both the “one-and-the-many”—the tensions between things that sometimes go together and sometimes don’t—and people have been following him ever since.⁹ I have never thought of my

own view of dialectic as normative, as prescribing the only or right philosophical or dialectical stance. Rather, I see various notions of dialectic be they Hegelian, Marxist, Adornoesque, Deweyan, or whatever, in dialectic with each other.¹⁰ Given the incompleteness of knowledge and the possibility of a better alternative in the future, I am particularly aware of the tensions and paradoxes arising from my position, the challenges of melding, reconciling, or accepting the irreconcilability of the various options to be considered, and the need to resist prematurely foreclosing alternatives.

Nor do I see my dialectical approach as applying necessarily beyond epistemological questions to encompass ontological or axiological questions, although when I approach these other matters, my perspective also tends to be dialectical. Even so, this way of seeing things reflects an epistemological stance. Since ontological and axiological questions are arrived at epistemologically, it is not surprising if my analysis of these matters also yields a dialectical perspective on them. Still, this “seepage” from epistemological to ontological and axiological matters and vice versa exemplifies the very characteristic that evokes my dialectical stance in the first place, namely, a tendency as I analyze categories to see overlaps and seepages from one thing to another as weak syndromes.

Among the ways in which theory and practice can be related and interrelated, in which “this” might be with “that,” I have sketched four models, notably, dichotomy, polarity, fusion, and dialectic.¹¹ To this list, W. Ann Stokes and Randall Allsup have added fugue and peaceful coexistence.¹² Others about which I might have written include melange, rhapsody, and synchronicity. These models are fascinating because they suggest an array of ways to think about how various theories and practices might interrelate. The richer and denser this analysis becomes, the more like art the process of examining, assessing, combining, accepting or

rejecting them becomes. In his *Languages of Art*, Nelson Goodman points to the semantic and syntactic density, syntactic repleteness, ambiguity, and imaginative appeal that are characteristic features of the arts.¹³ When musician teachers think imaginatively and passionately about their work, their responses to questions about how this might be with that are likewise artful in their ambiguous, particularistic, potentially rich, and varied character. This congruence between the thought and practice of the musician in knowing, doing, and being in music and the teacher's decisions about how to bring together "this-with-that" in the context of the specific circumstances of musical instruction appeals aesthetically, and while the analogy ought not be pressed *ad absurdum*, it raises interesting possibilities for understanding music as well as teaching and learning it.¹⁴

How does musical imagination play out in Brahms's Intermezzo, op. 118, no. 2?

In her analysis of musical imagination, Reichling formulates four facets of imagination—perception, feeling, intuition, and reason. Nowhere does she suggest that this is all there is. Still, she finds support for at least these four facets in the writings of North American philosophers John Dewey, Susanne Langer, and Vernon Howard.¹⁵ Her choice of the word facet is interesting since this word connotes dimensions or differing elements of musical imagination that are, she posits, interrelated although conceptually discrete. Assessments of what is imagined are beyond the scope of her inquiry. This focus on imagination is welcome since creativity is a troublesome notion that relies, in part, on objective assessments of the products that are made.¹⁶ Imagination is at least untrammelled in its concentration on the musician's thought-action.

Here is a clear case of "this-with-that." Perception, at least from the musician's standpoint, relies especially on one's aural, tactile, and visual senses, although it might also

include one's olfactory and taste senses as I suck a lozenge provided at a symphony orchestra concert to keep my coughing at a minimum. Aaron Copland refers to music's "sonorous" image as the central aspect of most interest to him in musical imagination.¹⁷ This sonorous image obviously has roots in one's sense of hearing. From the performer's point of view, however, there are physical skills involved. John can or cannot physically play the piano.¹⁸ And although Langer would think of the visual sense as a "secondary illusion" on which music is predicated,¹⁹ music also takes place in physical space and it more-or-less depends on physical sight, e.g., the staging of an opera. If John is blind he may see "imaginatively" the stage when it is described to him and a commentator may tell him what is happening physically as it is occurring. Still, there is a sense in which enjoyment of such genres as opera or film music rely upon sight as much as sound.

As I approach the Brahms Intermezzo, my perception is both intellectual in the sense of insight into the work and physical in terms of my senses in the phenomenal world. My inner hearing of this piece draws on the experiences of listening to live and recorded performances and studying the score visually, comparing various editions, some better than others. My choice of tempi, dynamics, phrasing, and so forth are shaped by this insight as much as by my physical perception of how this piece ought to go when I actually play it in the concert hall. Brahms gives us no exact tempo marking. What does he mean by his directive "*Andante teneramente*"? The Italian evokes a walking tempo and a quality of tenderness. So I choose a tempo within a range of possibilities, each of which could conceivably yield the rhapsodic, singing, and tender quality that Brahms seems to be suggesting in this piece. On one occasion, I may choose, for example, a more spacious reading evocative of the symphonic and contrapuntal character of Brahms's writing for the piano; on another, I may opt for a more sectional reading that evinces the different

character between the outer and middle sections reminiscent of the old minuet and trio form.

My imaginative choice is also predicated on what I perceive physically. There is a sense in which I “read” the hall as a performer. I may want a trusted observer/listener to test it with me to confirm how the sound is actually carrying or projecting into the hall from the stage where I am seated. So much depends on perception that musicians rely upon it as a way of hearing themselves in the midst-of-performance.²⁰ In a time at which so much sound is electronically manipulated, especially in large concert halls, it is essential to have an aural feedback that is satisfying so that I can hear what I am doing. Where I cannot hear myself or the decay time in the room is insufficient, I seem to be playing in a “dead” space in which the sound is “swallowed up.” Likewise, stage and house lighting can affect my perception of what is being created and re-created. Some might prefer the house lights on in order to visually gauge an audience’s reaction and achieve a sense of community between themselves and their audience; others might prefer a darkened house giving them the sense that they are playing more-or-less alone, or enhancing the sense of intimacy that might otherwise be reduced by a lighted concert hall.

Feeling is an ambiguous notion that Langer uses to represent thought-emotion-sensation.²¹ What is interesting about this idea is the seepage between the sensory, cognitive, and affective, and the fact that all three elements may be in play in imagination.²² In counterpoint with Israel Scheffler who proposes the cognitive emotion, emotion about thought, Iris Yob proposes the emotional cognition, thought about emotion, and she cites religion and music as instances of emotional cognition.²³ Whatever the particular interrelationships, the fact that all these aspects are involved in the musical experience enables one to think holistically about the people who music in a variety of roles such as composers, performers, and listeners.

Musically, one doesn’t have far to travel to reveal instances of feeling at work or where

intellection, emotion, and sensation intersect. In our Brahms Intermezzo (mm.1-10), for example, there is the expressiveness and spaciousness of long sweeping lines (or phrases) that are passionately felt as well as consciously thought. And as I play these often upwardly sweeping lines and large, robust chords, I feel the lines of this song in my fingers and body, emotionally and intellectually. One moves over the keyboard with Brahms. His chords and melodic lines require large leaps and extensions between fingers and I am conscious of a sense of spaciousness that contrasts with the sheer scale, for example, of keyboard pieces by earlier classical composers such as Mozart. This feeling is not fanciful, since the keyboards for which Mozart wrote were shorter, his instrument less robust, his orchestra smaller, less varied in timbre, and his resulting dynamic contrasts smaller than Brahms's. And the feeling, here, is physical, emotional, and intellectual; as a pianist, I am hard pressed to know where one becomes another. Although, as Yob points out, Langer asks a great deal of the notion of feeling,²⁴ there is still something very evocative and rich in the idea since its very ambiguity is useful when applied to a musical piece such as this Intermezzo.

What is Brahms expressing in this piece and how does my imagination grasp it feelingfully? I confess this to be something of a mystery. This is nineteenth-century romantic music, full of major and minor consonances, clear points of cadential rest, with a movement of tonality between major and minor keys, its melodic lines so evocative of those I encounter elsewhere in Brahms and that I find ultimately hopeful, even idealistic, yet tested through the tensions evoked in his use of the minor key and chordal qualities. This is not the restlessness and ambiguity of Schumann since it seems more controlled to my ear. When I play this piece, I am thinking hopefully, and I suppose, projecting a sense of this hopefulness, generosity of spirit, and breadth of scale pianistically. To play this Intermezzo, even though one of Brahms' miniatures,

is to play largely upon the piano and this feeling is projected to my listener by the vision of an expansive keyboard technique and imaginatively by a shared sense of this breadth by my listener, if I have been successful. As a pianist approaching this Intermezzo, I am hard pressed to find anything better to describe what I am up to than Langer's vision of the "patterns of motion and rest, of tension and release, of agreement and disagreement, preparation, fulfilment, excitement, sudden change, etc.," as I play this piece.²⁵ She captures this sense of the rise and fall and sweep of movement beautifully and evocatively as a performer might experience the playing.

Reason implies logical deduction and deliberative thought. This is a facet of imagination that, as Reichling notes, is often overlooked or regarded as critical thinking. Howard rightly observes that thinking imaginatively demands the exercise of rule-bound activity, even if the rules are bent or broken, and one needs to grasp the systems of musical rules that obtain in music as in the other arts.²⁶ Imagination is disciplined as it is also spontaneous and associative. It builds on and around critical and constructive thinking that makes sense in whatever symbolic language or system imagination is taking place. One needs to grasp this system in order to imagine with and within it.²⁷ And accounts of creative persons at work make it clear that around the sometimes initial flush of inspiration are times spent worrying with a problem, speculating about its solution, or otherwise preparing for the idea and cultivating it when it comes.²⁸

Why does Brahms use the title Intermezzo in this, the second of his Klavierstücke, op. 118—a group of pieces, published the year following the death of two of his close friends, Elisabet von Herzongenberg and Hermine Spies, and the year following op. 117, a collection of three Intermezzi that Brahms described as "Wiegenlieder meiner Scherzen," or "lullabies of my sorrow," and first performed in its entirety in London, March 1894?²⁹ The notion of an

Intermezzo, the little interlude, transition, or entertainment between other things, situated, for example, between movements of larger scale pieces, or between various acts or works in the tradition of the nineteenth century concert or opera, or that might be played after dinner or in the salon where the piece might have a rhapsodic and even unpretentious character is evocative, to me, of something likewise transitional and fleeting. As one of Brahms's last works, this opus consists of a sextet of four Intermezzi, a Ballade, and a Romanze, illustrating how unpretentious things in and of themselves may gather greater significance as they are grouped with others in a single opus. It seems to me that just as Brahms is breaking down the traditional distinctions between melodic line and voices beneath it, he is also challenging the rigidity and preeminence of the sonata form, choosing instead, a freer multi-movement form in which pieces are related thematically, in terms of key relationships, or simply as miniatures gathered together. In this respect, this collection of piano pieces evokes other cycles of Romantic piano pieces such as those by Schumann, in which composers are thinking rhapsodically in through-composed or loosely structured short pieces that when taken together and even individually still reveal the impact of formal constructions in the sonata form and dance forms such as the minuet and trio.

Within the set, I approach this piece structurally. What is the architecture of Brahms's thinking, or what Roger Sessions aptly calls the composer's "musical train of thought"?³⁰ How does the musical material develop throughout this Intermezzo? And since reason is a cultural artifact, what rules was Brahms following and in what genre was he creating this piece? Here, I cannot escape a theoretical analysis of the piece. I need to take it apart before I can put together a meaningful performance. The best way for interpreting this piece is predicated on my analysis of what I determine to be Brahms's thought, and he has laid down a sketch of that thinking in the score. Not all of it is there, since Brahms envisages that I already know the stylistic conventions

and the musical language in which he is writing. Still, there is enough to make intelligent judgements about how the piece should go.

I think of this Intermezzo as a song—its characteristic A section, contrasting B section that transitions back to a return to the A theme at piece’s end. I note the conjunction or intersection of texture, dynamics, rhythm, and melodic lines and see how these elements dovetail to articulate a clear sense of sectionality—the A section with its sweeping arpeggiated lower voices and long, smooth lines in the key of A major contrasting with the B section commencing with a contrasting melody in F-sharp minor with arpeggiated accompaniment that I feel as almost agitated even though also restrained wrapping a center section (mm. 57-64) that seems to be simplicity itself featuring chords moving chromatically and highlighting the movement of the inner voices.³¹ The return of the F-sharp minor melody brings us to a modified A section with the reprise of the first melody in A major ending in what I think of as a lovely and meditative coda that seems to resolve peacefully. The entire piece is quiet and introspective. I see trio upon trio in this piece, as Brahms draws on the minuet and trio form with its repetition and contrast, home key and relative minor in dialectic to eventually create a sense of consolation and calm at piece’s end. “This” is “with that” in a very real musical sense. And my challenge as a pianist becomes reconciling these contrasting sections to evoke a sense of unity and resolution, if only tenuous. In other words, I want my listeners to hear the sectionality and key changes of this Intermezzo as the moments pass by, but I also want them to hear the resolution of the piece as a coherent whole; it is not only comprised of disjunct moments that are interesting as they go by, but consists of musical architecture as a whole that expresses something of Brahms’s imagination at work.

Brahms is a subtle thinker. With him, the musical brush strokes are sometimes ever so

nuanced and his melodies have an evolutionary character as each return of the melody evidences slightly different elements melodically and harmonically.³² Apparent repetitions and pivot chords may conceal crucial junctures in the piece at which failing to attend sufficiently will leave the performer with the sensation of going around and around in the midst of the piece without being able to find one's way to its end. Understanding Brahms's musical train of thought in this piece and following it carefully and imaginatively demands the exercise of reason and intelligence, discernment and care in giving conscious attention to and interpreting his score.

Intuition is an element of imagination that Reichling borrows from Dewey, the "sparking" as mind leaps to conclusions and sees wholes that seem to emerge fully developed.³³ This apparently instinctive and lateral quality of thought is one that is often associated with imaginative thinking in which disparate things are associated giving rise to sometimes novel and startling conclusions.³⁴ There is an effortless and artless quality about this facet of imagination that contrasts with the kinds of intellectual work commonly associated with reason. I do not want to say that reason is not or cannot be just as seemingly effortless and artless, since there are the obvious examples of some composers whose scores went through fewer revisions than others. Still, these empirical differences would seem to suggest that for some composers, more intellectual "work" may go on subconsciously before the composition is written, whereas for others, more conscious effort occurs in the drafting and redrafting of compositions.³⁵ Intuition connotes a holistic and immediate sense or grasp of something that contrasts with the sort of working out of an idea rationally. Even for those creative thinkers who might endlessly revise their work, intuition is operating, although possibly on smaller chunks than for those who seem to have an immediate grasp of the whole project.

Now, performing the Brahms Intermezzo, resolving issues of how to ensure that the

sections of this piece remain interconnected, and choosing the tempo or particular interpretative aspects of this piece on this particular occasion and for this particular space require a sort of holistic thinking that I am conscious of immediately as a performer. Take, for example, the second theme in F-sharp minor to which I referred earlier (mm. 49-56). Here, among other things, Brahms creates tension by simultaneously juxtaposing duple and triple divisions to bring about this with that. This metrical tension and the use of the relative minor key grounding this trio section, if you will, is grasped intuitively. Does he intend this lullaby, this song, to give voice to his sorrow? Is he representing here the combination of tenuous sorrowful and joyful qualities of life? It seems to me as I study and play this piece that his choice to render this melody with its chordal centerpiece in restrained fashion dynamically evokes a sorrow that is kept under control. I am reminded of bedtime stories told to children in which, along the way, there is danger and fright, but in the end, a happy resolution. The fright can only go so far. The sense I have of playing this piece is similar to that I have had in studying and hearing his *Requiem* in which I find Brahms to be ultimately the idealist, in the end, at peace. My grasp of what he is up to is immediate and holistic as I see this piece as a consolation and play it that way. Maybe this is why so many philosophers of music and musicians stress the instinctual level at which the musician is operating.³⁶ Intuition seems instinctual, but only to one who understands the musical language. It takes time to develop this intuitive sense; it seems to emerge over the years. When I listen to another's performance of this piece, I may conclude that it seemed too rushed, unduly agitated, or overly staid for my taste. Had I played this piece, I would have changed such-and-such. How do I arrive at my conclusions and recommendations concerning this performance? I am not always conscious of why except to say that I feel it and I know immediately and holistically. And this knowing and feeling contrives to make an audience of

musicians one of the most challenging before whom to play this Intermezzo, because I know full well that if I am arrive at these sorts of conclusions and assessments as I listen to another's performance, so will my audience.

It is clear, therefore, that a "this with that" situation obtains in examining a case of the performer's musical imagination when put to the test of the Brahms Intermezzo. Perception, feeling, reason, and intuition are involved in all sorts of ways, together and separately. Imagination is a complex, ambiguous, multi-faceted, process-product, means-end that embraces thought, emotion, and sensation. As such, it is a dense and highly nuanced way of being musically.

How ought one teach for musical imagination?

Howard proposes a quartet of means whereby one learns in the arts, namely, by instruction, practice, example, and reflection.³⁷ His is one of the few philosophies of musical learning of which I am aware. What is especially interesting about his project is his proposal that these ways of learning as exemplified especially in the arts offer ways of learning in other areas of general education as well. For Howard, these four means of learning are active in the sense that they demand the learner's engagement. Instruction represents the teacher-driven expositions that prompt student learning as the teacher gives directions, proclaims rules, and makes particular demands.³⁸ This notion of instruction is deeper and richer than a superficial approach to teacher talk. It implies that teachers by virtue of their greater experience and knowledge are in a position to provide important rules for conduct that students need to follow. And it invokes imagination since much instruction in the arts is figurative in nature, taking short-cuts past rational and technical language to provoke for the student figuratively and gesturally what needs

to be done. Practice is unpacked by Howard to represent a rich view that moves beyond simplistic understandings of “mere” repetition to require the exercise of imagination at every stage in the process of moving toward what he calls “mastery,” and that I think of as empowering the learner through music making and taking.³⁹ Imagination, in Howard’s view, provides the means whereby the learner can keep in mind both what is desired and how to make the adjustments necessary to reach the desired end. That end keeps changing as the learner progresses towards mastery in the sense of the practice exemplified by proficient exponents. Example is viewed as an array of ways in which thought and practice are demonstrated and followed, including such things as model, sample, and exemplar.⁴⁰ Imagination again provides ways of grasping (intellectually, affectively, and bodily) what one needs to do and how one ought to think. And reflection represents, for Howard, an important component of imaginative learning as one thinks after action (and also, Donald Schön would emphasize, in the midst of action) about what one has done (or is doing).⁴¹ This component of learning represents the critical and evaluative aspect of imaginative thought and can be overlooked too easily in general education.

My response to Howard’s quartet of “this with that” elements that are both interrelated and discrete, sometimes in tension one with another, is to propose a corresponding quartet of elements of imaginative learning that represent what Dewey would describe as its “undergoing” or more “passive” (in its best sense) elements.⁴² I concur with Dewey that learning and thinking are active and passive, doing and undergoing. Taking an either/or position is simplistic, unrealistic, and reductionistic. Nor is a *both/and* synthesis as easy to achieve as Dewey might have thought since there are tensions and difficulties in its resolution that Dewey is inclined to believe can be resolved.⁴³ And maybe it is sometimes important that learning’s undergoing or

passive qualities remain discrete from its doing or active elements.

These four elements are as follows—osmosis, participation, observation, and sensibility. Osmosis is in counterpoint with instruction and refers to the absorptive quality of learning and its undirected and spontaneous quality. For example, when Socrates says that “rhythm and harmony sink deep into the recesses of the soul and take the strongest hold there,” he is noting a tendency for musical ideas and practices to be absorbed almost unconsciously.⁴⁴ The young girl who is read to every day may never remember a time when she could not read; she seems to absorb reading as she does language generally. Likewise, the young boy who learns the violin as a very young child may never remember a time when he could not play the violin. And music teachers such as Shinichi Suzuki are counting on this absorptive property in their instructional programs.⁴⁵ Participation contrasts with practice in its reference to the impact of being in a community and participating in its rituals, beliefs, and practices. By the very act of repeating things over and over again without any necessary direction or planned practice, one acquires a “nose” for how things should go.⁴⁶ Simply being in a congregation and present at its religious ceremonies, listening to the cantor or the choir, one comes to be able to sing particular responses, and if one has the aptitude or has heard them often enough, sing even more challenging material even if one has not been instructed formally. Observation is in counterpoint with example in its emphasis on the gaze, on the watching and listening to another. In many musical traditions, the disciple watches, hears, and seeks to do. Rather than intellectualizing what is going on, the teacher simply asks the student to watch, listen, and thereby learn. The teacher does as the student watches. After some time, the student learns to watch more intelligently, and begins to discover nuances that were not evident earlier. And sensibility is in counterpoint with reflection in its reference to the capacity to feel, intuit, and respond sensitively to such-and-such. Rather

than conscious reflection, one opens oneself to the idea/practice and thereby feels as well as thinks. In Langer's view, arts education is a matter of cultivating this sensibility and of teaching students to open themselves to the musical experience.⁴⁷ Her emphasis represents, for me, the undergoing of a work of art particularly its felt qualities.

The interaction of instruction, practice, example, and reflection and osmosis, participation, observation, and sensibility gives rise to new values and ways of teaching for musical imagination, in which doing and undergoing are important elements of musical learning.⁴⁸ When one puts "this-with-that" as I have done in suggesting these respective quartets of facets of doing and undergoing in learning, in dialectical relation between and among each other, the question arises as to what the teacher is to do. Which particular ways of imaginative learning are appropriate in the learning of this particular thing? In my view, a strictly spiral approach to dealing with these ways of musical learning such as June Boyce-Tillman and Keith Swanwick suggest is too taut and mechanistic.⁴⁹ For one, I cannot tell on the face of things which should come first, or easily determine how I should move betwixt and between these learning means. The best I can say is that here is an array of types of learning upon which I may draw and it is up to each teacher to decide what to do often in the midst of instruction. So how is this dialectical approach of help? A "this-with-that" approach would require considering the possibilities carefully, sometimes combining, melding, fusing, synthesizing or otherwise bringing them together and other times focusing on one thing and then another, and refraining from prematurely foreclosing one's options. As a teacher, I need to do some careful, critical, and imaginative thinking about what I should or can do in these particular circumstances.

How shall I arrange the order of musical learning? The first thing many music teachers want is an order of presentation that they can follow. Since the claims of exposition require that

I cannot do everything at once, I may need to focus on one thing and then another. But the nature of music is such that many things come together at the same time. Musical symbols are inherently dense and this density requires imaginative thinking. So how can I solve the pedagogical puzzle of what to do first and next and so on. I like Whitehead's response to this issue because it is both elegant and simple.⁵⁰ Whitehead proposes a three-fold cyclical process passing from romance to instrumentalism and thence to generalization. In romance, my first acquaintance with a subject may be like my first visit to a haunted house. I am fascinated by many things that seem to go bang in the dark. They are mysterious to me. My guide knows where to take me and how to achieve the maximum impact of fright on my part and I emerge breathless at the end of my first tour through the house. My knowledge at this point may be intuitive and sketchy, I may be dimly aware of what is going on, and I know bits and pieces but I haven't yet got a clear grasp of what is going on.

Considering the Brahms Intermezzo, I may first listen, as do many musicians, to live and recorded performances of this or other piano pieces by Brahms. I may sight-read the piece, playing it through to see how it goes. There is also the history of this opus and Brahms's life and compositions. Brahms is writing lyrically a few years before his death, dignifying the little piece, the miniature, and creating a group of more-or-less related pieces, sometimes evocative of the minuet and trio. The position of this particular Intermezzo as the second in a gathering of piano pieces reminiscent of his earlier collections in op. 116 and op. 117 seems figurative of its function as a "go-between," and an interlude between the opening Intermezzo, *Allegro non assai, ma molto appassionato*, in C major and the robust Ballade, *Allegro energico*, in G minor.⁵¹ I begin to understand the circumstances of its writing as I set about formulating ways to interpret this piece. I may hear it as a member of a master-class, a community of pianists who are

studying a variety of piano pieces. I may start to study the score by reading through it imaginatively before playing it to order to see how it will go. At this point, I may be engaged in instruction and osmosis, practice and participation, example and observation, reflection and sensibility in various ways and differing degrees. At first, I may draw more upon the undergoing aspect of musical learning as I open myself to coming to understand this piece, although this need not be necessarily the case.

Then comes Whitehead's second stage in which I develop the ideas and practices that represent mastery and empowerment. This is a necessarily analytic stage in which I systematically come to know things that were previously mysterious to me. Whereas my first tour of a haunted house may be scary, I now visit it room by room and become intimately acquainted with all its parts. I learn how the scary things are created, how the machines and devices are put together, and how they work to create the fear I first experienced.

Examining the Brahms Intermezzo more analytically and instrumentally, I may take apart the piece sectionally, even copying another's performance or following her suggestions. I may lay out suggested fingerings and this may be a matter of discussion with others as student and teacher or one musician and another evaluate, together, the close relationships between my physical motions at the keyboard and the musical effects I am attempting to generate. As I practice the piece, I have an idea of how this piece will or should go, and that vision becomes clearer to me as I master its technical aspects. I may move by successive approximation more closely to the ideal performance I am envisaging. This ideal may change along the way as I hear other performances and perform the piece publicly. The process of practicing involves much intellectual work as I reflect on what passages seem to go well and which need more work. There is the additional input, sometimes, of teacher, coach, or other members of the studio community

providing me examples (especially exemplars) towards which I might strive. Sometimes, the teacher or coach uses figurative language and gestures to clarify what needs to be done. So, in these varying ways, I utilize instruction and osmosis, practice and participation, example and observation, reflection and sensibility, in coming to an intimate knowledge of this piece. The emphasis at this phase may well lie towards the learner's doing and active working towards mastery and a visualized ideal, but there is a sense in which undergoing and passive accepting is also vital. One cannot rush understanding, and openness to learning, relaxation, sensitivity, and participation in the community of learners, of simply allowing the learning to happen and understanding to settle is essential. Learning this piece at this point takes as long as it takes for the learner to master and internalize it. And in the process, the learner is empowered as skills are honed and competence and assurance are increasingly manifested in playing this piece.

Next comes the vital third stage of generalization that Whitehead envisages as a culmination of this particular learning and a prelude to other cycles of learning. Here, my somewhat romantic and intuitive knowledge is combined with my now more sophisticated instrumental knowledge in generalization. Intuitive and rational aspects of imagination come together with perception and feeling. My earliest instinctual and receptive understanding has broadened to include a thorough grasp of what is going on and an ability to physically do as well as intellectually understand and feel. At this point, I recombine elements that may have been analyzed into a whole and a unity that is more than the sum of its parts, and in which the whole is also enlivened by the details. Howard makes the point in his analysis of the exponent's practice that the performer is gradually able to put into peripheral awareness many technical aspects that may have been labored over in the process of mastery in order to focus on the musical and other artistic ideas that are central to this particular performance.⁵²

With the Brahms Intermezzo, I now begin to think, again, of the piece as a whole, of how I shall bring together its various sections into a unit that speaks beyond the momentary and interesting elements of which the piece is comprised. The piece also seems to mature as I perform it multiple times, play it within the context of the entire op.118, other major and minor works by Brahms, and other romantic composers. As I forge a larger repertoire of piano works, the Intermezzo takes its place in my growing and deepening sense of its position in the piano repertoire. My contextual understanding of the whole benefits from my understanding of romanticism and its place in European and Western culture. I develop an intuitive-rational-perceptive-felt grasp of how I should play it. And this understanding changes over time. Each time I take up the piece after an hiatus a certain amount of forgetting has occurred and it is necessary to “re-learn” it, although the process seems to move faster and differently than when I first mastered it. Life experiences also affect my reading of this piece and my interpretation changes from one performance to the next. Over time, my playing becomes more authoritative since it benefits from a broader contextual understanding, repeated learnings and playings, and the possibility of re-seeing and re-hearing this piece as I pick it up again after having put it aside. And I see this piece as one would read any work of art, as a highly nuanced and dense symbolic system wherein I hear different things each time I study and play the work.

For Whitehead, cycles follow upon cycles of romance, instrumentation, and generalization, as I take up this piece and others again and again throughout my life. It is important here to distinguish this notion of a cycle from the metaphor of a spiral since it implies a looser and more open-ended development. I like this figure of nested cycles not only because it resonates with my own experience of studying the Brahms Intermezzo but because it also resonates with the musical form of the piece itself. Whitehead’s model is built in ternary fashion

in an ABA* form in which the return of the original theme comes with transformed understanding that can result from having engaged in the systematic analysis piece-by-piece of the A material—a construction that Brahms likewise uses for his piece. So, this is a metaphor for the way I learn this piece imaginatively, and vice versa. I am not claiming isomorphism as between the piece and the manner of its learning, but rather, suggesting how this particular piece so neatly and figuratively resonates with Whitehead's cyclical model.

Beyond this interesting interconnection and symbolism is the possibility that Whitehead's model provides a framework into which the various ways in which the aspects of imaginative learning in dialectical relation, instruction and osmosis, practice and participation, example and observation, and reflection and sensibility can be brought together in an organized pedagogical fashion. The specifics, however, are inherently situational and particular, and it is difficult to go much beyond this general frame of reference; the rest remains to the teacher and student to work out together. What is clear, however, is that there are a rich array of ways to cultivate musical imagination as my example of the Brahms Intermezzo shows. Considering all aspects of both musical doing and undergoing are important in arriving at generalization and at a mature and settled understanding of the work and its performance. Like actors on a stage, various elements of imaginative learning may come to the fore at various times throughout the performer's emerging mastery of this piece. The learner may focus on one or another, or some of these aspects throughout the process. But over the entire course of musical learning, it is likely that all of these aspects may be important at one point or another.

Since my use of Whitehead's model is heuristic rather than directive, as a way that teachers and students can think about what they do, this analysis provides a framework for decision-making. Opening the prospect of each element theoretically allows one to ask how the

model may be put to use practically in the development of a teacher's pedagogical approach. Since this is with that, I don't think that any one approach can be the only and best one for all people at all times. Rather, my experience of learning and playing this Brahms Intermezzo reveals that there are all sorts of ways to go about learning and playing this most ambiguous piece.⁵³ Just when I think that I might have arrived at the final solution to my quandary of how to play it, another better or different performance of it sets me thinking, and another idea strikes my fancy.

Summary

In sum, I have suggested with reference to Brahms's Intermezzo op. 118, no. 2 that the musical imagination is multifaceted, and that the ways one learns music imaginatively or the ways one teaches for the development of musical imagination are correspondingly varied. I have instanced ways in which "this-with-that" operates in describing music imagination and ways one might cultivate it. And I have concluded that I cannot say much of a prescriptive nature about developing musical imagination beyond the usefulness of conceptual frameworks in which I can think systematically about practical situations that are multifaceted and diverse.

Here, I am in the company of those who seek conceptually systematic frames of reference for music education that can be applied to the varied practical situations in which teachers work.⁵⁴ Still, I am not certain that a universally applicable framework or scientifically verifiable theory for all time can be found or should be sought. Rather, since music is inherently ambiguous, I would expect multiplicity and particularity instead of uniformity and universality. I prefer to see my own approach as a modest attempt to put into words the way in which I go

about the work of music teaching and learning in the hope that others may do their own intellectual work. Notwithstanding the failure of my own approach to provide a directive or normative way forward for music education generally, it is more important that all teachers and students approach their own practice reflectively. Imagination spurs ambiguity and diversity of thought and practice and the resulting “this with that” can enrich music teaching and learning in all the ways in which they are carried on.

Notes

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1. I am indebted to Christer Bouij, Peter Dyndahl, Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, Jukka Louhivuori, Frede V. Nielsen, and Mary J. Reichling for responses to previous versions of this essay.
 2. The term “this-with-that” was coined by Iris Yob to describe my dialectical approach, see Iris M. Yob, “Can the justification of music education be justified?” in *Philosophy of Education*, 1996, ed., Frank Margonis (Urbana IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 1997), 237.
 3. Estelle R. Jorgensen, *Transforming Music Education* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003); Estelle R. Jorgensen, “Four Philosophical Models of Theory and Practice,” presented to the Philosophy of Music Education International Symposium V, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL, U.S.A., June 4-7, 2003, and *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, in press.
 4. Mary J. Reichling, “Images of Imagination,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 38 (4) (Winter 1990): 284-293.
 5. Jorgensen, *Transforming Music Education*, 101-108; Vernon A. Howard, *Learning by all Means: Lessons from the Arts* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992); Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York: Free Press, 1929), chap. 2.
 6. See Estelle R. Jorgensen, *In Search of Music Education* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 72-91, and Jorgensen, *Transforming Music Education*, for examples of dialectics.
 7. For example, Vernon A. Howard, *Artistry: The Work of Artists* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1982), 14, 17, refers to “arty craft” and “crafty art”—to the borderland or meld between art and craft that he calls a “weak syndrome” as one thing seems to meld almost imperceptibly into another. Howard does not associate value judgments with his descriptors “weak” and “strong” but seeks to dignify craft, enrich art, and focus on this ground “between” art and craft where one thing appears to become another and where both are implicated.
 8. Jorgensen, *Transforming Music Education*, 10, 11. Sociological notions of typification to which I was introduced in the 1970s, were predicated on the idea of theoretical or ideal types that might (theoretically, at least, be melded). I came to see these notions as “problematic, simplistic, and reductionistic,” and to envisage the world of music education as inherently complex in terms of the sorts of choices that music teachers and their students faced in the lived world (11).
 9. I. A. Richards, *How to Read a Page: A Course in Efficient Reading with an Introduction to a Hundred Great Words* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1942), 221, refers to Socrates’ enjoyment of dialectical thought.

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10. This opens fertile ground for comparing and contrasting these (and other) conceptions of dialectic and seeing their intersections, a project that lies outside the scope of this essay.
11. Jorgensen, “Four Philosophical Models of Theory and Practice.”
12. W. Ann Stokes and Randall Everett Allsup responses to “Four Philosophical Models of Theory and Practice,” presented at the Philosophy of Music Education International Symposium V, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL, U.S.A., June 4-7, 2003, and *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, in press.
13. Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976), 252-255, on symbolic density (syntactic and semantic) and syntactic repleteness.
14. Other writers have been drawn to the artistic character of teaching and learning, among them, Donald Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987); Kenneth E. Eble, *The Craft of Teaching: A Guide to Mastering the Professor’s Art*, 2nd. Ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988); Gilbert Highet, *The Art of Teaching* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950); Vernon Howard, *Learning by all Means: Lessons from the Arts* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992).
15. See, for example, John Dewey, *Art as Experience* ([1934]; repr., New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1980); Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art* 3rd. Ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), her *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art developed from Philosophy in a New Key* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), and her *Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1957); Howard, *Artistry*.
16. In his introduction to his edited collection of the writings and sayings of writers, composers, painters, scientists, mathematicians, and psychologists, (*The Creative Process*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1952), 12, Brewster Ghiselin defines the creative process as “the process of change, of development, of evolution, in the organization of subjective life.” Yet, his selection of inventive thinkers is linked to their production of work that is widely regarded as exceptional—people such as Henri Poincaré, Albert Einstein, Vincent van Gogh, Roger Sessions, Mary Wigman, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Friedrich Nietzsche, Carl Jung, and George Eliot. Subsequent creativity literature also emphasizes products, for example, Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity Seen Through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); R. E. Mayer, “Fifty Years of Creativity Research,” in Robert J. Sternberg, ed., *Handbook of Creativity* (Cambridge, U.K. and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 449-460; Alfonso Montuori and Anthea Barron, eds., *Creators on Creating: Awakening and Cultivating the Imaginative Mind* (New York: Jeremy Tarcher/Putnam Book, 1997); Karl H. Pfenninger and Valerie R. Shubik, eds., *The Origins of Creativity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Maud Hickey, “Creative Research in Music, Visual Art, Theater, and Dance,” in *The New Handbook of*

Research on Music Teaching and Learning, eds., Richard Colwell and Carol Richardson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 398-415.

17. Aaron Copland, *Music and Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), chap. 2, on the sonorous image.

18. Israel Scheffler, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions and Other Essays on the Philosophy of Education* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 24-29, describes various notions of potential, namely, capacity, predictive, and decision, that jointly can provide a useful reconstruction of human potential.

19. Langer, *Problems of Art*, 35-41, sees sound as music's primary illusion. She sees opera as dramatic music, not the same thing as drama, since music "assimilates" or "swallows" the other arts of drama and dance with which it is associated in this case (85). For a more extensive treatment of the musical "illusion", see her *Feeling and Form*, chap. 7, and 125-129.

20. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, chap.2, refers to this quality of thinking as "reflection-in-action"—the thinking that professionals and artists learn to do, e.g., as the architect learns to design a building (chap.3), or the musician learns to perform a piece (chap. 8).

21. Langer, *Feeling and Form*, passim. Reichling mines Langer's views on feeling in her essays, "Images of Imagination," and "Intersections: Form, Feeling, and Isomorphism," presented to the Philosophy of Music Education International Symposium V, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL, U.S.A., June 4-7, 2003, in *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, in press.

22. This seepage can be read as exemplary or generative of dialectical relationships between these sensory, cognitive, and affective elements.

23. Scheffler, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions*, chap. 1; Iris M. Yob, "The Cognitive Emotions and Emotional Cognitions," In *Reason and Education: Essays in Honor of Israel Scheffler*, ed., Harvey Siegel (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 43-57.

24. Iris M. Yob, "The Form of Feeling," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 1 (1) (Spring 1993): 18-32, points to the difficulty arising from feeling's ambiguity.

25. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 228.

26. On "rule following" or "rule governed" activity, see Howard, *Artistry*, 94-99.

27. There is a tension between accepting and breaking artistic conventions; new conventions are forged as the artist reaches beyond or reacts against familiar ways of thinking and doing.

28. Whether it be a mathematical puzzle or an artistic idea (and there is great variability in how things are worked out and tested) deduction and rational thought within the frame of the particular science or art form play important roles in the creative process, see Ghiselin, ed., *Creative*

Process, 30. As Ghiselin explains, the idea is tested for its “serviceability”—for how it plays out in this particular creative work. One after another, his authors write about the effort necessary in laying the groundwork for a particular insight and working out the initial inspiration rationally and sometimes passionately.

29. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed., Stanley Sadie, 2nd. Ed., vol. 4 (New York: MacMillan, 2001), 203.

30. Roger Sessions, *The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), chap. 3, on the musical “train of thought.”

31. Felix Salzer, *Structural Hearing: Tonal Coherence in Music* ([1952]; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1962), vol. 1, 158, and vol. 2, 108, reads mm. 57-60+ as an instance of harmonic prolongation “in the form of a complete harmonic progression.”

32. For theoretical analyses of the Intermezzo see, for example, Robert Snarrenberg, “The Play of *Différance* in Brahms’s Intermezzo Op. 118, No. 2,” *In Theory Only* 10 (3) (1987): 1-25; Allen Cadwallader, “Foreground Motivic Ambiguity: Its clarification at Middleground Levels in Selected Late Piano Pieces of Johannes Brahms,” *Music Analysis* 7 (1) (March 1988): 59-91.

33. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 65-66, uses the metaphor of combustion as intuition sets alight things that are brought together and transformed in the process as “old and familiar things are made new in experience.” There is a “quick and unexpected harmony which in its bright abruptness is like a flash of revelation,” and “old and new jump together like sparks” (267).

34. Ghiselin and his writers (*Creative Process*, passim) also note the importance of laterality in their thinking, their playfulness in putting seemingly disjunct things together in new and sometimes startlingly different ways so that “this with that” yields a surprising conclusion or a sense of learning something new in the process.

35. One of the obvious differences among the writers about the creative process in Ghiselin’s collection, *Creative Process*, is the many different ways in which people work. For some, it is a case of an insight that seemed almost fully formed and just awaited writing down. For others, it is a laborious process in which much more conscious work is needed to articulate an idea that comes partly formed. In every case, however, there seems to be some participation of conscious and unconscious thought. Howard, *Artistry*, 158-160, describes the differences between these approaches to art as the differences between Athena who is inspired and works almost effortlessly, and Penelope who struggles to create her art. For Howard, these archetypes are rarely seen purely in practice. Rather, inspiration and effort are required to create a work of art.

36. Copland, *Music and Imagination*, chap. 3, compares two different sorts of performers—the “romantic” performer who gives a more individualistic and personalized reading of the score, and the “classic” performer who gives a more impersonal reading of the score. Both sorts of performers are working at an instinctual level. As Sessions, *Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener*, 18, 19, “music is significant for us as human beings principally because it

embodies movement of a specifically human type that goes to the roots of our being and takes shape in the inner gestures which embody our deepest and most intimate responses.”

37. Mary J. Reichling offers some useful ways in which one can teach towards developing musical imagination. Her focus on play in her essay, “Music Imagination, and Play,” in *Critical Reflections on Music Education, Proceedings of the Second International symposium on the Philosophy of Music Education, June 12-16, 1994*, eds., Lee R. Bartel and David J. Elliott (Toronto: Canadian Music Education Research Centre, University of Toronto, 1996) as a means of cultivating imagination is evocative of Friedrich Schiller’s emphasis on play in his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, transl., Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby ([1967]; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), passim. See also Vernon Howard’s homage to Schiller in his *Learning By All Means*, chap. 1.

38. Howard, *Learning By All Means*, chap. 5. Howard is careful to discriminate between what he means by instruction and the instructions teachers commonly give in telling students what to do.

39. Ibid., chap. 6. Although Howard’s term “mastery” can be read to suggest notions of control and power over persons or things, my concern is with empowering people as they gain expertise and assurance through music making and taking. And Howard may well agree with me.

40. Ibid., chap. 7. In *Artistry*, chs. 2, 3, 4, Howard describes the student singer’s predicament in attempting to grasp what is going on, and the importance of the teacher’s gestures and words in conveying enough to the student so that she or he comes to understanding. Both teacher and student are engaged in a process of rendering plain what was mysterious at outset. And there are a range of ways in which example is working.

41. Ibid., chap. 8; Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, chap. 2.

42. John Dewey’s *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938), especially chap. 3, describes the student in the midst of a “situation” in which things are happening to her or him at the same time as he or she is acting on the environment.

43. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 25, admits that a synthetic theory of education poses new challenges for the teacher.

44. *The Republic of Plato*, transl. Francis Macdonald Cornford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), Book III, §401, 88.

45. Shinichi Suzuki, *Nurtured By Love: A New Approach to Education*, transl., Waltraud Suzuki (New York: Exposition Press, 1969), 90, 94.

46. Howard, *Artistry*, 75, uses this metaphor for the artist’s “know-how.”

47. Langer, *Problems of Art*, 74.

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48. For a discussion of some practical implications of this intersection, see Jorgensen, *Transforming Music Education*, 108-116.
49. For a summary of their musical development spiral, see Keith Swanwick, *Music, Mind, and Education* (London: Routledge, 1988), 76.
50. Whitehead, *Aims of Education*, chap. 2.
51. The Fantasies of op. 116 and the Intermezzi of op. 117 seem more unified either through key, metrical, or thematic relationships than the pieces in Op. 118 which to my ear constitute the loosest collection of the three.
52. See Howard, *Artistry*, 173-176, on focal and peripheral awareness.
53. For example, in theoretical vein, Cadwallader, "Foreground Motivic Ambiguity," highlights what he sees as "a special type of ambiguity," or what Schenker would call "concealed motivic repetition" in this piece (59, 87).
54. For example, Frede Nielsen has attempted a systematic theory in his *Almen Musikdidaktik*, 2nd. Edn. (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1998), sketched more recently in his essay, "The Domain of 'Didactology' as a Field of Theory and Research in Music Education," Presented to the Philosophy of Music Education International Symposium V, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL, U.S.A., June 4-7, 2003, and *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, in press.