

Keynote Address: Musicology and Music Pedagogy: An Unnatural Divorce (Bologna, May 29-30, 2014)*

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This conference is promoted by the Association “Il Saggiatore musicale” (<http://www.saggiatoremusicale.it>) and by the Arts Department of Bologna University (<http://www.dar.unibo.it>), and is included in the prestigious program of the IMS, the International Musicological Society, which brings together musicologists from all over the world. They are the scholars who build musicological knowledge, develop, and organize it in historical and systematic perspectives. In the course of the twentieth century, musicologists, not only from the IMS, but also from several national musicological societies and associations, have worked intensively to help develop the discipline—verifying texts, reconstructing contexts, analyzing scores, inquiring into the mechanisms of patronage and reception, and examining theoretical and practical systems. Thanks to this complex research, musicology has long been established and recognized as an academic discipline. However, despite this, musicologists have not paid as much attention to music pedagogy and music didactics.

(A brief note is in order here to clarify my use of these two terms. In Italy, as in other European countries, we usually 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. More generally, I would like to emphasize here the distinction we draw between “pedagogy” and “didactics.” The former is a philosophical discipline dealing with the process of education of individuals. “Didactics,” on the other hand, deals with the transmission of knowledge: content, methods, techniques, etc. To put it drastically: pedagogy’s object is the human being itself in the process of its education, while the object of didactics

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is knowledge, and the ways to pass it down from teacher to learner. Of course, distinguishing these two branches is crucial in music education as well.)

As a result, in our country, and in the Western world in general, an unnatural divorce has taken place between the pedagogic–didactic field and musicology. There have been some praiseworthy exceptions—for instance, two great German musicologists, Carl Dahlhaus (1928–1989) and Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (1919–1999), certainly did not neglect music pedagogy—but in general, musicology and pedagogic–didactic studies have chosen and gone down parallel paths that only seldom meet. The damage is for all to see. Musicology has increasingly shut itself up in an ivory tower, while music pedagogy and didactics have mainly developed outside universities, often in an empirical and irregular fashion, and without drawing from the source of the so-called “learned knowledge,” the *savoir savant* of musicology. As far as Italy is concerned, musicologists have focused on the subject itself, music, losing sight of its educational value. Music educationalists, for their part, have turned their back to musicology, while nurturing forms of pedagogy and music didactics that are unrelated to the science of education (that is, primarily, to pedagogy and general didactics).

In Italy—a country where, since the 1970s, research initiatives in music didactics have been undertaken almost exclusively by conservatories—this situation has been partially corrected since the early 2000s, when a few musicologists became aware that this “divorce,” besides preventing the diffusion of cultural progress, was threatening the survival of musicology itself. It is at risk of becoming self-referential if it avoids vital relationships with the “political” dimension of education. At the same time, musicology might find itself helpless in the face of an impoverished notion of “music,” and of its cultural aspects in particular, if it loses control over the diffusion of knowledge, i.e., over the content to transmit, the methods to privilege, and the goals to pursue. While it is essential to build, step by step, a scientific–musicological knowledge, a “learned knowledge,” it is also essential that this knowledge be filtered through and become food for education, inspire a rational didactics of the discipline, and turn (in the school setting) into effective “didactic knowledge,” or *savoir enseigné*. From this perspective, music pedagogy and music didactics are not separate disciplines, detached from the trunk of musicology, but branches that prosper from it. At the same time, obviously, they have to relate to the science of education, i.e., general pedagogy, general didactics, and anthropology.

Another divorce that occurred in Italy, and also nearly everywhere else in the Western world, is the one between musicologists and musicians. This fracture can be observed at various levels. Universities privilege scientific research, while neglecting performed music; conservatories focus on the professional training of musicians, and hence on the production and reproduction of music

destined for performance, but except for rare cases they have never developed along the lines of musicological research. In Italian conservatories, a number of “music didactics schools” were opened in the seventies, which could have played a helpful role—however, since they have not connected to musicological research, nor to general educational research, as studied in universities, they grew in a closed environment. Secondary schools, for their part, have given precedence to the exercise of practical music (which is understandable), but have rarely placed it in an intellectual perspective: hence an evident marginalization of music teaching with respect to “strong” school disciplines.

In Italy, an important stage in the process of raising awareness among musicologists about this situation occurred in 2005 in Bologna, with the conference *Educazione musicale e Formazione* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2008). The ambitious goal of the conference was threefold: (1) to help musicologists interact with educationalists; (2) to ensure that they (educationalists, didactics scholars, psychologists, anthropologists) identified the highly specific issues relating to musical knowledge; and (3) to encourage both musicologists and educationalists to interact with school teachers. The conference was followed by another meeting, in 2008, about *La musica tra conoscere e fare* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2011), which further defined the essential link between intellectual comprehension and music practice. These meetings encouraged Italian musicologists to raise two issues which, until then, did not really stand out in scholarly debates, although almost every one of us has had to face them daily in our job as teachers. These two issues are the selection of content according to its epistemological and cultural structure, and the modes of its transmission. The discussion of these issues also led musicologists to look into the relationship that exists between musicological knowledge and the disciplines related to education science, as well as the “political” relations between universities, conservatories and schools. Two points, in particular, were brought to the attention of participants during the 2005 and 2008 meetings.

The first is the importance of “reflective listening” in the acquisition of music knowledge. Reflective listening confronts students directly with the musical artwork, helping them to identify its connecting and turning points, to build a mental map of it, and, by constant reference to historical contextualization, lead them to the final goal, which is the semantic comprehension of the work. We therefore placed emphasis on the importance of “reading” the musical text *through* listening, through the decoding and recoding of various elements—the kind of “reading” that allows us to identify, at a cognitive–emotional level, a number of suggestive, wide-ranging cultural implications—not unlike what we would do for other works of art (a Dante canto, a Shakespeare monologue, a Rembrandt portrait, a church by Le Corbusier). Reflective listening presupposes an *active* attitude on the part of the listener. Just like performing, playing,

and singing, listening is an “act,” a true “experience” (in the sense of John Dewey) which, on a didactic level, simultaneously produces, and is the product of, knowledge. It also contributes to the general process of education, since it helps develop the cognitive and meta-cognitive abilities—and hence encourages critical thinking, refines sensitivity and taste, enhances both emotional involvement and control over emotions, reinforces the sense of belonging to a tradition, and simultaneously encourages respect for other cultures. In a word, it promotes democracy. The practice of musical instruments and choir singing, therefore, must always go hand in hand with the listening of quality musical works and historical–critical reflection, in an uninterrupted circuit that moves from “performance” to “listening” and vice versa. Both of these activities, in conjunction, show the way to “knowing” and “understanding.”

The second point is the importance and relevance of the Western musical heritage for the general education of European and Western citizens, and their cultural education—both as immaterial heritage, that is, music to be performed and listened to, and as material heritage, consisting of books, treatises, scores, instruments, and buildings conceived for music performance. The Western musical heritage plays a crucial role in the interconnection of many fields of knowledge (linguistic–literary, artistic, historical–philosophical, logical–mathematical, scientific–technological), and is also a powerful tool for inclusion, in Europe in particular, for at least three reasons:

1. It allows European citizens, who from Cyprus to Finland can boast very diverse cultural traditions, to identify in *one* shared musical, and hence cultural, tradition: that of art music—which is a European, and by extension Western, peculiarity. This tradition provides an ideal, potentially unified framework, harmonically constructed and practiced all over the continent. Its message (neither easy nor superficial, and yet seductive) possesses an unparalleled power of attraction. As such, it can be a key motivating factor in building a strong European identity. A good music education can therefore contribute to create a more cohesive, participative society.
2. The knowledge of art music can foster a more inclusive society, because through music (perhaps more immediately and intensely than through other cultural expressions, given the high emotional potential inherent in this art), citizens from faraway countries such as China, Korea, Southeast Asia, who come to Europe to study, can more knowledgeably approach European culture and appreciate its breadth.

3. Art music can also foster the access to European culture for those non-European groups who move to Europe not to study, but to survive. Providing a good music education to immigrant children gives them some basic tools to get acquainted with, and participate in, a civilization that is distant from their native one, a new world in which they must learn to live and act. European citizens in their turn can approach the musical culture of immigrants who are moving to Europe, provided that they take it seriously, i.e., with adequate and pertinent intellectual tools. In this perspective, ethnomusicology—i.e., the scientific study of oral musical cultures in their irreducible variety—is called upon to play a key role in the relationship between different cultures in music education.

On the basis of their conference experiences, Italian musicologists, in particular those from Bologna, have marked 2007 as a crucial turning point in the discipline. The Association “Il Saggiatore musicale” launched a group (*SagGEM*) especially devoted to music education, and hence to the study of pedagogy and didactics (<http://www.saggiatoremusicale.it/home/il-saggem>). Members include musicologists, school and conservatory teachers, educationalists, and school heads. The four cornerstones on which *SagGEM* rests are: (1) giving prominence to art music, without any prejudice towards other music genres and traditions; (2) creating a much-needed synergy between universities, conservatories, and schools, for a harmonious development of music education; (3) bridging the gap between music education and other school subjects; and (4) referring to ethnomusicology for an intercultural perspective. With *SagGEM*, the Association has started to implement an intensive cultural policy, establishing collaborations with several regional School Offices, and promoting research and education courses addressed to school teachers. We now have a functioning, permanent mechanism that puts school teachers in touch with the musicological content produced in academic contexts. Teachers then go back to their schools and process the scientific content, turning it into didactic knowledge.

In recent months we have been formalizing another project, which I believe will help reinvigorate pedagogic–didactic studies in Italian musicology. We are creating a network of musicologists working in different universities, currently nine in number (Bologna, Catania, Chieti–Pescara, Ferrara, Pavia–Cremona, Roma Tre, Sassari, Teramo, and Turin), dedicated to music education, and hence to the study of music pedagogy and music didactics. This project is aimed at encouraging reflection in Italian universities, inviting musicologists to consider pedagogic–didactic aspects, in order to promote a “rich” transmission of musical knowledge, and hence a quality music education that can play a positive role in the intellectual, cultural, and human growth of young people.

In the past few years, Italian musicologists have also tried to raise consciousness among foreign musicologists about the gap that opened between musicology and music education, and have proposed, and attempted, a change of route. For this I would like to thank first of all two prominent musicologists, respectively from the US and Germany, who have accepted this challenge and joined our endeavour: Philip Gossett and Manfred Hermann Schmid. This act of consciousness-raising has already produced some results: the program for the 19th congress of the International Musicological Society (Rome, July 1–7, 2012) included a study session titled *Transmission of Music Knowledge: Constructing a European Citizenship*. The papers presented at the session, read by musicologists who work in China, Germany, Japan, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and the US, focused on basic issues and notions in the transmission of musical knowledge. All of the papers started from a common premise: that music pedagogy and music didactics are to be understood as branching out from the shaft of musicological science, in which they are deeply rooted.

These papers were collected in a recent online, annual, peer-reviewed journal, *Musica Docta*, which deals with topics pertaining to the transmission of musical knowledge. The journal is a successful product of our work: it was founded in 2011 with the aim of helping spread our intellectual and political stances, the circulation of ideas, and the reinforcement of the relationship with foreign musicologists.

I have mentioned the study session of the IMS congress in Rome, whose papers are collected in the current issue of *Musica Docta* (vol. 3, 2013, <http://musicadocta.unibo.it/issue/view/402>) and Special Issue (2014, <http://musicadocta.unibo.it/issue/view/427>). At the Rome meeting we also suggested that we establish, within the IMS, a study group on “Transmission of Knowledge as a Primary Aim in Music Education,” and the board of the IMS promptly accepted this proposal (see the website <http://www.ims-education.net>). Today’s meeting is the first result of that initiative. It will, I believe, mark a significant step forward in the debate on music pedagogy and didactics; this will happen thanks to collaborations and exchange between musicologists and musicians, through meetings like the one we are opening today. For this first event, we wanted German and Russian scholars, as well as Italians, to participate. We have also welcomed this opportunity to invite a well-known Canadian musicologist, Professor Edmund J. Goehring, who is a contributor to *Il Saggiatore musicale*, and is currently on this side of the Atlantic for research purposes.

This choice is based on a number of intellectual and symbolic reasons. Let me state them in a few words. Our German colleagues, who teach at universities or *Musikhochschulen*, are part of a glorious tradition, that of *Musikwissenschaft*, to which we have all looked, and continue to look, as a reference point. Without it, musicology could not have evolved the way it has. Furthermore, the great

music of German composers such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Brahms, Schoenberg, and so on is a central nucleus of European musical tradition which can never be sniffed at or discounted, not even by the most mistrustful trends of post-modern criticism. It is therefore essential, in our opinion, that our German colleagues be involved right from the start, on a regular basis, in this project of renewal of music pedagogy and music didactics. On this first occasion, we have highlighted our relationship with a *Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main) in order to emphasize the importance of an exchange relationship between general universities and university-level music schools (or, in Italy, conservatories).

Our Russian colleagues, for their part, are representatives of an extraordinarily rich culture, both in music and in literature, the knowledge of which was, and still is, partly hindered in Western Europe by factors that are as much linguistic as, at times, geopolitical in nature. In order to overcome this barrier, we have always sought to cultivate our relationship with our Russian colleagues. At the very beginning, we asked Professor Yevgeny Levashov to be a member of the advisory board of our journal, *Il Saggiatore musicale*. In 2006 his place was taken by Professor Levon Akopyan, to whom we owe thanks for assistance with articles and expert advice. We have also published essays by Russian authors, for example, the 2009 one by Marina Raku on the conception of Italian opera in Soviet musical culture; one of the next issues will contain a brilliant study by Yelena Petrushanskaya on the early fortune of Shostakovich's *Ledi Makbet* in Italy.

I believe that today, in Bologna, thanks to the eminent musicians and musicologists who have convened here from Canada, Germany, Russia, and Italy, under the umbrella of the International Musicological Society, we will celebrate a significant moment in a fruitful cultural exchange aimed at overcoming the age-old divorce between musicology and music pedagogy. We trust that, in the following years, more scholars of other nationalities will come to understand the value of the project run by the IMS study group, and will choose to support it with confidence and enthusiasm. Thank you.