

Chapter 6

LEARNING MUSIC IN ORQUESTRA GERAÇÃO

QUESTIONS ABOUT MUSICAL PEDAGOGY

JORGE ALEXANDRE COSTA, ANA ISABEL CRUZ, RUI BESSA, RUI FERREIRA,

GRAÇA BOAL-PALHEIROS, PEDRO SANTOS BOIA

An old *orquestra* stand for a young *Generation*⁴⁵

As stated before, the *Orquestra Geração* (OG) strives to provide disadvantaged primary school age populations with i) the development of social and personal competences, ii) the acquisition of essential knowledge in the field of musical instruments, iii) better school and social integration (Caldas, 2007) and iv) an alternative path able to contribute towards the desired mobility and changes in social trajectories. This is achieved through collective instrumental practice, carried out in a regular, intense and pedagogically structured way.

The desire to achieve these multiple goals, and the belief/*doxa*⁴⁶ (Bourdieu, 2001) in the benefits this project may provide to all the young persons involved, serves as a type of core assumption or the theoretical framework for the OG project. Above all, this incorporates and assumes in its actions that the teaching of music in general, and instrumental practice in particular, may act as the means for a fundamental transfer capable of bringing about transformations in the target school population and ensuring their access to the desired opportunities, both at the *personal* and *social* levels and as well as at the *artistic* level. Helena Lima, one of the OG board members, explained what this belief in the project means:

The word faith, to me, changed somewhat when I went to Venezuela [in 2014]. Because when we had people from Venezuela here saying: “You have to have faith that this is all going to work well!”. [I] would listen and... It’s a complicated model (...), but, in fact, they believe that things are possible, they can get done, they believe in that genuinely and do not question much. To us,

⁴⁵ In Portuguese ‘Geração’ means ‘Generation’, hence the use of the word in this context. See Chapter 2 for the origin of the name ‘Geração’.

⁴⁶ According to Pierre Bourdieu, *doxa* represents a particular vision or position, the vision or position of those who dominate and present and impose it as if a symbolically accepted universal vision.

to Europeans, this is confusing, we are used to displaying a more critical spirit. However, in fact, it is fundamental to believe that this can... I have convinced myself of this. We must believe, irrespective of things that are not going to go so well, that this can still be done. (Helena Lima, sub-director, 25-03-2014)

From the OG perspective, as well as that of many researchers in this field⁴⁷, collective instrumental practice or music taken as a whole, is not distinct to society across its multiple lived experiences, but rather on the contrary is an integral part of it –an *object* and an *activity* that gets socially constructed (Roy, 2010). Therefore, it may supply the adequate means and the tools, through musical/instrumental educational actions, for improving the social lives of young people and, consequently, of their families. Thus, music, far from being a simple copy of social life, actually stands as social action and interaction among a diversity of actors with its meaning emerging out of the social usages (Frith, 2003; Martin, 2007).

The sociologist Tia DeNora (2003) maintains that music is not about or caused by the social but is instead part of a broader social creation as its *constitutive ingredient*. An ingredient applied through active and dynamic engagement with social life – in the sense that this helps invoke, stabilise and transform the parameters of collective and individual action (DeNora, 2000) – based on trajectories and styles of life that are operationally, systematically and creatively deployed in the social space in real time (Willis, 1978). The musical significance extends far beyond any mere emotional and cognitive function and encapsulates a form and a more powerful means of sociability and communication – a powerful means of social order (Frith, 2003)⁴⁸.

This intended reconfiguration of the *social* by means of interaction with the *musical* does not stem from the existing structural similarities between collective instrumental practice, on the one hand, and the personal and social extra-musical activities, on the other hand, but rather emerges out of attentive observation as to how musical practices share basic procedural characteristics with the extra-musical activities. Furthermore, these procedural characteristics hold consequences for the doing, the understanding and the achieving of these same activities. As Daniel

⁴⁷ Cf. Tia DeNora (2000) and Peter Martin (1995), among many other authors.

⁴⁸ Cf. Chapter 1.

Barenboim states in his book *Everything Is Connected*, through musical experiences “(...) it is possible to imagine an alternative social model, where Utopia and practicality join forces, allowing us to express ourselves freely and hear each other’s preoccupations” (2008: 68). This dialogic quality that orchestral musical experience provides – we have to express ourselves and we have to listen to each other – ensures that culture/music “becomes the primary voice of the oppressed and takes over from politics as a driving force for change” (2008: 62). The national OG coordinator, Juan Maggiorani, shares this same transformative view that the orchestra provides:

This is a complete transformation of a system that helps, through music, (...) the children to develop as great musicians and especially as great people.
(National coordinator, 07-05-2013)

In order to build and implement its social, pedagogical and artistic identity, the OG project makes use of, in the words of its senior management, the guiding principles of the *Venezuelan National System of Youth and Children’s Orchestras* and, additionally, to the curricular structuring models of the national artistic, vocational and professional music teaching system. Helena Lima highlighted how:

The Sistema’s concept is since the beginning, [in the] original idea. (...) The design was shaped, somewhat, according to the Sistema’s principles as the whole joint work, and then adapted to our possibilities. Obviously, our project (...) had a greater emphasis on the individual component and on ear training and sight singing class (...). Our training programs demonstrate the influence of the Paris conservatory model: the musicians have individual classes, and only at the end of several years do they get permission to be in the orchestra. (Helena Lima, sub-director, 21-05-2012)

The socio-musical teaching and learning space, or the educational *field*, adopted by the OG project is put into practice through instrument classes, section classes, orchestra and ear training and sight singing classes with a total weekly timetable of seven hours⁴⁹ (Costa, Cruz & Mota, 2014). At the heart of this curricular structure, collective instrumental practice – the place in the old orchestra stand – appears to form the central focus of the teaching and learning process and, thus, the

⁴⁹ This guiding curricular structure is subject to adaptations according to the different School Groups: Instrument (1h - 2/4 students), Instrumental section (3h), Orchestra (2h) and Ear training and sight singing (1h).

catalysing dimension to all of the artistic activities which will be presented in various moments and in public venues across the country. An apparently contradictory situation to the normal practices encountered in specialised music teaching in which the instrument seems to gain this curricular profile – the centrality of the teaching -, despite the identity and the autonomy of the different subjects:

Our main objective is the collective practice. We are convinced that a child learns more rapidly in the collective than in the individual. (...) In this collective practice, we greatly strengthen the core values, self-esteem, security, companionship and create a big family that is a big community which is inherently the orchestra. I don't think there is any better discipline than that of the orchestra itself. (National coordinator, 07-05-2013)

The complete attainment of this *field* of socio-musical education does not take place in any absolute or unvarying way in the different schools where the project is implemented. Without ever rejecting its underlying conceptions, this *field* above all undergoes implementation in accordance with its human and material resources⁵⁰ and the scope for action generated by the different schools at each moment. We would recall that the teaching activities of the OG project take place in the participating public schools and not in the orchestra's own venues or in specialised music schools.

A possible *field* of socio-musical training

The *field* of socio-musical training nurtured by the OG project, a *field* of instrumental (technical), cultural and social training, also represents a place for the teaching and learning of the different constituent subject fields – *Collective Instrumental Practice* (on variable dimensions), *Instrument and Ear Training and Sight Singing* – while getting involved in external relationships that provide distinction and affirmation over the course of these practices.

The notion of *field* applied here may be conceptualised as a *network* or *configuration* of objective relationships among a plurality of *actors*, individual or collective, that take up specific positions within the scope of a particular *field* – in our

⁵⁰ The limited support from the Ministry of Education and the host municipalities for contracting music teachers represents one important restriction on the full implementation of the OG project.

case, a network of objective relationships between subjects/teachers that are located in different places within the *field* of socio-musical training. These objective relationships are historically socially competing relations built upon and between positions rooted in specific forms of *capital*, that exist and survive beyond any consciousness and individual will (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1996).

The *field* of socio-musical training, with its origins based upon a division in and articulation with the pedagogical work, emerges as a *relatively autonomous* space (Bourdieu, 1996) as it follows logics that are simultaneously *generic* and *specific* (Bourdieu, 2004). They are *generic* as the knowledge acquired in a particular *field* (political, religious, artistic, sporting, etc.) proves of relevance for the questioning and interpreting of other *fields* and *specific* because all *fields* are endowed with the needs and interests exclusive to them and irreducible to the multiple existing spaces (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1996).

The *field* of socio-musical training, thus alongside any other *field*, behaves on the one hand as a *field of strengths* among the dominant disciplinary fields (the leading ones) and the dominated (functional or supportive of the dominant) and, on the other hand, as a *field of battle*, therefore a space for conflict and competition where different disciplines express themselves through different *capitals* of *autonomy*, *identity* and *scale*, face each other off and engender strategies to maintain or transform their respective positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1996; Bourdieu, 2001, 2005).

The construction of any disciplinary domain in this *field* implies the occupation of a space of meaningful representation (having *dimension*), with their own distinctive features (defining the *identity*) and striving for emancipation from the other domains of knowledge (seeking *autonomy*). The different *capitals* mentioned above are the components of the symbolic valuation that gives meaning and reason to the survival of the different actors – in this case, subjects/teachers – that participate in the *field* of socio-musical training. The proposed concept of *capital* means on the one hand, the set of properties that are held/accumulated by these disciplinary domains over the course of their existence and, on the other hand, the set of resources that endow meaning on the structure of distribution inherent to each *field*, thus justifying its

functioning.

Perspectives and discourses on the origins of place in the *field*

The documental *corpus* applied to understand and empirically justify the *place* that the different subjects occupy in this *field* of socio-musical training by the OG project was exclusively constructed out of three methodological tools for gathering information: interviews⁵¹, carried out with the teachers of the Instrument and Ear Training and Sight Singing subjects, the project coordinators (at the school and national levels) and members of the board; content analysis of the programs⁵² for Ear Training and Sight Singing and Instrument classes alongside other pedagogical support materials for instrumental practices, both individual and collective; and, the observation of Instrument and Ear Training and Sight Singing classes and orchestra rehearsals⁵³.

Following a first brief exploratory phase along with content analysis of interviews and the records made during observations, we carried out a categorisation of the information gathered thereby making recourse to, firstly, analogies in the sense of the predominant units of meaning encountered in the respective contents and, secondly, the new possibilities for codification and classification, more tightly refined and heuristically richer, that emerged from the former. These categories or thematic classes, given the qualitative type of analysis undertaken here, were thus defined *a priori* and enriched *a posteriori* (with the construction of the subcategories that emerged in the meanwhile) using our previous knowledge and formal (sentences or words) and semantic (units of meaning or themes) criteria applied within an exclusive system (Bardin, 2003; Hodder, 2000; L'Ecuyer, 1990).

⁵¹ The interviews took place according to differentiated structures depending on the specific characteristics of each one of the subject domains involved – Ear Training and Sight Singing, Instrument and Orchestra.

⁵² Within the scope of this project, there are no specifically Ear Training and Sight Singing programs in the strict sense of the term applied in education, but rather matrixes or orienting frameworks that highlight a series of content and activities, in a cross-referenced approach, distributed by years and organised according to three fundamental musical domains and three modes of pedagogical operational implementation – melody, rhythm and harmony | sensorial, reading and writing.

⁵³ As already detailed in Chapter 3, the present study opted to choose, given their respective specific characteristics, only four schools as case studies, that is, the nuclei in Vialonga, Miguel Torga, Apelação and Amarante.

The guiding documentation and the different discourses observed and produced by the various project participants on the *field* of OG socio-musical training, gave rise to a methodical and critical analysis. This enabled us to identify the properties and the resources of the main capitals held by each one of the subject domains participating in this *field*.

Over the course of the many observations, interviews and analyses, we attempted fundamentally to grasp, i) what is the importance that these subject domains hold within the scope of artistic, vocational and professional teaching in general and in the *field* of OG socio-musical training in particular; ii) what are the types of curricular organisation and program orientations or the program framework for the pedagogical activities inherent to each subject; iii) what pedagogical strategies get deployed within the scope of teaching practices and which may be identified as pedagogy specific to *El Sistema* (ES); iv) and what is the academic and professional profile of the teachers involved in the OG project.

The answers obtained provided the material for defining the different subject domains within this *field* of socio-musical training. We correspondingly began to grasp the level or the value of *autonomy* held by each domain over others (for example, valuing the importance of discipline in the curriculum); the extent to which each subject has its own *identity* and/or exclusive characteristics irrespective of the potential interlinkages (for example, recognising the presence of a particular teacher profile and the specific programs of each subject); and, finally, understanding the *dimension* or the type of presence that each subject domain has within the overall curricular plan (for example, attribution of time/duration or even its very existence).

In summary, within the framework of this chapter, we aim to convey and highlight what is the *place* that the different subject domains, specifically *Collective Instrumental Practice*, the *Instrument* and Ear Training and Sight Singing, occupy within the scope of this *field* of socio-musical training as regards the symbolic recognition of its *capitals* in terms of *autonomy*, *identity* and *dimension*.

Ear Training and Sight Singing in the socio-musical *field* of *Orquestra Geração*

Ear Training and Sight Singing is a subject area that, while having a constant curricular presence in the formal construction of music teaching programs, almost always registers an irregular and downplayed valuation of its input within the *field* of specialized music education. This indicates an unstable presence in view of the attributed varying symbolic recognition, formally or informally, and in terms of program autonomy, the training identity and curricular dimension.

There are several factors contributing to this subject subordination, including: the central role of learning the instrument (whether individual or collective instrument practice) in the specialist music teaching curricula, the curricular configuration of this subject as an appendix to some other key training or the lack of Ear Training and Sight Singing programs appropriately set out in terms of their structure and contents.

However, without seeking to contradict the subordination referred to above, we do need to recognise how the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject emerged from a path featuring notable transformations. Within this framework, we would recall the changes that took place following the implementation of the *Solfeggio* teaching reform, led by Viana da Mota, in 1934, the Pedagogical Experience of Veiga Simão, in 1971, in which the *Solfeggio* subject gave way to the new subject of Music Education or the change in its title from Music Education to Ear Training and Sight Singing, in 1985⁵⁴.

In the case of the OG project, the inclusion of the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject, within the framework of its *field* of socio-musical training, fundamentally reflects the symbolical and historical influence of music curricula⁵⁵ (having always been present on the curriculum with a varied level of importance) and out of recognition of the pedagogical gains the subject may bring to the effective implementation of the project:

We are talking about a vocation area of music for students learning an instrument. (...) Therefore, Ear Training and Sight Singing is really very, very important to ensure students are able to attain the necessary skills to be more at ease with the instrument, both in terms of reading and tuning abilities. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

⁵⁴ Cf. Decree-law no. 23577, of 19 February 1934, Decree-law no. 310, of 1 July 1983 and Dispatch no. 78/SEAM, of 9 October 1985.

⁵⁵ On the current curricular organisation of basic music teaching, see Decree no. 225/2012, of 30 July.

Departing from assumptions about the historicity and pedagogical gains, and taking into consideration the aforementioned initial framework, we sought to critically analyse the responses obtained based upon the four fundamental questions raised by the various actors involved in the OG project (Ear Training and Sight Singing teachers, board and coordinators) in order to understand what is the true *place* that *Ear Training and Sight Singing* holds in the *field* of OG socio-musical training and in keeping with the symbolic recognition of its *capitals* – of *autonomy*, of *identity* and of *dimension* – that attribute its profile and status as a subject matter.

On the importance of Ear Training and Sight Singing ...

Considering the discourses produced by the different actors, the question about the role or roles that Ear Training and Sight Singing performs within the scope of specialized music teaching in general, and in the *field* of OG socio-musical training in particular, enables us to understand three fundamental ideas. The first tells us how the roles assumed by the actors are the same for the two educational settings, even while adapted to each reality:

The idea is [that Ear Training and Sight Singing] plays exactly the same role [as this subject in specialized music teaching]. This does not mean that we are able to do the same type of work as these students have, in general, more difficulties in various musical domains. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

A second idea shows how the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject, in terms of the learning skills to be developed, is taught more demandingly and with a wider reaching range in specialist music teaching than in the OG socio-musical partner training:

I thought that the program of the Lisbon National Conservatory, was very complicated... for us to apply that here [at the OG] would be impossible. That of the Metropolitana is very difficult as well... and therefore we have to adapt. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

Finally, the third idea sets out how these roles emerge and cluster around three fundamental axes shared by the two *fields* of learning – that of specialist music teaching and that of the OG. The first axis attributes to Ear Training and Sight Singing the role of a training resource for the development of instrumental practice, whether at the collective or the individual levels. In this axis, reading music without singing constitutes the central teaching practice of Ear Training and Sight Singing, according to the pedagogical orientation of the project coordinator:

There is a great reluctance [on behalf of theory teachers] around doing pure and hard solfeggio and we, sometimes, for our orchestras, we need that. Therefore, this is a question that most definitely remains unsolved. (Helena Lima, sub-director, 25-03-2014)

A second axis attributes to Ear Training and Sight Singing a role in the domain of musical culture. Questions such as musical appreciation and knowledge about different musical works, composers and interpreters as well as the interrelationships between the fields of music analysis and the history of music, all hold relevance within the scope of the teaching activities of this subject:

Should the teachers wish to, they may also show musical examples (...) students who do not have this culture, who do not know high art music, do not know... these works, (...) therefore, I think Ear Training and Sight Singing may also help in this aspect, providing a little bit of musical culture. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

Furthermore, the third axis endows Ear Training and Sight Singing with a fundamental role as an educational unit capable of leveraging the capacity to acquire other specific musical skills. Without ignoring the learning components already mentioned, the Ear Training and Sight Singing teaching practices should be structured around the diversity of aspects that are particular to this field of knowledge – reading, listening, musical repertoires – and other pedagogical resources such as theory and musical analysis:

And, after all, a musician has to be more than just an instrument player. At least that is what we... we... attempt, we try to educate musicians who are not exclusively players and who do not just focus on the mechanical part (...). Thus, Ear Training and Sight Singing goes a long way beyond knowing the notes and

the rhythms, reaches far beyond the solfeggio, (...) approaches the harmonic question, chords and theory. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

The curricular structure and program orientations...

Now concentrating on the responses obtained to a second group of questions – the Ear Training and Sight Singing curricular structure and pedagogical activities within the OG project framework – we may highlight at least three aspects that would seem relevant to understanding and perceiving the role of this subject in the *field* of socio-musical training. These interrelate with what the different actors think about the timetable/duration of the subject, the way of organising the respective classes and, finally, the structure and content of the subject's programs.⁵⁶

As regards the timetable and temporal duration of the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject, in general terms, we find a certain dissatisfaction with the time allocated weekly to teaching this subject:

It's very little time, 45 minutes is not enough to do anything, the time it takes for them to come in and go out... immediately takes up 15 minutes, (...) almost ensuring that there isn't the time to get going it's... fast, putting together two pieces... and there's not enough time to do anything. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

Concerning the different ways of organising the OG project classes, two fundamental concerns were expressed by the teachers. Firstly, attention falls on aspects such as the number of students per class and irregularities in classroom attendance over the course of the academic year (both the lack of attendance and the arrival and departure of students at any time over the school year):

Another of the problems that is somewhat complicated to deal with, (...) is how halfway through the year, there are always people arriving, always getting new students. Even now, today, I'm going to be getting two new students. They are always arriving and leaving. This causes a lot of disturbance. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Miguel Torga, 04-02-2014)

⁵⁶ The existing documents are not programs in the strict senses but rather matrixes/guiding frameworks with indications for content across different levels.

A second issue approaches the heterogeneity in musical knowledge experienced within the extent of any Ear Training and Sight Singing class. This disparity would seem to occur fundamentally because the organising of classes seems dependent on the availability of students:

The class times relate to the availability of students, with their school timetables. We try and combine the two [the availability and the level of development]. It's always... we always think about bringing the levels together, don't we? But obviously there is, or there might be one or two students (...) that due to the timetable cannot attend the class level that they are supposed to be in. But it's not due to the fact of not having the timetables that we do not fit them into another class. But we do have to know how to adapt to the situation, yes, we do. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Apelação, 05-02-2014)

This heterogeneity in knowledge faces the Ear Training and Sight Singing teachers with classroom situations that are somewhat problematic in terms of the different learning phases. These professionals refer to how the education obtained at the end of the primary teaching study cycle is, to a certain extent, deficient or unequal and that there are clear difficulties in students successfully passing the entrance texts to secondary school music teaching:

Some students are able to follow the path to the end, a route that I would say is sufficient, but not others who also reached the end of the 5th grade even while not having anywhere near the same competences. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

Last year, we had some cases of poor students who managed to get in by chance, very much thanks to the instrument. In Ear Training and Sight Singing, they were not so well prepared. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

As regards the contents of program orientations⁵⁷ provided for the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject in the OG project, we encountered different situations. The programs were drafted based upon those established for specialized musical training while differing in their level of adaptation (higher or lower) to the specific OG contexts

⁵⁷ See the guiding matrixes and chronograms for activities and contents for coverage in Musical theory at the Vialonga and Miguel Torga schools.

and in the way they were built up, whether in an autonomous (isolated) fashion or through articulation among nuclei:

The program that we are following was designed by Mário and myself, we did the drafting but inspired on the National Conservatory program and eventually on the programs of other schools that we consider sufficiently complete. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

This year, I took the liberty of bringing together some colleagues [from Lisbon located nuclei] and attempted to work out a program, an Ear Training and Sight Singing program for the orchestra. (...) Because what happens is that there is a program for the orchestra, pretty much common to all of the nuclei. In Ear Training and Sight Singing, there was never anything like it, that means, each teacher does what he thinks is best for the students. And that ended up being all very unequal. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Miguel Torga, 04-02-2014)

The pedagogical strategies...

Regarding the different pedagogical strategies applied in Ear Training and Sight Singing, we highlight here those that seem to hold the greatest relevance within this framework, in particular:

- i) the use of musical repertoires as a pedagogical tool for the development of teaching and learning practices:

When I bring musical examples, this is either the first thing that we do or the last. Very often, it's a sweetener: "Well, if everything goes well, if we all manage to work through everything, at the end, we can hear a musical excerpt, learn something a bit more". (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

- ii) the transformation of the orchestra repertoires into pedagogical materials (pedagogical content knowledge⁵⁸) to be used in Ear Training and Sight Singing teaching and learning practices:

Instead of having the scales, a study, a piece, they use here the orchestra pieces with the objective of working everything at the same time. This has good aspects and some that are less good. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher,

⁵⁸ Cf. Shulman (1993).

Apelação, 05-02-2014)

The information then also goes to the Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher. The Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher knows the way it works... This week, we will be working around this section, this part. (...) Therefore, the Ear Training and Sight Singing classes are always focused on what the students are doing in the orchestra. (Helena Lima, sub-director, 25-03-2014)

- iii) the importance of developing reading without singing skills in the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject as this represents an unequalled tool enabling students to move on from a process of learning from imitation and repetition to a process of self-learning of the collective instrumental practices:

This is an orchestra system, there has to be theory and solfeggio, that's it. That has to be. (...) Through the instrument, you can play, repeat, with the claves, you can attempt to play but to spend an entire year teaching about the sun, the moon and the little boat ... it doesn't work. Therefore, they also sing, they can sing (...) they are developing listening skills. (National Coordinator, 07-05-2013)

- iv) the option to engage and develop, within the scope of the classroom, strategies and activities that prioritise musical orality and practical knowledge as opposed to whatever focuses on musical scores and the theoretical domain:

I always attempt to do a practical part, especially because the practical part to them is fundamental because they are in the orchestra and they need to feel [the music]. The music gets enacted through the body. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Miguel Torga, 04-02-2014)

- v) the use of methodological strategies that imply that classes include the different dimensions of learning in a balanced fashion:

In this phase, I don't go into theory much but I go over a bit of everything, structure the class to provide a reading, a melodic-rhythmic reading, (...), doing something around audition in terms of any of the listening skills, as, for example, dictations (...). In truth, I do a bit of everything. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher de Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

- vi) the option for pedagogical strategies that promote motivation and involve students even when this requires moving away from the formal content of Ear Training and Sight Singing:

With them, you've got to get into the game a bit, (...) catch some of their waves at the beginning and then soon move onto the music. (...) I'm never able to go into the class and [get] all of the kids sat down. (...) You need to get into their spirit a bit. (Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher, Apelação, 05-02-2014)

The academic and professional profiles of teachers...

As regards the academic and professional profiles of the Ear Training and Sight Singing teachers in the project⁵⁹, we may report: i) a wide variety in the educational backgrounds even while there is a greater incidence of those with Ear Training and Sight Singing education – the four teachers interviewed all hold academic qualifications in different music based programs, specifically, Music Theory and Ear Training and Sight Singing, Music Education, Instrument and Musical Sciences; ii) the almost complete absence of professional training in this field; iii) a very recent joining of the teaching profession both in terms of music teaching and in the OG; iv) the complementation of Ear Training and Sight Singing teaching with other subjects, especially Choir, Instrument or Orchestra; v) and, finally, that the number of weekly hours taught by these teachers, even when they teach in several nuclei, do not amount to a full time job.

From the perspective of the coordinators, the ideal profile for an Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher is somebody able to teach all of the subjects making up the *field* of socio-musical training in the project:

The ideal situation is that the teacher teaches Orchestra, teaches instrumental section, teaches Violin and is an Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher. If you get that in one teacher, you'll get a fantastic teacher. (...) The teacher who wants to be an Ear Training and Sight Singing teacher in the project has to be aligned with its core, that is, his or her training is the same as that of any Instrument teacher. (National Coordinator, 07-05-2013)

⁵⁹ Cf. Chapter 4.

Notes for reflection

Of the three previously referred axes⁶⁰ regarding the role of Ear Training and Sight Singing in the *field* of OG socio-musical training, the first – Ear Training and Sight Singing as a training resource for the development of instrumental practices – is the one that emerges with the greatest relevance and that elicits constant concern in the discourses of all the participant actors. Taking into consideration collective practice – socio-musical performance in the orchestra, the majority option for this axis is also discursively accompanied by almost obsessive references that point out the need to implement Ear Training and Sight Singing teaching practices above all oriented to the domain and the development of reading without singing of the repertoire.

Departing from the different organisational and pedagogical features observed – constructing timetables, organising classes and drafting programs – we may state that the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject seems to occupy a volatile position within the *field* of OG socio-musical training. This position, while subordinate to collective instrumental practices, varies in accordance with the recognition that each school environment attributes to the *autonomy*, *identity* and *dimension* of this subject domain.

Ear Training and Sight Singing represents a subject without any program autonomy, with a limited pedagogical identity and a reduced curricular scope. As observed in the case of the *Apelação* nucleus, its existence depends on the mere role of functional support to (and not articulation with) the collective instrumental practice. The opposite happens whenever its attributed importance falls within the scope of the third axis detailed above –an educational unit capable of leveraging the capacity to acquire other specific musical skills, as in the case of the *Vialonga* nucleus. In this school, the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject displays its own program, strives to convey specific training and presents an appropriate timetable.

The place of the instrument in the socio-musical *field* of *Orquestra Geração*

The curricular structure and the program orientations...

⁶⁰ See section 'ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EAR TRAINING AND SIGHT SINGING' in this chapter.

Regarding instrumental teaching, two aspects require highlighting: the first relates to the organisation of the program while the second derives from the time attributed to instrument classes. Concerning the programs, we may state that they: i) are structured by levels; ii) define transition criteria for entering upper level orchestras (practice evaluation tests); iii) are organised by objectives, content and technical skills to be developed as well as the orchestra repertoires; iv) should be implemented flexibly taking into account individual student development:

The organisation of the program into levels and not into years assumes that the transition from one level to another does not happen by years while not implying passing or failing (...) However, the transition to the more advanced level of the orchestra is determined by the accomplishment of a test that determines the instrumental level attained by the student.

The objective of the program is to provide the basic tools for developing musical competences in the instrumental area ranging upwards from the level of initiation; equally, this seeks to convey the basic knowledge required to approach orchestral practice as a fundamental tool for individual instrumental development.

The teachers, based upon the present flexible programs, have the liberty to include, beyond the repertoire defined below, studies and pieces from a similar level, while knowing how to adapt the program content to the needs of each student at any particular moment in their individual development. (String Instrument Program, *Orquestra Geração*, January 2011)

Learning an instrument at the OG is intrinsically bound up with the context of each nucleus and dependent on the respective orchestra program. While there is leeway in the programs for the various instruments to carry out their specific training, the orchestra defined repertoire seems to prevail over the time available for individual classes⁶¹. Hence, the Instrument effectively gives up its autonomy in favour of the collective instrumental practices:

This entirely relates to the orchestra: we have a new piece and this piece has to go through the individual class circuit, the instrumental section, the orchestra.

⁶¹ This situation is not verified equally across all of the nuclei included in this study. In the case of the Vialonga nucleus, as the music teaching functions under an integrated regime, the Instrument class also focuses on the individual program.

As soon as this work goes along this circuit, we then have time to prepare the individual program with them (instrument teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014).

The individual classes always contain a more technical component and the group class is to bring all the different parts together. The difference is that the individual classes (...) are for practicing the technique for our part of the orchestra work; we are not preparing the individual program. (Instrument Teacher, Apelação, 07-06-2014)

The opinion of teachers regarding the time spent in Instrument classes denotes a lack of satisfaction as the hours dedicated to individual work do not enable student development as regards their instrumental technique:

I believe that the time allocated to Instrument classes is small given that students need to develop the basic technique of their instrument, which sometimes is not possible due to certain difficulties that appear in the orchestra repertoire and that have to be overcome in the classes. (Instrument Teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

Unfortunately, individual practice does not get valued with so many joint activities ongoing. (Instrument Teacher, Vialonga, 06-06-2014)

They further acknowledge that, in comparison with students from other specialized music institutions, the young OG musicians display a gap between the technical competences the teachers deem essential and those that are worked according to the needs of the orchestra repertoire:

The programs and methodology applied to obtain results easily create problems in the future technical evolution of the instrument. (Instrument Teacher, Apelação, 01-04-2014)

Attention is not always paid to the technical aspects of the instrument that, in my opinion, may become a serious obstacle to the evolution of the student. (Instrument Teacher, Amarante, 24-03-2014)

The pedagogical strategies...

From the observations made of the different OG nuclei, whether the individual, section or orchestra classes, we may understand how instrument teaching initially emerges out of a model of imitation, repetition and memorisation:

Well, there has to be a lot of work of repetition and almost always saying the same thing (...) insisting, repeating, and many months playing the same thing. (...) I, for example, with my little ones I have to always play with them for them to see the bow, to see how I hold it in my hand (...). They end up memorising this and they arrive doing it while looking at a score. (Instrument Teacher, Apelação, 01-04-2014)

Because their general learning is very much based on imitation. And only in that way are they able to see relatively quickly how they are able to play together, even simple pieces (...). To the extent that they make progress and the pieces they approach become increasingly complex, that's when in fact you begin noting a difficulty in reading, that is, in the capacity to free themselves from the process of learning through imitation in favour of a process of self-learning, meaning that they read and learn on their own. (Instrument Teachers, Vialonga, 31-03-2014)

From the outset, the teaching of instrumental technique remains dependent on the demands of the repertoire defined for each orchestra, and thus one learns to play the instrument while playing the orchestral pieces. While the autonomy of the teacher seems limited, as seen above, concerning the choice of the repertoire to work in the classroom, there would seem to be some freedom, regarding the implementation of the teaching methodologies:

In the individual classes, I always begin with working on technique, mastering the instrument technique. Afterwards, a second section is always interconnected with the orchestra repertoire. And even the technique work is always based upon the technical difficulties posed by the repertoire (...). Yes, the teaching principles are identical but afterwards, when playing parts of the repertoire, that's when the difference, of course, happens. (Instrument Teacher, Apelação, 06-06-2014)

Another important aspect worth highlighting emerges from the collaborative learning as seen in various nuclei. Both inside and outside the class, students mutually help each other irrespective of their competences and ages:

They also have the support of colleagues and the example in which... which may serve for inspiration and support. It always helps to have somebody by your side who is already playing that encourages you to go further and to understand just how this all functions. (Instrument Teacher, Apelação, 06-06-2014)

Therefore, these older ones already help the young. (...) Every student, even those who only began today, whoever learns fastest already functions as the teacher, already has the obligation to teach the other, whether in the pause or at home – because many of them come from the same neighbourhoods and therefore have that opportunity to help each other out. (...) [What] the older ones do with the younger is reading the notes with the instrument (...), clarifying any doubts: 'Hey, do you know what this note is as I don't?' (Instrument Teacher, Apelação, 07-06-2014)

The academic and professional profile of the instrument teachers

OG instrument teachers⁶² display an identical academic and professional profile to that required by specialized music teaching establishments: i) holding higher education qualifications as a soloist or Instrument teacher; ii) professionally active for only a short period both in terms of teaching music and teaching music in the OG; iii) complement their instrument teacher activities, in some cases, by also teaching instrumental section and orchestra classes; iv) and, finally, the majority do not have full timetables even when teaching at more than one nucleus.

Notes for reflection

OG instrument teaching is a disciplinary field with limited program autonomy as while there is the individual program for each instrument, the repertoire defined for the orchestra seems to dominate the time available for individual classes; with a well defined pedagogical identity in keeping with the specialist academic training in instrument teaching and the methodological flexibility displayed by teachers in exercising their functions; and with a recognised curricular dimension as the acquisition of the instrument technical competences proves essential to collective instrumental practice.

⁶² Cf. Chapter 4.

Pedagogies in the orchestra – intentions, assumptions and practices

Collective instrumental practice – the Orchestra – is, as already stated, at the heart of all the OG pedagogy and musical practice.

Playing in the orchestra happens from the moment when the young person joins the project: picking up the instrument and playing in a group simultaneously represents both the beginning and the objective in accordance with which students learn both instrumental techniques in the instrument classes alongside Ear Training and Sight Singing. These learning processes take place therefore in keeping with the orchestra and its respective repertoire.

Based upon the discourses of the board members and other influential actors in the project design and implementation, we have analysed some of the crucial aspects to the appropriation of the ‘orchestra’ format by the OG based upon the ES, which specifically reflects in the socio-pedagogic practices of orchestra rehearsals.

Collective practices at the centre and encouraging collaborative learning

Collective instrumental practice is perceived as the essence of the OG pedagogies and musical practices. That also extends to encouraging collaborative teaching and learning among the young participants themselves (Tunstall, 2012), as explained by the national coordinator and as empirically observed over the course of our study:

Our objective is collective practice. We are convinced that kids learn far more quickly in the collective than individually, at least the dimensions of motivation, that intrinsic motivation. How many times have I arrived in class, teaching the piece in the first session and then in the following class they already knew three or four pieces on their own. How? Because they look at their colleague and they ask – ‘hey, teach me that’. And then they want to repeat and that’s very nice. Really, we create... it has to be a very dynamic system, which means that the teacher has to deal with an enormous challenge. This is a room with ten

students that may all be in different levels, which means we must multiply ourselves in our action and find a strategy so that everybody may learn at the same time and everybody helps and nobody gets left out. Indeed, at the highest level, it is the oldest teaching the youngest. (National Coordinator, 07-05-2013)

Playing in the orchestra and sonic intensity as factors of motivation

The interest and desire of the participants to belong to the OG is fundamental both to the project's success from the musical point of view and to achieve its goals of social inclusion of the young participants. Playing in the orchestra and giving concerts in prestigious venues – hardly accessible to the very OG teachers, as one of them once said – is, in its own right, stimulating:

And that which really motivates us is the orchestra, (...) it's the work of the orchestra (...) They themselves have the advantage of having already played in some of the best halls in the country (...) not even they properly understand that. (Instrument Teacher, 21-03-2014)

In addition to the symbolic aura of the concert venues, *intensity* is presented as a core factor that endows the daily routines of the orchestra with motivating power:

It was a really great struggle to render all this more intense. At the beginning [there was], and there still are, a lot of dropouts. We used to discuss this a lot, in the good sense, the whys to this and I kept insisting that there wasn't enough motivation because there wasn't the proper intensity to be able to stimulate the student. (...) El Sistema [philosophy] says that the [big] number, the orchestral mass is where the ambition begins, where the stimulus comes from. (former National Coordinator, 11-10-2013)

Motivation is seen as a fundamental ingredient in the whole project which would be also obtained through three dimensions of that intensity:

- i) *Social intensity* – the assumption that the orchestra fosters the establishment of social relations and bonds, intensifying the feeling of belonging and encouraging participation and the ambition to want to play better;

- ii) *Sonics intensity* – considering that a large sound volume inherently has motivating powers;
- iii) *Work intensity* – on the grounds that a certain number of hours of rehearsals and classes constitutes an essential aspect to strengthening the desire to play in the orchestra.

The periodic holding of training internships was the response found to enable the achievement of the highest possible level of intensity. These are events in which the daily routine is exclusively dedicated to rehearsals and concerts, bringing together children and teachers from various nucleuses and around the same objective under the guidance of guest maestros. The musical development brought about by these camps is the feasible approximation to the guidelines handed down by the ES.

The repertoire

In the OG project, the objective of fostering the social inclusion of disadvantaged children and young persons takes place through collective musical practice in the format of the 'classic' western orchestra.

As happens at other peer youth orchestras that take their inspiration from the ES, the bulk of the repertoire is of high art music and correspondingly highlighting the works of European composers and a lower level of input from Latin American music, including the 'classical' composers and the traditional and children's songs of Venezuela.

One of the selection criteria for the repertoire is intended to fulfil pedagogical objectives to the extent that the level of difficulty in technically playing the pieces gets aligned with the level of musical development of the young learners. This level does not only directly relate with the age and the length of study in the OG but also with the level of musical development that the students are able to attain; that which results from their capacities and their working efforts. For beginners, the players in the Youth

Orchestra⁶³ represent a model to be followed as they encapsulate a visible demonstration of the results feasible with time, work, effort and persistence:

The fact is that, right from the beginning, from very little (...) they start seeing their older colleagues playing and after they all want to get into Orchestra A (...) And they know that they have a path to follow to get there. (Instrument Teacher, Vialonga, 21-03-2014)

The current national coordinator affirms that the feeling and sensation of progressing to increasingly difficult pieces – and, it might be added, between the different levels of orchestras – proves a stimulus to the internal resilience of the children:

According to my view, this has been a fantastic experience with the results ever more visible. We are now going to make our concert already playing original symphonies, we are going to play the opening of the Light Cavalry, the 5th [Symphony] by Beethoven, the original. This year, we are including the Overture by Joly Braga Santos, the original, we are performing the Alleluia with the choir and the New World Symphony by Dvorak, an arrangement (...). The pieces are beginning to appear and they are a very big ambition for the kids and here we strengthen the technical part and the internal resilience that the children have to have (...) And, step by step, we have already begun to perfect the position, the hand, to play at their best in this concert. (National Coordinator, 07-05-2013)

Another relevant criteria for the selection of the repertoire stems from the characteristics of the works chosen. Fast and lively movements, strong rhythms, attractive melodies and the majestic and driving character of music are the factors able to really motivate not only the students and the teachers but also the audiences that attend the concerts, mostly made up of family and friends of the young musicians.

The OG repertoire features the composers and excerpts generally drawn from the best known works to the wider public as is the case, for example, with the *Nutcracker* ballet by Tchaikovsky, the opera *Carmen* by Bizet, the *New World* symphony by Dvorak, the march *Pomp and Circumstance* by Elgar. The almost

⁶³ Most advanced level (formerly referred to as Orchestra A). About the organisation of the orchestras into different levels, see Chapter 2.

notorious absence of the Portuguese high art music repertoire might be one consequence of adapting a project from another country.

The Latin American component of the OG repertoire takes on perhaps a more ludic character, which may also be motivating, representing a style closer to the general musical preferences of the young students and with their performance in concerts including a component of movement and a more intense communication with the public (a collective choreography) as described in field note observations of a concert:

The concert repertoire held on 25 April 2012, entitled 'Commemorations of 25 de Abril - City of Amadora Orquestra Geração', combined traditionally Venezuelan melodies, some of which are also sung (for example, 'Lindo barquito', 'El grillito', 'A mi mono'), which were performed by the youngest children, alongside high art music (for example, 'Trepak' by Tchaikovsky, 'Farandole' by Bizet, 'Pomp and Circumstance' by Elgar, and as well as works by South American composers), played by the older, more experienced children. The concert began with the national anthem, which the audience listened to standing up, followed by the repertoires of various orchestras. All the groups received great applause, with the enthusiasm of the audiences rising in the final pieces in which the young musicians made performances with dancing, leaving the stage and circulating through the space normally reserved for the public, a common practice among ES orchestras.

Concluding reflections

In order to close this interpretative and critical analysis of the places of the different disciplinary domains in the *field* of OG socio-musical training, we here provide a short epilogue that, while falling into the temptation of providing so-called conclusions, only seeks to propose some reflexive thinking on the overall content of this chapter.

The *field* of socio-musical training adopted by the OG project for the construction and implementation of its social, pedagogical and artistic identity does not prove particularly different, at least in the curricular structure and its respective designations, to that applied to the specialized and professional music teaching.

Within the framework of this curricular structure, collective instrumental practices emerge as the main aspect of the teaching and learning process and hence

the dynamic component of all artistic activities. This situation would apparently counter practices in specialist music teaching in which the instrument would seem to take on this curricular leading role despite the identity coherence and the program autonomy of the different existing subjects.

One facet for reflection emerges from the OG board and coordination team conception of how Ear Training and Sight Singing and Instrument teaching develop their actions as educational resources for the purposes of collective instrumental practices. Thus, these subjects do seem to lose their *autonomy, identity* and *dimension* because they transfer a proportion of their contents to orchestral practices.

As regards the specific characteristics of the *OG/Sistema Portugal*, we encounter, in the discourses and observations of practices, certain aspects that, despite not amounting to any exemplary methodological model, do highlight particular pedagogical differences.

We would correspondingly identify three structural features:

- i) the collective instrumental practice (the Orchestra) as a catalysing factor and organiser of the different learning processes undertaken collaboratively – joining the orchestra occurs prior to any mastery of musical scores or instrument techniques;
- ii) the transformation of the orchestra repertoire into pedagogical materials for use in every class, including Ear Training and Sight Singing and Instrument classes:
- iii) the importance of the development of reading without singing skills in the Ear Training and Sight Singing subject as this represents an unparalleled tool for enabling students to move on from an imitation and repertoire based learning process to a process of self-learning both in the Instrument class and in collective instrumental practice sessions.



The OG projects builds its difference out of an articulated and hierarchical overlaying of three structural components – the repertoires, reading without singing and collective instrumental practices – bearing in mind a final effective result, the socio-musical performance as demonstrated by the public presentations made by the orchestra.

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