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Content

Introduction	5
Le Corbusier, E. Varèse, I. Xenakis: Poème électronique (1958) Martin Flašar	7
Music Preferences in Relation to Personality Dimensions of Adolescent Population Jana Horáčková	49
Typology of Music Preference in Czech Adolescents Pavel Mužík	87
Classroom Composing in Music Education with Regard to Minimal Music Gabriela Všetická	111
Elements of Sub-Saharan Music and Indian Classical Music in Integrative Experimental Music Teaching at Grammar School Štěpánka Lišková	151

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Classroom Composing in Music Education with Regard to Minimal Music

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Abstract

The contribution, resulting from the dissertation thesis of the author, deals with the topic of classroom composing in Music Education in relation to the possibility of accessing contemporary music. It briefly introduces the individual partial aspects of this issue and subsequently, specifies the topic citing minimal music as an example, which is characterized by features and composing procedures that can be used when working with children on their creative projects. The contribution describes some of these projects in more detail and examines the practical application of compositional principles of minimal music.

Key words

classroom composing, contemporary music, minimal music, creativity

Contemporary Music in Schools of Today

Contemporary music represents a challenging task within the today's musical education. Due to the plurality of its styles and the diversity of aesthetic resources and composition concepts, it has edged to very thin interest and currently has only marginal role in teaching. It is very often not included at all in educational plans and curricula or there is only borderline inclusion in higher classes. The "image" of contemporary music is severely distorted and it just happens too often that it is rejected not only by pupils but to a great extent actually also by the teachers. We could assume that the teachers do not know how to handle this topic. And if they do decide to step into this overflowing river, traditional teaching methods, which is interpretation combined with listening (as the most frequently used work procedures), do not have the ability to adequately captivate pupils and provide them with sufficient insight into a world of sounds and expression that is completely new to them.

However, this situation also highlights a key problem – the required changes in the concept of Music Education and Teaching at Czech primary and secondary schools towards greater representation of creative activities. The current state of Music Education shows many shortcomings, which primarily include insufficient representation of creative activities and excessive emphasis on theoretical knowledge of music (without deeper understanding and authentic experience). Over time, Music Education due to other circumstances (social or political) became a passive subject, understood as uninteresting for children and which, furthermore, in most cases does not reflect their extra-curricular musical interests. When compared with other types of education in the field of aesthetics – art, physical, drama or literary education – the difference is obvious straightaway. In all these educations, children have the chance to actively develop their talent from the very beginning (however inartistic their efforts may be at first). It would probably be hard to imagine a situation where children would sit at their desks and paintings and art techniques would just be read and talked about.

So, what prevents children to have the possibility to develop their own creativity in the field of music as well? The Music Education of today is still closely linked with the European major-minor musical tradition, its schemes, musical notation, enshrining in tonality, etcetera. At the same time, room for creative expression is limited to mere mechanic imitation of predetermined schemes and patterns (the type of exercise as question – answer, an echo, the opening – the conclusion or accompaniment to a folk song). Interpretation is generally accepted as a standard form of musical creativity. It was already in the mid 1960's that R. M. Thackray drew attention to the fact that “...*musical performance or interpretation is usually looked upon as a legitimate substitute for creative work.*”¹ According to him, such approach is incorrect. “*Music in education has for too long been regarded as mainly an interpretative art; the creative aspects of the subject have been either merely dabbled with, or left to the exceptionally gifted. [...] Singing songs by rote and reading, playing and listening to the music of others is no substitute to a child for making up his own music.*”¹ And as added by Vít Zouhar, such concept of Music Education brings many disadvantages. It intensifies intolerance towards musical multiplicity, limits understanding, often traumatizes and stigmatizes, and invites the misconception that all

¹ THACKRAY, R. M. Creative Music in Education. London 1965, p. 10-11.

music has already been written and all composers are extinct.² Another consequence of this fact was also the loss of reflection for the current state of musical culture and the society in general.

Music education in our country shows signs of certain conservatism. Music, of which children are taught in schools, is mainly music of the 17th to the 19th centuries. However, a school must not become a museum, which merely cherishes the few most significant pieces from the past centuries. It must become more open to the present. And it was actually the development in music after 1945 that prompted changes in the direction of musical teaching. Many composers and educationists began to result from the complexity of experimental music and the richness of its composition base. However, conveying it to school children requires new adequate teaching methods, which are experimental, open, process orientated, flexible and productive, and not merely receptive.

Learning must no longer be a mere handover of ready-made knowledge, but a process of seeking facts through creative activities. And although this process is not the quickest path to the finish line, it leads to new experience and complex understanding through constantly asking oneself questions, trying options, occasional wandering and finding answers. In this case, knowledge is constructed through direct personal practice and experience. Practical activities bring the joy of seeking and finding new things, but, at the same time, understanding the facts already known in new contexts. In English, this approach to teaching is succinctly called *learning by doing* or also *discovery learning*. However, in this case, the process of cognition cannot be identical for each individual (and knowledge cannot be handed over to everyone through the same linear process). Quite to the contrary, it is strongly individualised and results from individuals own activity, his/her mental and physical prerequisites, experience, abilities, skills, talent and many other factors.

And changing the overall concept of Music Education towards activity and creativity in relation to the principles of contemporary music helps to implement the so-called classroom composing.

² ZOUHAR, V. Slyšet jinak. Každý může být skladatelem (Different Hearing. Everyone Can Be a Composer). His Voice, 2005, Issue no. 3, p. 11.

Classroom Composing

For the vast majority of public, composing is perceived as an activity that can only be performed by exceptionally talented individuals – geniuses – who often hold supernatural or even magical abilities, gifted to them by God (the archetype of Mozart, as the “child prodigy”). Apart from this, there is also a deeply ingrained belief that one must first acquire a large amount of theoretical knowledge (associated with traditional notation and musical language) and practical skills before he/she can even begin to compose.

It is with a similarly reserved approach that people perceive natural intuitive exploring of the world of sounds by preschool age children. It is called (annoyingly) “noise”, and it is at best tolerated and at the worst, punished. I think we can fully identify with the opinion of Susan Kenney who claims that “...maybe the reason Western culture thinks that only a few gifted people can become composers is that we lose most of our composers before they turn eight.”³ Playing with sounds, exploring them, spontaneous composing of little pieces and songs is an everyday part of each preschool child, just as any other activity. However, this natural interest later can only be developed provided there are suitable conditions provisioned at school.

The term classroom composing (in the Czech language sometimes also known as “elementary composition”)⁴ is usually understood as creating simple musical structures through simple musical elements and the principles of composition. The very definition of composition expanded greatly from the second half of the 20th century under the influence of

³ KENNEY, S. Every Child a Composer. *General Music Today*, Winter 2007, p. 31.

⁴ The terms classroom composing can be found in literature for the first time probably in 1960, in an article called Elementary Composition Project by an American author Janice S. Smith (SMITH, J. S. Elementary Composition Project. *Music Educators Journal*, 1960, Issue no. 2, p. 85). In English literature, the most frequently used terms are classroom composing or more general (creative) compositional activities. The British music teacher John Paynter talks about making up music or positioning things together (PAYNTER, J. Making Progress with Composing. *British Journal of Music Education*, 2000, Issue no. 1, p. 8). In German texts, the most frequently used terms are Musikmachen, musikalische Gestaltungsarbeit (making music, musical artwork) (Ortwin Nimczik), or possibly schöpferisches Musizieren (creative music-making) (R. Murray Schafer) or even simple Musik erfinden or komponieren (invent music or compose) (Hans Schneider).

John Cage and other authors to all operations with musical material. Cage simply describes music as “organization of sound”⁵ and defines the process of composition as follows: “Structure in music is its divisibility into successive parts from phrase to long sections. Form is content, the continuity. Method is the means of controlling the continuity from note to note. The material of music is sound and silence. Integrating these is composing.”⁶ Therefore, composing is a process of organising sound and silence in the broadest possible concept.

Classroom composing can be put in direct contrast to receptive activities in Music Education and analyses of various pieces, as it often provides children with a unique opportunity for their own creative expression, and thereby to gaining valuable and lasting musical experiences. As Keith Swanwick also points out – “Curiosity is not aroused by dictating notes on the lives of musicians or on social history, or by always telling pupils what to listen for, or by treating a performing group as if it were a kind of machine. There should be some scope for choice, for decision-making, for personal exploration.”⁷ He feels that it is essential to pique children’s curiosity, their desire for discovering the unknown, and at the same time give them space for making their own decisions and their own responsibility. And experimental music is a good tool for inspiring creativity and productivity in children. A pupil who wants to create no longer needs to learn a heap of burdensome rules first. All of a sudden, he/she has a great amount of musical material that can inspire him/her to his/her own artistic activity.

Behind the first projects, focused on classroom composing and utilising the new findings from experimental music, was the effort to promote contemporary music in Music Education. Thus, actually not composing itself but learning about contemporary music was the main aim of the first project in the United States, Canada and Great Britain from the 1960’s. The first American projects – especially the *Contemporary Music Project*⁸, which took place under the leadership of Norman Dello Joio between 1959 and 1973 (before 1963 under the name *Young Composers Project*) – were followed with greater or lesser success by the musically progressive

⁵ CAGE, J. *Silence. Lectures and Writings*. Middletown 1979, p. 3.

⁶ CAGE, J. *Silence. Lectures and Writings*. Middletown 1979, p. 62.

⁷ SWANWICK, K. *Teaching Music Musically*. London 1999, p. 54.

⁸ The Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music Education. Music Educators National Conference. *Music Educators Journal*, March 1968, p. 41–72.

European states over the next thirty years, lead by Great Britain, Germany and Austria (whose efforts on smaller scale also resonated in our country).

As it is in Great Britain, where from the mid 1960's, we at various types of schools see projects focused on creative approach in Music Education, coordinated by the University of York. Projects were based on the work of two leading representatives of the so-called progressive ideology⁹, the music teachers John Paynter and Peter Aston. They linked the impulses of experimental music with music pedagogy and summarized their findings in the book *Sound and Silence. Classroom projects in creative music* (1970).

The general objective of their *Creative Music Project* was again to make contemporary music accessible to children. Unlike in the American project, emphasis shifted from learning about music and instructing to one's own creative work and experience: *"We believe that young people deserve a truly liberal education, alive with the excitement of discovery. This excitement is a first step: the details, disciplines and skills will follow. Without a sense of adventure true education is impossible."*¹⁰ It was no longer the existing piece that was the centre of attention, but the child as a unique creative personality. The primary aim was children's creative work with inexhaustible number of sounds, which contemporary music provides. Experimenting with them, remembering them and subsequently interpreting one's own pieces (i.e. a procedure as: basic musical material – structure – interpretation). In other words *"...composition seized to be a mere tool for learning about the already existing music, and became the resource, the aim and also the equivalent topic in music education"*.¹¹

Apart from these projects, there were already a number of authors in the 1960's who created their own concept of creative music education in relation to contemporary music. These include mainly the British music educationists and composers George Self and Brian Dennis, the Canadian composer and environmentalist R. Murray Schafer, and in Germany Gertrud Meyer-Denkman.

⁹ Term by a British theoretician Martina Skilbeck.

¹⁰ PAYNTER, J. – ASTON, P. *Sound and Silence. Classroom Projects in Creative Music*. Cambridge 1970, p. 3.

¹¹ ZOUHAR, V. Komponování ve třídách. Poznámky k prvním americkým a britským projektům (Classroom Composing. Notes to the initial American and British projects). In *Inovace v hudební pedagogice a výchově (Innovation in Music Pedagogy and Education)*. In honour of Lee Kestenberga, *Miscellanea from International Musicology Conference, held from 29.11. to 01.12.2007 at the Art Centre of Palacky University in Olomouc*. Olomouc 2008, p. 188.

During the second half of the 20th century, the Czech Music Education system and pedagogy were severely influenced by the totalitarian regime in the country, which for many years isolated it from the current events in western countries. At the same time, the strong tradition of Herbart's concept of school persisted (and we should add that it still persists!), which considerably limits the room for pupil's own creative activity.

*"I believe that even in our country, it should be the initiative of the faculties of education to strive and create very close contacts with young composers, and involve them in the issues of music education, although it is undisputable that even composers themselves must be fully aware of their responsibility and their share towards music development of youth. It is after all in their own interest to capture as many dedicated young listeners for their work as possible."*¹² These were the words that Libor Melkus said in response to statements that he heard at the 1964 ISME conference in Budapest (amongst which was also the contribution of *Contemporary Music Project* initiator, Norman Dello Joio *New music and creative music education*¹³) – a truly visionary idea in the Czech environment, which has not been fulfilled for almost the ensuing forty years.

In our country, the then Czechoslovakia, the first attempts at including creative activities in general into the music education curriculum started to appear during the second half of the 1960's. Creative activities were to complement the two main components of music education, which is singing and listening. However, there was no room for these activities to deviate from the traditional concept of music education. Creativity was still limited to mere reproduction and mechanical imitation of predefined schemes, which were based on the western major-minor and the local folk traditions. Moreover, these attempts for changing the concept of music education came against considerable resistance and objections of both academic educationists, as well as the teachers themselves. They believed that *"...musically creative manifestations are only the privilege of those who are musically gifted and therefore, musical improvisation cannot be a generally valid component of basic music education. Forcing all children*

¹² MELKUS, L. Problematika hudební výchovy na všeobecně vzdělávacích školách a příprava hudebních pedagogů. (The Issue of Music Education at General Education Schools and Training of Music Teachers, In HOLZKNECHT, V. – POŠ, V. (ed.) *Člověk potřebuje hudbu (Man Needs Music)*. Prague 1969, pp. 75–76.

¹³ POLEDŇÁK, I. – POŠ, V. (ed.) *Konfrontace (Confrontations)*. Prague – Bratislava 1968, p. 20.

to improvise is apparently a mistake, as more than half of them have no prerequisites for such activity, and nor are they interested in it."¹⁴ There is rejection and condemnation of experimental music at the same time. As a result, a dominant feature of the main stream music education for a long time remains to be "...music, which has already been created and musical territory, which was traditionally handed down"¹⁵. The requirements of Libor Melkus could not be put into practice.

It is only today, with the entry of new Framework Educational Programmes, that the set stereotypes are being broken but it is only happening very slowly. So, what is the concept of creativity in music education in the newly established FEP for primary education? music education (together with Art Education) forms part of the educational area of Art and Culture here, which aims for transmitting the so-called artistic acquirement of the world (acquirement with an aesthetic effect) to the pupils. This is done through activities (vocal, instrumental, musically-motoric and listening) at the level of production, reception and reflection. And, although music education with such concept should also lead to learning through one's own production, the creative vocal and instrumental activities only remain at the level of controlled improvisation (rhythmisation, melodisation, music games: the echo, question – answer, creating preludes, interludes, postludes, etc.). And, although musical pedagogy abroad has been dealing with classroom composing for almost half a century, the FEP for primary education does not mention this issue at all. Nevertheless, nothing is stopping teachers from making the effort to introduce new creative methods as part of creating School Educational Programmes.

In 2001, a project called *Different Hearing* (*Anders Hören*)¹⁶, which strives to develop the principles of classroom composing in the conditions of the educational system in the Czech Republic, was established at the Olomouc Department of Music Education. The project with its methodological resources builds on the British-German programme *Response* and especially the Austrian *Klangnetze*. The initiator and the mastermind behind it is Vít Zouhar (born 1966), a renowned composer, musicologist and educationist,

¹⁴ SEDLÁK, F. et al. *Nové cesty hudební výchovy na základní škole* (*New Paths to Music Education in Primary School*). Prague 1983, p. 218.

¹⁵ ZOUHAR, V. Slyšet jinak: každý může být skladatelem (*Different Hearing: Everyone Can Be a Composer*). *His Voice*, 2005, Issue no. 3, p. 10.

¹⁶ See also www.slysetjinak.upol.cz

who gradually formed his own stable organizational team.¹⁷ Experienced Austrian lecturers, headed by Professor Josef "Seppo" Gründler, Cordula Bösze and Professor Hans Schneider participated in the development of the Czech project until 2005. Close cooperation was also developed with the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, especially with Professor Ivo Medek and Markéta Dvořáková.

When wording the general starting points, aims and requirements in relation to music education and creativity development, the project authors were also inspired by the ideas of John Paynter, R. Murray Schafer and other pioneers of classroom composing. That is also why one of the main intentions of the *Different Hearing* project is "...making music education an exciting, creative and playful discipline, which is rich in experience, just like for example Art Education can often be."¹⁸ For "...knowledge is not something to be mechanically communicated and accepted at school, it is something created through active process whereby a teacher plays the role of a guide, not a scholar. Knowledge and understanding is thus established through a multiple interactive process between pupils and their teacher; however, not in a single direction only."¹⁹ The project aims to break down the stereotypical concept of music education lessons, which has not altered much during the past fifty years, and does not provide pupils with sufficient room for their own creative acts. "*The Different Hearing project originated from efforts to transform music education into a field, where the role of creativity is just as important as reproduction, creating music as it is playing, where the significance of creativity exceeds the limits of musical pragmatism, and music and musical appreciation are not only seen as practicing and preserving the European musical multicode but where everyone has the opportunity of developing their talents and skills regardless of their musical and sociocultural experience thus far.*"²⁰ At the forefront of the *Different Hearing* project is

¹⁷ Members of the team are also other members of the Olomouc Department – Jaromír Synek, educationist, choir-master and maker of nontraditional musical instruments, and Gabriela Coufalová, a flutist and educationist.

¹⁸ FLAŠAR, M. Postmoderno vysvětlované (nejen) dětem (*The Postmodern explained (not only) to Children*). An interview with a composer and musicologist Vít Zouhar. *Opus Musicum*, 2005, Issue no. 4, p. 34.

¹⁹ ZOUHAR, V. Hudební výchova bez bariér? (*Music Education without Barriers?*) To projects Klangnetze and Different Hearing. In *Miscellanea of the Faculty of Education, University of Prešov*. Prešov 2004, p. 75.

²⁰ ZOUHAR, V. Slyšet jinak. Každý může být skladatelem (*Different Hearing: Everyone Can Be a Composer*), *His Voice*, 2005, Issue no. 3, p. 10.

concentrated work with musical material and thereby related development of children's perception and experience of their own composition. We are also working with elements and resources of contemporary music, although, as Vít Zouhar adds, "...aesthetics of experimental music are one of many in the programme..."²¹

The general objective of creative efforts within classroom composing is "...knowing music, rather than knowing about music."²² This is understanding music, not only mere gaining knowledge about music. In case of (elementary) composition, we must differentiate two basic elements – the actual (creative) process of composition and the final product of this process (i.e. the composition). In principle, both of these components exist in mutual symbiosis, i.e. the process leads to a product. But while for example in the commercial world, a product has a privileged position, in the field of musical teaching it is the creative process that is key. During the course of this process, a child is given the option of expressing his/her own ideas and feelings through music, and to make his/her own decisions, which result in specific sounds and their arrangement. And it is through this process that a child learns and develops his/her personality. Keith Swanwick draws attention to the fundamental fact that unlike with mere reproduction "...composing (inventing) offers the greatest scope for choosing not only *how* but *what* to play or sing and in which temporal order."²³ And according to him, this creative freedom is one of the reasons for composing to be perceived as a teaching necessity, and not just an occasional activity "as and when time permits".

In relation to classroom composing, we must also emphasize the importance of active perception and its development. In a broader sense, the aim of classroom composing is to "...open children's ears and educate the feelings."²⁴ In other words, teach children how to perceive their surrounding

²¹ ZOUHAR, V. *Projekty Response, Klangnetze a Slyšet jinak ve výuce hudební výchovy. Komponování jako výuková metoda (Projects Response, Klangnetze and Different Hearing in teaching Music Education)*. Habilitation lecture, which took place on 27.06.2005 at the Faculty of Education OU in Ostrava, manuscript 2005, p. 3.

²² BUNTING, T. The Place of Composing in the Music Curriculum. In SPURCE, G. (ed.) *Teaching Music in Secondary Schools*. London 2002, p. 166.

²³ SWANWICK, K. *Teaching Music Musically*. London 1999, p. 55.

²⁴ PAYNTER, J. *Hear and Now. An Introduction to Modern Music in Schools*. London 1972, p. 96.

sounds, as well as sounds that are absolutely new and non-traditional, with more attention. Play with them, transform them and experiment. Introduce them to new experiences. In the current world, where perceptions of visual character are of prevalence, active hearing perception is very important. It allows children to be more sensitive towards their surroundings, and possibly even take a critical stance on the ubiquitous musical smog.

Classroom composing can also be perceived as a way of teaching through problem-solving. This includes initial definition of a problem, testing the possible hypotheses, wording an original solution and publication of the results. Solving a defined problem is an important part of a learning process. A method of solving problematic situations thus directly influences the way children approach composition. Kaschub and Smith even call the composition process a "research project", which leads "...to the generation of new knowledge."²⁵

Creative procedures, which are used during classroom composing, are often identical to the procedures of contemporary composers. Thereby "...it is not difficult to demonstrate the relationship between the classroom pieces and the work of our contemporary professional composers."²⁶ This "insight from the inside" in consequence leads to better understanding of the 20th and 21st century's music, as well as to effective motivation – look at me, I can compose just like that real composer!

The main advantage of classroom composing in relation to education can be considered the fact how "barrier-free" it is, i.e. the possibility to actively involve all children regardless of their previous musical experience and skills. In other words, even a pupil, who under normal circumstances would be described as marginally gifted musically, is given an opportunity for his/her own creative expression. Such non-selective approach allows giving equal position to all children in a class – even children with special needs, or with physical or mental impairment.

The barrier-free concept is possible because the process of creation works with simple means – voice, one's own body, and traditional and non-traditional instruments. After 1945, the contents of the term music expanded to everything that makes sound. Therefore, even things that are primarily not musical instruments can be considered in this category.

²⁵ KASCHUB, M. – SMITH, J. *Minds on Music. Composition for Creative and Critical Thinking*. Lanham 2009, p. 10.

²⁶ PAYNTER, J. *Hear and Now. An Introduction to Modern Music in Schools*. London 1972, p. 96.

Various materials, whether natural or synthetic, such as stones, leaves, wood, sand, water, glass, sheet metal, paper, plastic, rubber, cork, etc., can be used to create compositions. Even items of everyday use (also called *ready-mades*) provide a wide variety of sounds – tables, chairs, lamps, keys, plastic bottles, pencils, parts of clothing, plant pots, notebooks, water taps, doors, walls, etc., – and the list could continue. Another category is the so called non-instrument instruments, i.e. musical instruments that are newly made and original. Children can make these themselves, often with minimum cost and effort. In this case, ingenuity has no limits. Using traditional instruments is of no hindrance, but they should preferably be played in a non-traditional manner and thereby their sound qualities that were hidden so far can be discovered (playing piano strings, blowing into the holes of a recorder and so on). Last but not the least, we should not omit the possibility of involving Orff instrumentarium (accompanied by percussions of all kinds) or ethnic instruments from various parts of the world. The result of using all these sources of sound is that “...the element of I know how – I do not know how is completely gone, and is replaced by a primarily creative ‘I will try’”²⁷ In this context, I fully agree with the opinion of Roy Cooper that children must be given full support in perceiving sound as a source of discovery, surprise, but most of all fun.

The most appropriate form of composition work appears to be activity in small groups, mostly containing 5 to 10 children, exceptionally up to 15. Collective work helps in mutual interaction between children, and thereby encourages creating new musical thoughts and ideas. Children are given the chance to react to one another and critically evaluate others as well as themselves. At the same time, composing in a group also gets rid off self-consciousness and inhibitions, and helps to acquire a healthy level of self-esteem. However, composing can also be done individually or within the whole class.

The most appropriate form of recording the resulting pieces from the perspective of elementary classroom composing appears to be graphic (also

²⁷ MEDEK, I. Několik poznámek k hudební kreativě (A Few Notes to Musical Creativity). In ZOUHAR, V. – MEDEK, I. – SYNEK, J. (ed.) *Different Hearing '03. Tvořivost a improvizace v hudební výchově na zvláštních školách* (Creativity and Improvisation in Music Education at Special Schools), *Miscellanea from the seminar focused on developing creativity in musical activities, held from 18. to 20. 11. 2003 at the Department of Music Education, Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc*. Brno 2004, p. 25.

known as invented) notations (or *idiosyncratic symbols*²⁸, in German as *graphische Notation* (graphic notation) or *musikalische Graphik* (musical graphic art)), which can be mastered without any previous theoretical preparation by all children without exception and regardless of age. They can be defined as the manner of recording musical ideas and images, using various symbols and pictures, letters, words or text passages, numbers, colour, but also empty space, etc. Traditional notation can also be used, although it should be done independently, out of the context of traditional notation (more like abstract symbols). Graphic recording does not necessarily have to be of linear (left to right) arrangement; it can acquire various forms and shapes.

The element of improvisation also plays a vital role in elementary creative efforts. It is a tool for creating a composition (which is constantly present throughout the entire process of its origination), enables for sounds to be discovered and “touched”, and thereby at the same time opens the realm of new experience. In classroom composing, the elements of improvisation are constantly present even in the final form of the piece. As stated by Markéta Dvořáková, “...in composition itself, there can be some more or less improvised units, but the skeleton of it is precisely defined. This means that the resulting piece can truly be considered a musical composition, although some of its fragments can differ from performance to performance. The main character of it, the course and the form, are fixed, unchangeable and recorded in a score.”²⁹ Initial improvising and testing various sound possibilities can often smoothly transform into a final piece. The precise definition of a border between these two activities is very difficult especially in smaller children.

The personality of a teacher plays a key role in the process of classroom composing. It is he/she who provides children with an opportunity, inspiration, support, guidance as well as feedback throughout the entire process. However, unlike in the traditional concept of teaching, he/she does not adopt the superior position of a mentor, but more of a partner and a guide through the learning process. A teacher is no longer the only

²⁸ BARRETT, M. Invented Notations: A View of Young Children's Musical Thinking. *Research Studies in Music Education*, Issue no. 8, July 1997, p. 2.

²⁹ DVOŘÁKOVÁ, M. Kompoziční aspekty projektu Slyšet jinak (Compositional Aspects of Different Hearing Project). In *Hudební improvizace* (Musical Improvisation), *Miscellanea from the national conference, 1–2 November 2005*. Prague 2005, p. 7.

source of knowledge; he/she is more an intermediary and a co-creator. A teacher becomes the main person to inspire and coordinate, he/she supports children in experimenting with sounds and provides them with new stimuli, and he/she gives advice, monitors and actively intervenes in the process if required. He/she steers and regulates the entire creative process, preferably through appropriate questions and comments. His/her instructions must always be precise and understandable. Teaching composition makes a teacher face new problems that otherwise he/she would not encounter in traditional form of teaching. And it is for this reason that he/she must exhibit certain degree of didactical flexibility and should not fear experimenting new methods of work (and thereby with the related some degree of uncertainty). A teacher must always be prepared to deal with unexpected and unforeseen situations that require flexible thinking, independence, ability to communicate, patience, being open to the new and yet unknown, and also show enthusiasm to learn throughout his/her professional career. With regard to appropriate determination of the compositional tasks and targets, he/she should know his pupils and know what to expect from them. He/she should also not lack the courage to possibly engage in the creative process. It is apparent from the above that composing requires for a teacher to have many different abilities and skills, resulting from the complexity of such creative work.

In the composing process, evaluation is ever-present in the form of questions and comments, and its primary goal is to encourage interest and enjoyment in listening and creating music. It can be seen as a certain type of communication and interaction between a teacher and his/her pupils.

It is beyond any doubt that the inclusion of composing in music education lessons brings many positive points. As it was already mentioned, it is easier to introduce children to contemporary music through this process; they can then grasp the creative processes that makes it much easier for them to accept (this hypothesis was verified through a study by Archibeque³⁰ or Václav Drábek³¹). Children then perceive contemporary music in a much better light. In this respect, an interesting fact is stated by Swanwick: "For example, in discussion with Steve Reich following the rehearsal of his *City Life*, the composer was asked how much he was paid to

³⁰ ARCHIBEQUE, Ch. P. Developing a Taste for Contemporary Music. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 1966, Issue no. 2, p. 142–147.

³¹ DRÁBEK, V. Tvořivost a integrace v receptivní hudební výchově (Creativity and Integration in Receptive Music Education). *Studia Paedagogica* 23, Prague 1998.

produce the piece. His answer left the students in no doubt that composers were real people and that composing could really be a lucrative activity, though one involving some hard work. It itself was a revelation."³²

However, classroom composing also provides plenty of room for developing other music as well as non-music abilities and skills. Working in a group always requires certain degree of cooperation and communication. Children are made aware of the responsibility for their own work as well as for the work of a group as a whole. Composing activates and increases motivation (towards completion of a given task and its successful implementation), but also towards other musical activities. Michele Kaschub also realizes the importance of motivation when she states that "...perhaps there is no more powerful motivational tool to offer students than the opportunity to create music that is uniquely their own."³³ Work with composing forces pupils to seek constructive and practical solutions to various problems and thereby, develops critical thinking. It requires promptness and perseverance, but also self-confidence, self-criticism, tolerance and respect for others. It provides new experience and feelings (e.g. happiness from one's own success), which aids in developing personality as a whole. Strengthening social ties within a team is no less important, classmates have the opportunity to know one another better and unite. All such lessons learned then provide positive reflection within other subjects.

Children simply enjoy creative work with sounds (and with other classmates in a group). This is illustrated by the words of one German pupil. „Ich habe bei mir selbst und auch bei meinen Klassenkameraden bemerkt, dass uns ein Schultag, an dem wir Musik hatten, irgendwie mehr Spaß gemacht hat als andere Schultage.“³⁴ (I noticed that my classmates and I enjoyed more the school days with music lessons than any of the other school days). To the children, music suddenly becomes something they can create themselves and therefore, they develop a certain affinity for it. And if this affinity for music is created this way, it is much stronger and more lasting than one built on mere theoretical knowledge of music. Kaschub

³² SWANWICK, K. *Teaching Music Musically*. London 1999, p. 98.

³³ KASCHUB, M. Exercising the Musical Imagination. *Music Educators Journal*, November 1997, p. 26.

³⁴ HARTMANN, W. „...dürfen wir heute wieder was erfinden?“. *Musik und Bildung*, Dezember 1984, p. 803.) „...Can We again Invent Anything Today?“ *Music and Education*, December 1984).

and Smith do not only apply this concept to music, but to the entire children's world. "*The act of composing challenges children to consider their understanding of the world in new ways*"³⁵ According to them, composing supports a changed perspective on the world around us (in the sense of a more sensitive perception), but also a change in the perspective on oneself. "*The act of composing is a process that allows the child to grow, discover, and create him- or herself through artistic and meaningful engagement with sounds*".³⁶

Naturally, classroom composing is not aimed at training professional composers, but rather people who can appreciate the artistic work of others, people with their own opinion and taste, who are not mere passive consumers of music. Classroom composing opens up new and unexpected horizons and at the same time, also enables for disadvantaged children to take active part. Therefore, let us not be afraid to compose with children. It takes us one step closer to educating a self-confident person and a tolerant listener.

Minimal Music

Movement in music, which is now called minimalism³⁷, began to surface around 1960 in the United States. It developed in close conjunction with other artistic fields, especially with visual arts, but similar features can also be found in literature, film and dance. And it was from the area of art (*minimal art*) where the actual name for this movement came (the term minimalism was already used here in 1929 to identify work by John

³⁵ KASCHUB, M. – SMITH, J. *Minds on Music. Composition for Creative and Critical Thinking*. Lanham 2009, p. 5.

³⁶ KASCHUB, M. – SMITH, J. *Minds on Music. Composition for Creative and Critical Thinking*. Lanham 2009, p. 7.

³⁷ Apart from the most frequently used terms of minimal music and minimalism, literature also uses a whole range of other terms (synonyms), such as repetitive music, systemic music, pulse music, pattern music, trance music, process music, modular music, hypnotic music or meditative music. However, each one of these terms only describes one of the many characters of minimalism, and they are therefore difficult to use on a general level.

Graham³⁸). However, composers from the minimal music circle were mostly impacted by the artistic movement *Fluxus*³⁹.

"*After the war, minimalism can be perceived as a first trend, which is not seeking new sounds but restores the contents of traditional resources, which in Europe are even considered profane.*"⁴⁰ It represents postmodern reaction to serial models of modernism, represented by Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen or Milton Babbitt. Young composers strive to define against them, and they therefore seek their own artistic ways. They even criticised serialism and considered it to be a musical and cultural error, and a negative model. Philip Glass even spoke "*...of a wasteland, dominated by these maniacs, these creeps, who were trying to make everyone write this crazy creepy music.*"⁴¹ Minimalism also stands against Cage's indeterminism and aleatorics (although it originated from a circle of composers around Cage), and it is well-thought out composition and determinism, which are laid on the other side of imaginary scales. The element of chance is very strongly restricted (although not completely eliminated). Even Cage himself takes a critical reserved attitude towards minimal music. Although as remarked by Keith Potter, "*...all four composers share with Cage and other experimentalists the belief that their music should somehow go beyond what their own imaginations were inherently capable of inventing,*"⁴² Wim Mertens considers repetitive music to be the final stage "*...of anti-dialectic movement that has shaped European avant-garde music since Schönberg,*

³⁸ LINKE, U. *Minimal Music. Dimensionen eines Begriffs*. Essen 1997, p. 44.

³⁹ *Fluxus* movement, as an international network of artists, especially influenced the art scene during the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's. It built on the legacy of Dada and the work of Marcel Duchamp, and sought brand new forms of art. The philosophy of this movement was the close relation between art and everyday life and their mutual connection. It stood in opposition to the traditional "high art". It valued simplicity against complexity, anti-commercialism, happenings and performances, multimedia projects, irony and humour. The Fluxus movement includes personalities such as George Maciunas, George Brecht, Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys, Yoko Ono, but also John Cage, and from Czech artists, Milan Knížák was close to the movement at the given time.

⁴⁰ KOFROŇ, P. *Tón ne! Čítanka pro ty, kdo pochybují o smyslu nové hudby (No Tone! A reader for those who doubt the purpose of new music)*. Brno 1998, p. 46.

⁴¹ POTTER, K. *Four Musical Minimalists*. La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass. Cambridge 2000, p. 10.

⁴² POTTER, K. *Four Musical Minimalists*. La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass. Cambridge 2000, p. 6.

a movement that reached its culmination with John Cage".⁴³ Minimalism can therefore also be seen as smooth continuation of music development in concurrence to the previous tendencies. "No matter how consistently composers of repetitive music have spoken out against the intellectualism of the avant-garde (which for Reich, includes Webern and Cage), they cannot escape its influence".⁴⁴ So, the new stems from the old and it defines itself against it. And as Michael Nyman adds "...the origins of this minimal process music lie in serialism".⁴⁵ So, there is developmental continuity between minimalism and the previous musical trends (avant-garde), although it is radically denied soon.

Four American composers are considered to be the main representatives of minimal music – La Monte Young (1935), Terry Riley (1936), Steve Reich (1936) and Philip Glass (1937). These authors themselves take a reserved approach (apart from Young) to the qualification of their music and consider it rather simplistic. The work of these four leading minimalists was eventually followed by many other authors in America and in Europe, who to a greater or lesser degree took over the minimalistic principles and adapted them to their own artistic needs. They can be considered as the second generation of minimalists, post-minimalists or recipients of minimalisms (although all of these terms are just orientational). They are John Adams, Charlemagne Palestine, Michael Nyman, Gavin Bryars, Howard Skempton, Louis Andriessen, Peter Michael Hammel, Zoltán Jeney or Arvo Pärt, who gets close to minimalism with his subtle style called *tintinnabuli*.

So what are the main features and characteristic procedures for composing minimal music? The most significant feature can be considered extreme reduction of one or more parameters of a piece (initial tonal material, rhythm, timbre of sound, etc.). Such reduction to basic elements of music (sound, tone) is an intellectual return to Anton Webern (however, in a somewhat different manner). Even Michael Nyman offers comparison to this author: "In Webern one perceives sameness out of (apparent) variety; while in Young's, Glass's, or Reich's music one perceives variety out of (apparent) sameness."⁴⁶

⁴³ MERTENS, W. *American Minimal Music*. London 1983, p. 87.

⁴⁴ MERTENS, W. *American Minimal Music*. London 1983, p. 87.

⁴⁵ NYMAN, M. *Experimental Music. Cage and Beyond*. Cambridge 1974, p. 119.

⁴⁶ BERNARD, J. W. The Minimalist Aesthetic in the Plastic Arts and in Music. *Perspectives of New Music*, Winter 1993, p. 113.

Another fundamental feature of minimalism is the excessive use of repetitions and ostinato (with the exception of La Monte Young, for whom continuity of sound is typical). Naturally, this is not the first case of maximum use of repetitions in music (we can remember for example *Vexations* by Erik Satie or Ravel's *Bolero*), but it is the first time it became a truly significant style-forming element, which is almost permanently present in the work of several authors. Repetitions can be understood as a means of maximum control – determinism. At the same time, it is absolutely elemental and a simple composing process, the use of which brings some very interesting results when it comes to sound (even in connection with the creation of psychoacoustic effect).

Working with the so-called patterns is also characteristic. Patterns in this sense stand for small (rhythmical or melodic) motivic cells or formulas, which form the foundation for composing and applied procedures (repetitions, gradual transformations, variations). This procedure was used and developed by Terry Riley in his piece *In C*.

When it comes to compositional principles, the so-called phase shifting (*Phasenverschiebung*), the creator of which is considered to be Steve Reich, plays an important role. Phase shifting can be gradual or sudden. Gradual phase shifting is created by overlapping of two identical voices, while the primo flows in a different tempo than the other. A sudden shift is achieved by making one voice shorter or longer for a specific rhythmic value. In both cases, this results in continuous mutual shifting of both voices, which, after a certain time, return to their common initial state.

Frequent compositional techniques are also addition, subtraction and substitution, i.e. gradual adding or subtracting of tones, or substituting rests with tones and vice versa. These procedures are typical for the work of Steve Reich and Philip Glass, another beautiful example is also a piece by Frederic Rzewski *Les Moutons de Panurge* (1969).

La Monte Young specialises in experimenting with drones and their impact on listener's perception.

Minimalism is also characterised by the absence of functional harmony (tonal centre, cadence) and influences of non-European music and jazz.

Different work with time, which plays a significant if not fundamental role (as means of presentation), is typical for minimalism. Minimal music lacks dramatic structure and contrasts. It has no peak, no development in the traditional dialectic sense, and it does not even have to have a clear beginning and an end (the pieces often end quite abruptly and

unexpectedly). Despite all this, one could hardly call it static. Music only exists as a sound event here and now. Its existence can be considered as not entirely objective; free from all subjective influences of a listener. Music exists on its own – “an sich”. In this context, Petr Kofroň characterizes minimalism as *permanent presence*, music, which has no horizontal time dimension.⁴⁷

This is also related to a different way of listening to minimal music – even in relation to originating psychoacoustic effect (Reich calls them *resulting patterns*). Perception is strongly individualised here and it presents an integral creative part of every work (process). Thus, a listener himself participates in the construction of a piece, which for that reason can acquire an endless number of variants.

Some features of minimal music are very close to popular music, especially rock, techno, house music and ambient, for which the element of repetition and continuous pulsation is typical. Composers lead their own ensembles for which they write music (Young – *The Theatre of Eternal Music*, Glass – *The Philip Glass Ensemble*, Reich – *Steve Reich and Musicians*, Nyman – *Michael Nyman Band*), and they are therefore the authors and interpreters in one person. They show affection for world music, jazz and electronic music. Philip Glass and Michael Nyman became renowned authors of film music. On the other hand, minimalism influenced many artists from the pop scene, especially Brian Eno and David Bowie.

The above mentioned compositional principles and position of minimalism at the intersection of classical and popular music forms a prerequisite for its possible use in various creative activities, which are part of music education at schools, especially classroom composing. Individual techniques are primarily simple, therefore, easy to understand, and in a simplified version also easy to imitate, and they can be applied to simple rhythmic or melodic models.

Minimalism goes beyond the boundaries of artistic disciplines (visual arts, film, and literature) and thereby offers room for other activities in this direction. Many of its characteristic features are known to children and they feel close to them – regular rhythm, fast tempo, tonality and consonance. On the other hand, static harmony, continuous repetitions, processuality, psychoacoustic effect or working with time – is what is new to them.

⁴⁷ KOFROŇ, P. *Tón ne! Čítanka pro ty, kdo pochybuješ o smyslu nové hudby (No Tone! A reader for those who doubt the purpose of new music)*. Brno 1998, p. 50.

Composition Projects Based on the Principles of Minimal Music

Projects that work with compositional principles of minimal music are of very diverse characters – some are very brief, some are extensive (stipulated for more long-term work), some work with written or spoken text and some utilise computers and recording equipment. They contain various degrees of productive, reproductive and improvisational activities.

Projects can be divided into two groups, according to topics – institutes of general education and music institutes. The first group includes projects, primary stipulated for use within music education (at various levels and types of schools), the authors of which are composers, music educationists and active teachers. The second group includes projects, the establishment of which was initiated and guided by significant music institutes (orchestras and opera houses) as part of their animation programmes. These projects always strive to introduce a specific reference piece, their character is more complex and they count on pedagogical support of professional musicians and animators.

Petr Kofroň regards minimalism to be a universal creative principle. “The principle of minimalism is actually very simple and easy to imitate: it is a repetitive technique. Minimalism thereby became (next to dodecaphony and indeterminism) a candidate for a universal music principle that everybody could create with.”⁴⁸ A question, as to what extent are such positive prerequisites transferable to actual use, can be answered on the example of several specific selected projects and exercises (from the first group).

Diana Blom (born 1947) is a composer, a pianist and a cembalist, originally from New Zealand, but currently living in Australia where she works at the University of Western Sydney. As groundwork for research for her dissertation thesis (focused on approaches and strategies of teachers to composing in relation to minimal music for children of various ages), she created a set of compositional exercises, called *The Pulse Music Album*⁴⁹. This album is divided into eight thematic chapters. Six of them

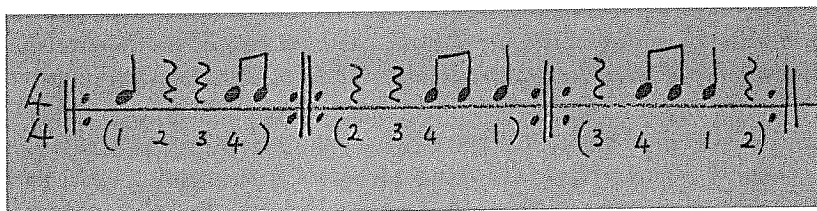
⁴⁸ KOFROŇ, P. *Tón ne! Čítanka pro ty, kdo pochybuješ o smyslu nové hudby (No Tone! A reader for those who doubt the purpose of new music)*. Brno 1998, p. 51.

⁴⁹ BLOM, D. *Minimal Music: Roles and Approaches of Teachers Engaging Students with a Contemporary Art Music through Composing Activities*. Dissertation thesis, Sydney 2001. Appendix for Chapter Five, 5B, p. 16-36. Available online at <http://adt.caul.edu.au>.

are focused on the most significant minimalist compositional procedures, such as phase shifting, additive and subtractive rhythmic constructions, isorhythmic model overlapping, patterns established by repeating chords, work with patterns according to Riley's *In C* and canons. The last two sections are devoted to African rhythms (in relation to music of Ewe tribe in Ghana, which influenced Steve Reich's work) and gamelan (in this case Malaysian, the structure of which, according to the author, is much simpler than Balinese or Indonesian gamelan). The exercises are for example as follows:

Phase Shifting (Reich)⁵⁰

The first compositional principle, which the album offers to be processed, is phase shifting. The basis of this is a rhythmic pattern, here in quadruple time. First, a basic link is made out of it through multiple repetitions. The second layer is then derived (with the application of phase shifting), the principle being that in each following measure (which is always repeated several times), the first note shifts to the end of the measure. This process is repeated until the initial rhythmic model is reached. "The second measure is constructed by placing the first note at the end of the measure and moving beats 2, 3 and 4 along one place to the left. Continue this process with the following measures until the original measure is re-established."

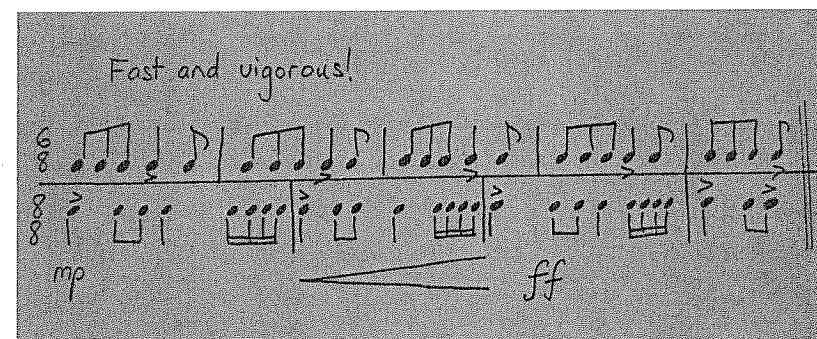


Phase Shifting – secondo with applied phase shifting.

⁵⁰ BLOM, D. *Minimal Music: Roles and Approaches of Teachers Engaging Students with a Contemporary Art Music through Composing Activities*. Dissertation thesis, Sydney 2001. Appendix for Chapter Five, 5B, s. 18–20. Available online at <http://adt.caul.edu.au>. Use of all illustrations printed herein has been approved by the author.

Phase Shifting Melodies (Glass, Shrapnel)⁵¹

The second exercise also deals with phase shifting, but this time embedded in static harmony and created by two (or more) layers, which are not the same in length. The exercise goes: "Write a phrase of music of 'x' measures length. Write a second phrase of music (within the same harmonic framework if tuned instruments are to be used) with a different number of bars from the first phrase, and play the two phrases together, beginning at the same time and repeating each phrase until the original starting point is reached or until you wish to stop the piece." Naturally, the same principle cannot only be used with melodic but also with rhythmic (if untuned or other percussions are used) voices.



Phase Shifting Melodies – two constantly repeated patterns with a different meter.

Add and Subtract (Glass)⁵²

The next section is devoted to the principles of additive and subtractive rhythms, following up on Philip Glass, using at least two different pitches or series of spread chords. The basis is formed by one short rhythmic or melodic pattern (for example two quarter notes of the same pitch) repeated

⁵¹ BLOM, D. *Minimal Music: Roles and Approaches of Teachers Engaging Students with a Contemporary Art Music through Composing Activities*. Dissertation thesis, Sydney 2001. Appendix for Chapter Five, 5B, p. 20–21. Available online at <http://adt.caul.edu.au>.

⁵² BLOM, D. *Minimal Music: Roles and Approaches of Teachers Engaging Students with a Contemporary Art Music through Composing Activities*. Dissertation thesis, Sydney 2001. Appendix for Chapter Five, 5B, p. 22–24. Available online na <http://adt.caul.edu.au>.

several times. Following this "...establish the pulse unit and add one pulse unit to form a new cell. For the following cells, either add or subtract one pulse unit. Repeat each cell a prearranged number of times. If using untuned percussion, (e.g. drums) use high-medium-low pitches. If using tuned instruments, choose a pattern of related chords which can then be repeated as often as required. [...] All players start and end at the same time." Exercise of this type offer endless solution variants.

Drum Walk.

Instruments: high and low pitched drums.
Repeat each cell six times.

Fast as possible.

High (+) (+) (-) (-)

Low f (1+1) (1+1+1) (1+2+1) (1+1+1) (1+1)

High (+)

Low (1+1) (1+1) (1+1+1)

Add and Subtract – adding and subtracting tones in two basic pitches.

Music Waving (Riley)⁵³

In her project album, the author did not omit to include themes arising from a compositional principle used for the first time by Terry Riley in his famous piece *In C*. Even here, the basis is creating a number of various patterns and their gradual repetition at the player's will.

"A number of one, two or three measure cells are written, each enclosed by repeat signs. [...] Each player enters at will, beginning with cell one, repeating

⁵³ BLOM, D. *Minimal Music: Roles and Approaches of Teachers Engaging Students with a Contemporary Art Music through Composing Activities*. Dissertation thesis, Sydney 2001. Appendix for Chapter Five, 5B, p. 26–28. Available online at <http://adt.caul.edu.au>.

it as often as he/she wishes (or a specified number of times, if preferred) then moving onto the next cell. [...] Continue in this manner, letting one's ear be the guide as to when to move to the next cell. The piece is finished when all players are on the last cell." Individual patterns can be based not only on rhythm, but also on the chords or functional harmony. Even other compositional principles stated herein, such as phase shifting, can be included.

Repeat each measure as often as you like.

pulse: claves – begin first.

As fast as can be played.

1. p 2. mf 3. mf 4. mf 5. f 6. f 7. f 8. f 9. pp

Music Waving – the basic pulse and nine possible patterns.

In the introduction of *The Pulse Music Album*, Diana Blom points out that a teacher should not proceed in the exact sequence from one task to another, but should utilise the whole file as a suggestion for free selection of ideas and activities. Exercises are not to be taken as strictly "ready-made", but only as a basic model for possible modifications and necessary adjustments according to the given requirements. There should also be room for children's own ideas from the fields of music, rhythm and harmony. The entire *Pulse Music Album* is unique in the sense that it includes all basic compositional principles for minimalism, including relations to non-European music. It offers inspiration for children of all age groups and levels of music education – exercises can vary from very simple to complex, from short to more time consuming. It is also very well-arranged and comprehensible with enough specific compositional examples. It is, therefore, delightful that Diana Blom is preparing to publish its extended and slightly revised version.

Ulli Götte (born 1954) is a leading German composer, pianist, musicologist and music educationist, who is inspired by minimal music in his own compositional work. According to his opinion, minimal music is suitable for first introduction to contemporary music, as it has certain qualities, which „...sie als einen günstigen Repräsentanten neuer Musik im Unterricht erscheinen lassen: Sie besitzt Affinitäten zur Jazz- und Rockmusik, sie erwuchs aus der Idee der Nachvollziehbarkeit musikalischer Strukturen, sie macht Elementarisierung und Vereinfachung, wesentliche pädagogische Prinzipien bei der Vermittlung (nicht nur) neuer Musik, unnötig und sie ist praktisch erfahrbar, also 'spielbar'“.⁵⁴ „...allow minimal amount of music to appear as an appropriate representative of new music in teaching: it has affinities to jazz and rock music, it originates from the idea of feasibility of musical structures and it makes unnecessary elementarization and simplification, which are the basic pedagogical principals of (not only) explanation.”

Ulli Götte understands classroom composing to be one of the ways to introduce children to minimal music and its principles. It is, according to him, linked with certain risk, which consists in a seeming simplicity of this musical trend. As „...obwohl kompositorische Grundelemente der Minimal Music, wie Einfachheit, Reduktion etc. unmittelbar ästhetisch konkret werden, ist die Qualität einer minimalistischen Komposition, die ja durchaus komplex sein kann, nicht a priori mit Kriterien der Einfachheit messbar.“⁵⁵ „...although compositional basic elements of minimal music, i.e. simplicity, reduction etc., become concrete immediately in aesthetic sense, the quality of a minimalist composition, which can be quite complex, is not a priori measurable by means of criteria of simplicity.”

Regardless of this he believes that this music is suitable as a starting point for first compositional efforts.

However, the selection of a starting material is important. It should be significantly reduced in order to simplify creative work. „Die Vielfalt des musikalischen Materials wirkt oft erdrückend, hindernd oder gar blockierend. Es scheint daher ratsam, mit sehr reduziertem Material das eigene musikalische Erfinden zu starten.“⁵⁶ “The variety of the musical

⁵⁴ GÖTTE, U. *Minimal Music. Geschichte – Ästhetik – Umfeld* (History – Aesthetics – Environment). Wilhelmshaven 2000, p. 273.

⁵⁵ GÖTTE, U. *Minimal Music. Musikpraxis in der Schule* (Music Practice at School). Kassel 2002, p. 52.

⁵⁶ GÖTTE, U. *Minimal Music. Geschichte – Ästhetik – Umfeld* (History – Aesthetics – Environment). Wilhelmshaven 2000, p. 278.

material has often a suppressive, damping or even blocking effect. Therefore it is reasonable to start one's own musical invention with very reduced material.” To start with, basic rhythmic training is required through simple games and exercises resulting from compositional principles of minimal music (he suggests e.g. *Namensspiel*, *Metrum-Spiel* or *Ostinato-Spiel*⁵⁷).

Unlike his own compositions (which also include simplified versions of Reich's or Riley's pieces), stipulated for direct interpretation by the students, compositional exercises are even suitable for beginners and the less experienced. They focus on the principle of reducing musical material, on the gradual development of a theme (by substituting rests with tones), on “graduality in music” (i.e. realising, perceiving changes of sound in time), and they use the method of phase shifting or canon just like in Riley's *In C*. The assignment is not over extensive, so it can be quoted in full here:

Reduktion:

Bilde eine Melodie mit nur drei Tönen. Führe ganz allmählich einen Ton nach dem anderen ein. Denke immer daran, dass auch Pausen zur Musik gehören. Wie aufmerksam wird ein neuer Ton wahrgenommen, wenn mehrere Takte lang nur ein einzelner Ton erklingen ist? Mögliche Tonvorräte: (c, d, e), (d, f, g), (c, cis, d).

Komponiere Rhythmen mit ausschließlich Viertel- und Achtelnoten. Forme erst eine Stimme, füge später eine zweite Stimme und schließlich noch eine dritte dazu. Verwende auch Pausen! Beachte Instrumentation und Dynamik.

Reduction:

Compose a melody with only three tones. Gradually add tones one by one. Always take into consideration that even breaks belong to music. How carefully is a new tone perceived, when during several times only one tone sounds? Possible tone reserves:

Compose rhythms only with crotchet and quaver notes. First create one voice, then add the second voice and finally the third one. Use breaks also! Be mindful of the instrumentation and dynamics.

⁵⁷ GÖTTE, U. *Minimal Music. Musikpraxis in der Schule*. Kassel 2002, p. 54.

Sukzessiver Modellaufbau:

Erfinde (oder übernimm) eine einfache Melodie. Lass zunächst nur einen Ton der Melodie erklingen – der Rest wird durch Pausen ersetzt. Bringe die Melodie nach dem Prinzip 'Ersetzen der Pausen durch Töne' allmählich zu ihrer Gestalt. Beobachte, wie spät man erst die zu Grunde liegende Melodie erkennt!

Gradual Model Formation:

Invent (or take) a simple melody. First allow the sounding of only one tone of the melody – remaining tones are substituted with breaks. Create the melody according to the principle "substitution of the rests with tones" gradually. Observe when the initial melody is recognized!

Allmählichkeit:

Bilde eine Reihe dreistimmiger Akkorde, von denen sich je zwei benachbarte Akkorde in nur einem Ton unterscheiden. Ihr könnt euch die Aufgabe in Dreiergruppen aufteilen: A betreut die erste, B die zweite und C die dritte Stimme. Wechselt euch gleichmäßig ab (oder lasst einen Würfel entscheiden); jeder bestimmt nur in Bezug auf seine Stimme, welcher neue Ton eingeführt werden soll.

Versuche ein Stück zu komponieren, bei dem eine Zeitlang nur ein Ton erklingt, dann ein zweiter hinzugefügt wird usw., bis schließlich alle Töne (einer Tonleiter oder des chromatischen Totals) verwendet worden sind. Tipp: Man beginne mit dem d, verwende dann die Oberquinte a, dann die Unterquinte g, dann nach diesem Muster weiter e, c, h, f... Jeder neue Ton tritt ergänzend (und nicht verdrängend) hinzu.

Graduality:

Create a three-part series of chords, in which two neighbouring chords always differ from each other only by one tone. You can divide the task among groups of 3 pupils: A cares for the first voice, B for the second one and C for the third one. Take turns equally (or roll dice to decide); everybody can define which new tone should be added only with regard to his voice.

Try to compose a piece, in which only one tone sounds for some time, then a second one is added etc., until all tones (of one gamut or of a chromatical total) are used finally. Tip: begin with d, then use upper quint a and then low quint g, then according to this pattern e, c, h, f... Every new tone is added as a supplement (without suppressing the others).

Phasenverschiebung:

*Nehmt (oder erfindet) eine kleine Melodie. Spielt diese Melodie zunächst gemeinsam. Erweitert die Melodie einer Stimme um eine Zählzeit. Spielt die beiden Gestalten so lange, bis ihr die Ausgangsposition wieder erreicht habt. Versucht dies auch mit zwei unterschiedlichen Melodien.*⁵⁸

Phase Shifting:

*Take (or invent) a small melody. First play the melody together. Extend the melody of one voice by one beat. Play both the forms until you achieve your initial position again. Try it also with two different melodies.*⁵⁸

Kanon-Prozesse:

*Schließlich biete die Spielidee von In C, einen kanonartigen Prozess zu entfalten auf der Basis verschiedener, beliebig oft wiederholter Muster, ein kompositorisches Einstiegsmodell, das durchaus individuell ausgeprägt sein kann.*⁵⁹

Canon Processes:

*Finally offer a play idea from In C to bring out a canon process on the basis of various patterns repeated with optional frequency – a compositional introductory model which can be expressed quite individually.*⁵⁹

Projects are primarily focused on developing perception (the course of music flow in time and its gradual transformation) and rhythm, which are probably the two most distinct features of minimal music. It is clear from these that Ulli Götte understands composing in the rather traditional sense – based on the knowledge of notation – and he probably also does not expect using any other than traditional musical instruments. Despite these specifics, this author brings a number of valuable suggestions for working with children without any major musical experiences – the outlined procedures can be modified and adjusted according to the specific needs and requirements.

⁵⁸ GÖTTE, U. Schön einfach – einfach schön. Spielen und Komponieren im Sinne der Minimal Music. *Klasse Musik* (Pretty Simple – Simply Pretty. Playing and Composing in Accordance with *Minimal Music*. Music Classroom), 2005, Issue no. 1, p. 39.

⁵⁹ GÖTTE, U. *Minimal Music. Musikpraxis in der Schule* (Music Practice at School). Kassel 2002, p. 104.

Professor **Ortwin Nimczik** (1956) is one of the most distinct personalities of German music education of today. He is intensely committed to making contemporary music close to children through various creative activities. As part of these long-term efforts for making experimental music more accessible, he also brings a number of specific practical ideas. Two of these projects are related to the topic of minimal music, which, according to his opinion „...*bietet zudem durch die Einfachheit ihrer Strukturen gute Möglichkeiten für musikalische Gestaltungsarbeit im Unterricht*“, but at the same time „...*dürfen freilich nicht die Schwierigkeiten im Detail unterschätzt werden.*“⁶⁰ („...*offers also good possibilities for musical creative work in teaching thanks to the simplicity of its structures*“, but at the same time „*the difficulties in detail must not be underestimated.*“⁶⁰)

The first project titled *Einfach zählen*⁶¹ (Simply Count) focuses on the compositional principle of phase shifting (Nimczik considers it to be a phenomena and a centre trait of minimal music). However, mastering this principle to perfection is not easy. Practicing it requires particular care and intense work. In order to introduce and understand phase shifting, the author offers a structurally simple game with words (or numbers): „*Zunächst suchen sich alle Mitwirkende eine ein- oder zwei- oder drei- ... silbige Zahl aus. Einer beginnt und setzt damit den Grundpuls und das Tempo. Nacheinander kommen die weiteren Spieler hinzu, die Zahlen werden silbenweise im gleichen Puls gesprochen (ein Schlag = eine Silbe).*“ (First all participants choose a figure of one syllable, two syllables or three syllables. One starts and determines the basic pulse and tempo. One by one the other players join the game, they pronounce the figures by syllables in the same pulse (one beat = one syllable).“ The first part of the task can be expressed as follows:

⁶⁰ NIMCZIK, O. Einfach zählen!. Spielerische Annäherungen an das Phänomen der Phasenverschiebung. *Musik und Bildung* (Simply count! Playful Approaches to the Phenomena of Phase Shifting. *Music and Education*), 2000, Issue no. 3, p. 47.

⁶¹ All following quotes are from NIMCZIK, O. Einfach zählen!. Spielerische Annäherungen an das Phänomen der Phasenverschiebung. *Musik und Bildung* (Simply Count! /Playful Approaches to the Phenomena of Phase Shifting. *Music and Education*), 2000, Issue no. 3, p. 47–49.

null	null	null	null	null	null	null	null	null
sie	ben	sie	ben	sie	ben	sie	ben	sie
hun	dert	elf	hun	dert	elf	hun	dert	elf
ein	und	neun	zig	ein	und	neun	zig	ein
vier	tau	send	sieb	zehn	vier	tau	send	sieb
atd.								

Eventually, individual numbers can be interlined with rests – for a period of one beat, or they can gradually be extended to several beats:

null	⏏	null	⏏	null	⏏	null	⏏	null
sie	ben	⏏	sie	ben	⏏	sie	ben	⏏
hun	dert	elf	⏏	hun	dert	elf	⏏	hun
ein	und	neun	zig	⏏	ein	und	neun	zig
vier	tau	send	sieb	zehn	⏏	vier	tau	send
atd.								

null	⏏	null	⏏	⏏	null	⏏	⏏	⏏	null	⏏	⏏
sie	ben	⏏	sie	ben	⏏	⏏	sie	ben	⏏	⏏	⏏
hun	dert	elf	⏏	hun	dert	elf	⏏	⏏	hun	dert	elf
ein	und	neun	zig	⏏	ein	und	neun	zig	⏏	⏏	ein
vier	tau	send	sieb	zehn	⏏	vier	tau	send	sieb	zehn	⏏
atd.											

Based on these exercises then in the second phase „...*können nun individuelle Tempoveränderungen im Sinne allmählicher Phasenverschiebungen erprobt werden.*“ („... *individual tempo changes can be tried in accordance with gradual phase shifting.*„)

First in small groups of 3 to 5 musicians. „*Ein Spieler beginnt und exponiert Puls bzw. Tempo, die anderen setzen nacheinander im gleichen Tempo ein. Nach einer Weile gemeinsamen Sprechens beschleunigen 1 bis 2 Spieler ganz allmählich und kommen dann wieder auf das Ausgangstempo zurück (um das Stabilbleiben des Ausgangstempos zu gewährleisten, können*

die Spieler Lichtimpulse eines Metronoms zu Hilfe nehmen). Im Weiteren können Überlagerungen von Beschleunigung und Verlangsamung u. a. m. erarbeitet werden.“ („One player starts and determines pulse or tempo, the others begin one by one in the same tempo. After some time common speaking is phased out and 1 or 2 players speed up quite gradually and then return again to initial tempo (in order to maintain initial tempo, the players can use light pulses of a metronome). In addition, it is possible to elaborate, among others, overlays of acceleration and deceleration“.)

The above mentioned exercises do not have to be only spoken, but also sung or possibly supplemented with or replaced by musical instruments. Ortwin Nimczik also points out that by mere utterance of the numbers, typical psychoacoustic effects emerge. It is, therefore, appropriate for children to be divided into two groups – one, who is “speaking”, and the other “listening” – and to be fully perceiving the new audio experience.

Although this project focuses on practicing of certain skills (rhythm, maintaining independence of voice, etc.), rather than on creating composition based on one's own invention, it is a very interesting idea of how to utilise the phase shifting principle in a simple manner. At the same time, nothing is preventing the conversion of the exercise into Czech language or possibly creating other modifications.

The second project is called *Musik mit einem Ton*⁶² (*Music with one tone?*) and focuses on creating original compositions based on a single tone. The piece by György Ligeti, *Musica Ricercata Nr. 1* is the source of inspiration for work here. And although Ligeti is not included amongst composers, who are known as the minimalists, the first piece from this piano cycle carries evident features of minimalism. The initial musical material is reduced to the minimum here – a single tone.

In this case, the assignment of a compositional exercise is brief: „Legt einen Ton fest und versucht, [...] aus euren Ideen verschiedene kleine Stücke zu erfinden und gemeinsam zu spielen.“ („Define one tone and try, [...] to invent various small pieces from your ideas and to play them together.“) Naturally, this idea is not new, R. Murray Schafer or John Paynter already worked with it before. However with Nimczik, it is in relation to a specific contemporary composition. The task can be somewhat limited to start with:

⁶² All following quotes from NIMCZIK, O. *Musik mit einem Ton?*. Zur unterrichtlichen Behandlung von Ligetis „Musica Ricercata, Nr. 1“. *Musik und Bildung* (Music with one Tone? How to Deal with „Musica Ricercata, No. 1 by Ligeti in Teaching“, *Music and Education*), 1991, Issue no. 4, p. 24–27.

“Welche Möglichkeiten gibt es, bei beibehaltener Tonhöhe, einen Ton klanglich zu verändern?“ (“Which possibilities are available for changing the sound of a tone provided that the strike tone remains unchanged?“)

Compositional assignments of this type give room to contemplations over properties of a tone, the rhythm, the structure of a musical piece, etc. It is becoming apparent that there are many possibilities of working even with such limited initial material.

François Förstel⁶³ is another name in the line of music educationists who are strongly opposed to the traditional approach to music education. In order for students to be able to penetrate beneath the surface of experimental music, they must divert from the traditional “talking about music” and result from their own creative potential. The author summarised his own method, how to achieve this, into ten points:

1. “Neue Musik musst du selber machen! (Handlung) (“You must make new music yourself! (Action)”)
2. Neue Musik muss sichtbar gemacht werden. (Visualisierung) (New music must be made visible! (Visualisation))
3. Habe Mut zur Eigengestaltung, zur Parodie und zur Vereinfachung. (Produktion I) (Take courage to your own creation, parody and simplification. (Production I))
4. De-komponiert überlieferte Stücke! (Produktion II) (Decompose the traditional pieces! (Production II))
5. Bringt Laien und Profis zusammen! (Öffnung der Schule) (Connect laymen and professionals! (Opening of school))
6. Wählt elementare und einfache Beispiele. (Einfachheit) (Choose elementary and simple examples. (Simplicity))
7. Neue Musik braucht neue Instrumente und neue Ohren! (Experimente) (New music needs new instruments and new ears! (Experiments))
8. Geht Dissonanzen nicht aus dem Weg! (Schüler nicht nur abholen!) (Do not avoid dissonances! (Not only take over the pupils))
9. Ältere und neuere Musik gehören zusammen! (Integration) (Old and new music belong together! (Integration))

⁶³ FÖRSTEL, F. Schweizer Käse, fast food und Klangwörter-Menü. Neue Musik selber komponieren. In BÄßLER, H. (ed.) *Brücken. Musikunterricht im geeinten Europa* (Swiss Cheese, Fast Food and Menu of Sound Words. Compose New Music Yourself. In BÄßLER, H. (ed.) *Bridges. Music Education in United Europe*). Mainz 2001, p. 89–96.

10. *Geht nicht die Anstrengung hermeneutischer Verstehensarbeit auf! (Sinndimension)*⁶⁴ (Do not give up striving after hermeneutical understanding's work! (Sense dimension))

Apart from theoretical deliberations on the topic of classroom composing, François Förstel in his text also brings several specific proposals how to go about this activity. Coincidentally, two of the stated compositional tasks are related to minimal music.

The first task is called *Schweizer Käse*, and it is based on compositional principles of substitution (substituting a tone with a rest or vice versa) or subtraction and addition. It belongs into a group of exercises, which are based on working with words. His assignment is the following: "Erfindet einen volltaktigen Spruch von acht Silben Länge und ordnet jeder Silbe eine Achtelnote zu. Ersetzt dann bei jeder Wiederholung eine Silbe durch eine Pause. Gebt eurem Sprechstück einen Titel, ergänzt eure Namen und übt das Sprechstück ein.

Spielweisen: ("Create a full time eight-syllable sentence and adjoin a quaver to each syllable. When repeating, always substitute one syllable with a break. Give a title to your sentence, add your names and exercise the sentence. Game Methods:)

- jede Zeile viermal wiederholen (repeat each line four times)
- den Ablauf von unten beginnen (start from below)
- einen passenden dynamischen Verlauf vereinbaren (agree on an appropriate dynamic course)
- zwei Verläufe überlagern (shift two courses)
- das Verfahren auf Melodien oder Geräuschfolgen übertragen.⁶⁵ (transfer the proceeding to melodies or sequences of sounds.)

⁶⁴ FÖRSTEL, F. Schweizer Käse, fast food und Klangwörter-Menü. Neue Musik selber komponieren. In BÄBLER, H. (ed.) *Brücken. Musikunterricht im geeinten Europa* (Swiss Cheese, Fast Food and Menu of Sound Words. Compose New Music Yourself. In BÄBLER, H. (ed.) *Bridges. Music Education in United Europe*). Mainz 2001, p. 96.

⁶⁵ FÖRSTEL, F. Schweizer Käse, fast food und Klangwörter-Menü. Neue Musik selber komponieren. In BÄBLER, H. (ed.) *Brücken. Musikunterricht im geeinten Europa* (Swiss Cheese, Fast Food and Menu of Sound Words. Compose New Music Yourself. In BÄBLER, H. (ed.) *Bridges. Music Education in United Europe*). Mainz 2001, p. 91.

A visual illustration can be rendered as follows:

1. *In der Schule wird geschrieben* (We write in school)

in	der	Schu	le	wird	ge	schrie	ben
in	der		le	wird	ge	schrie	ben
in	der		le	wird	ge		ben
in	der		le	wird			ben
in	der		le				ben
in			le				ben
			le				ben
			le				ben

2. *Hausaufgaben kriegt man immer*⁶⁶ (We always get more homework)

Haus	auf	ga	ben	kriegt	man	im	mer
Haus		ga	ben	kriegt	man	im	mer
Haus		ga	ben	kriegt	man	im	
Haus		ga	ben		man	im	
Haus		ga	ben			im	
		ga	ben			im	
		ben				im	
						im	

There are numerous variants to his exercise. Five possible modifications are stated directly in the assignment – for example multiple repetitions of each line, the last "silent" line is to be taken as first, including the appropriate dynamics, implementation in two groups or using various melodies or sounds instead of a voice. Conversion into the Czech language does not present any problems.

⁶⁶ FÖRSTEL, F. Schweizer Käse, fast food und Klangwörter-Menü. Neue Musik selber komponieren. In BÄBLER, H. (ed.) *Brücken. Musikunterricht im geeinten Europa* (Swiss Cheese, Fast Food and Menu of Sound Words. Compose New Music Yourself. In BÄBLER, H. (ed.) *Bridges. Music Education in United Europe*). Mainz 2001, p. 93.

The second task, called *fast food*, is built on compositional utilisation of a single tone – an F, to be specific. The author is consciously following up on a similar project published ten years earlier by Ortwin Nimczik. Förstel's composition is stipulated for a piano:

"Entwerf in Gruppen zu 3–5 Schülern ein Klavierstück nach folgenden Regeln:

1. Länge: 4 Takte, Taktart: 4/4, Noten- und Pausenwerte: 1/8–1/1. (Length: 4 times, time kind: 4/4, values of notes and breaks: 1/8–1/1.)
 2. Einigt euch in der Gruppe auf einen Ton. (Agree on one tone in your group.)
 3. Ordnet jeder Linie einen Spieler und eine Tonlage zu. (Assign one player and one position to each line.)
 4. Entwerft einen rhythmischen Ablauf und findet einen Titel. (Propose one rhythmical course and find a title.)
 5. Übt euer Stück zunächst klopfend am Tisch, dann am Klavier. (When practising your piece, first mark the time on the table, then play the piano.)
 6. Präsentiert das Stück vor der Klasse. (Present the piece to class.)
- Variante: 2–4 Töne (harmonisch, disharmonisch).⁶⁷ (Variant: 2–4 tones (harmoniously, disharmoniously).⁶⁷

The exercise is much more specific than with Nimczik. Differences in individual parts (F tones in various registers – e.g. f4 f2 F F) are mainly due to the chosen rhythm (or possibly the dynamic course). It is clear from the assignment that at least the basic theory of music knowledge is necessary, which could be bypassed in a certain way though, and therefore would not represent any handicap for students. This task presents another interesting example of how musical material reduced to a mere single tone can be used.

Also **Bernhard Weber's** contribution, called '...kein fehler imt sysem...'⁶⁸, reflects on how to make repetitive music accessible to children through simple means; here specifically through phase shifting. This principle should be outlined at the very beginning of the entire project by the means

⁶⁷ FÖRSTEL, F. Schweizer Käse, fast food und Klangwörter-Menü. Neue Musik selber komponieren. In BÄBLER, H. (ed.) *Brücken. Musikunterricht im geeinten Europa* (Swiss Cheese, Fast Food and Menu of Sound Words. Compose new Music Yourself). In BÄBLER, H. (ed.) *Bridges. Music Education in United Europe*. Mainz 2001, p. 94.

⁶⁸ WEBER, B. "...kein fehler imt sysem...". *Musik und Bildung*, März 1998, p. 26–33. ("...no mistake in system...". *Music and Education*, March 1998, p. 26–33.)

of visual non-musical examples. In this case, the author recommends Andy Warhol's painting *Coca-Cola Bottles* or a poem by Eugen Gomringer *3 variationen zu 'kein fehler im system'* ("variations on "no fault in system"). A passage from the poem appears as follows and phase shifting is absolutely clearly depicted:

kein fehler im systém (no mistake in system)
 kein efhler im system
 kein ehfler im system
 kein ehlfir im system
 kein ehlefr im system
 kein ehlerf im system
 kein ehleri fm system
 kein ehleri mf system
 kein ehleri ms fystem atd.⁶⁹

For respective musical elaboration of this process, the author offers specific compositional model (or instructions). This can be interpreted without any change directly or it can be modified according to the needs of a given class. The model consists of a total of nine patters, divided into three groups of three (according to the tone duration – quarter, eighth, sixteenth) and all of it is in D Dorian key. Within all of these three groups, the patterns run in a different meter (5/4, 4/4 a 3/4), and their continuous mutual shifting thereby occurs. In order to achieve greater effect of the entire exercise, it is subsequently possible to experiment with tones, which with different rhythmic accentuation and further interesting acoustic effects can be achieved by exempting or dampening individual tones from Orff instruments (e.g. xylophones). The entire course of a piece can be recorded by means of simple graphic symbols. Based on these experiences, pupils can subsequently create their own pieces, whether independently or in groups. "Das geschieht in der Unterrichtspraxis in aller Regel durch die tonale und metrische Modifikation einzelner pattern. Nur wenigen Schülern gelingt ein

⁶⁹ SCHNAUBER, C. (ed.) *Mein Gedicht – deine Träume. Eugen Gomringer und die konkrete Poesie* (My Poem – Your Dreams. Eugen Gomringer and Concrete Poetry). Nördlingen 1989. Quoted from WEBER, B. "...kein fehler imt sysem...". *Musik und Bildung*, März (Quoted from WEBER, B. "...no mistake imt sysem...", *Music and Education*, March) 1998, p. 27.

wirklicher Transfer, indem sie sich ganz von der Vorlage lösen, und nach dem Prinzip der Phasenverschiebung ein völlig neues Musikstück erstellen.”⁷⁰ („As a rule, this is performed in the teaching practice by means of tonal and metrical modifications of particular patterns. Only a few of the pupils manage a real transfer by exempting from the pattern entirely and creating quite a new music piece according to the principle of phase shifting.”)

According to Weber, all of these activities should be set in a broader context – other compositional principles of minimal music (such as additive and subtractive rhythms), its cultural and historical roots and development, the issue of aesthetics, etc., should all be taken into account. Also, listening to specific pieces or excursion into the area of visual arts and literature should not be missed.

Bernhard Weber’s project includes reproductive character activities as well as an outline of children’s possible own compositional activities. He leaves the overall concept to the teacher’s discretion, who can transform hereby acquired inspiration according to his/her own ideas and the requirements of a specific class. The effort toward including minimalism into a broader cultural context can also be perceived as positive.

Evaluation

Overall, we can state that the initial assumption about suitability of minimal music for classroom composing was confirmed, although with certain reservations. There is certain inconsistency between the initial expectations and the actual results. Minimalist techniques are basically described by their authors as elementary, simple, easily accessible and imitable. However, it turns out that when practically applied, they bring many ailments (especially in connection with complicated rhythm, regular pulse, and the use of traditional notation) and some limitations (exactly stipulated procedure of work). It turns out that compositional principles of this style, which appear to be simple at first glance, are often immensely difficult to imitate (especially for smaller children). There is an issue mainly with maintaining a steady tempo and pulse, orientation in multiple repetitions and maintaining independence of one’s own voice (i.e. not letting others confuse you). I, therefore, believe that accessibility

⁷⁰ WEBER, B. “...kein fehler imt sysem...”. *Musik und Bildung*, März 1998, p. 30. (“...no mistake in system ...”. *Music and Education*, March 1998, p. 30.)

of compositional activities in relation to minimalism increases with the age of a target group and previous musical experience and skill, especially playing a musical instrument, can also be of a great advantage as they provide sufficient training in rhythm.

In any case, it is definitely worth creating with children, whether it is done absolutely free or by means of specific techniques of contemporary music, as “It is better to make a piece of music than to perform one, better to perform one than to listen to one, better to listen to one than to misuse it as a means of distraction, entertainment, or acquisition of ‘culture’.”⁷¹

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⁷¹ CAGE, J. *Silence. Lectures and writings*. Middletown 1979, p. 64.

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Elements of Sub-Saharan Music and Indian Classical Music in Integrative Experimental Music Teaching at Grammar School

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Ústí nad Labem

Abstract

The subject of research for this dissertation is ethnic music and its application in music teaching at higher grammar schools. The model patterns concern two topics from the field of non-European music: Sub-Saharan music (SSM) and Indian classical music (ICM). The selection of these topics is mainly associated with the domain of teaching music at secondary schools and at university level; however, in many aspects it reflects society-wide topics. Both selected fields are addressed and presented with respect for their subsequent use in the creation and implementation of model integrative lessons of music education. All information contained herein has been assembled with this intention in mind. Brief characteristics of SSM and ICM are given, and the basic principles pertinent and applicable to the said fields are defined. These form the basis of teaching units, which are first designed (models and sub-models of activities) and subsequently also implemented. Work is, therefore, logically divided into theoretical and application parts. Pedagogical research was conducted in 2008/2009 at the higher grammar school of František Křižík in Plzeň, in three parallel classes. Some activities were also verified at a lower grammar school. The research results were then complemented with the curricular documents of education reform. The results favour the entire proposed concept of inclusion of ethnic music in grammar school teaching. The dissertation was supervised by prof. PhDr. Josef Říha. It comprises 270 pages of text, 79 pages of appendices in the form of pictorial material and three DVDs with audio and video recordings.

Key words

ethnic music, experimental music teaching, Grammar School of František Křižík in Plzeň, Sub-Saharan music, Indian classical music, integrative music teaching