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**WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT A MUSICIAN'S/VIOLINIST'S
PERSONALITY WITHIN THE MUSICAL-EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

Key words: *personality of musician, musical development, violin, violinist, musical psychology, musical education*

Introduction

The Ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thyself. (Carlyle, n. d.)

In accordance with the above quote, we start out from the position that every musician has a certain potential. As a rule, the fact of whether or not the musician fulfils this potential is decided upon during the course of the musical-educational process. In this course, a very important role is played, naturally within the context of other factors, by certain psychological aspects which we could summarise under the general heading of personality.¹ According to Kogan,² psychological adjustment is an essential condition which is of far greater significance than is usually imagined, and its absence may lead to failure, even in the case all the other equally essential conditions are met. One's individual psychological constitution is thus frequently the decisive factor in the success or failure of work in the field of music, and in this sense explicitly determines the fate of young musicians.

¹ Grigorij M. Kogan, *Před branou mistrovství* (Praha: Akademie múzických umění, 2012); Jindřich Pazdera, *Vybrané kapitoly z metodiky houslové hry* (Praha: Akademie múzických umění, 2015).

² Kogan, *Před branou mistrovství*.

An important point of departure for our research is the fact that the personality of a musician/violinist influences their playing to a considerable extent.³ In this respect, we essentially consider playing a musical instrument to be a kind of “mirror of the personality” of every musician, and substantial theoretical support is offered not only by the extensive processing of empirical experiences on this theme but primarily by music therapy.⁴ This works on the assumption that in their musical activity a musician cannot exhibit something they do not possess within,⁵ and that displays of musical behaviour are symptomatic of the manner of the musician’s general behaviour and expression.⁶ Music therapy also has certain points of contact with musical education, and for this reason it is not possible to separate these disciplines clearly and unequivocally. On the other hand, it is nevertheless possible to delineate fundamental differences between the two,⁷ some of which can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1

Differences between musical education and music therapy⁸

	Musical education	Music therapy
Process/product	Above all product is important	Both process and product are important
Structure	Fulfilment of a predefined structure	Space for individually created structure
Relationship	Relationship of teacher–pupil	Therapeutic relationship
Objective	Objective of musical nature	Objective of non-musical nature
Music	Aesthetic quality of music	Therapeutic quality of music
Technical competences	Requirements for training as a teacher	Requirements for training as a therapist

³ Blanka Bogunović, “Personality of Musicians: Age, Gender and Instrumental Group Differences”, in *Proceeding of the 12th International Conference of Music Perception and Cognition and the 8th Triennial Conference of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (July, 23-28, 2012, Thessaloniki, Greece)*, eds. Emilios Cambouropoulos, Costas Tsourgas, Panayotis Mavromatis, Costas Pasiadis (Thessaloniki, 2012), 120-121; Anthony E. Kemp, *The Musical Temperament. Psychology and Personality of Musicians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); František Sedlák, *Základy hudební psychologie* (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1990).

⁴ Jiří Kanor, Matěj Lipský, Jana Weber, *Základy muzikoterapie* (Praha: Grada, 2009).

⁵ Jaroslava Zeleiová, *Muzikoterapie* (Praha: Portál, 2007).

⁶ Henk Smeijsters, *Grundlagen der Musiktherapie*, in Jaroslava Zeleiová, *Muzikoterapie* (Praha: Portál, 2007).

⁷ Josef Probst and Moog, undated in Kanor, Lipský, Weber, *Základy muzikoterapie*.

⁸ Kanor, Lipský, Weber, *Základy muzikoterapie*.

Within the context of our study we could for example accentuate the difference between musical education and music therapy in the sense that whereas the objective of musical education is the interpretation of a certain musical work, music therapy works rather with musical improvisation. In this respect, however, it appears logical to us that if a personality is projected into playing in improvisation, it shall probably be projected also into playing in interpretation. Furthermore, music therapy does not reckon with one factor which is of great importance to us, namely the issue of long-term development. The personality of a musician does not merely influence their playing at the time when the actual musical activity or production is taking place, but also the manner of the musician's overall musical development.⁹ In this respect, we are also of the opinion that these two aspects cannot be separated, because musical development leads to the resulting playing.

In addition, playing a musical instrument requires a whole range of specific psychological aspects.¹⁰ For this reason, we also believe that if we identify psychological factors that are desirable for musical development, we can develop them in a certain manner. The theme of psychological conditions which are important or even essential for musical development has already been addressed, for example by Kogan,¹¹ who also defined three central conditions important for successful musical development – focus at work, clear awareness of the objective and also a genuine inner desire to achieve this objective. According to Kogan,¹² this concerns “general laws of creativity”, which are specific manifestations of general regularities and as such apply to all types of artistic and even general intellectual work as well. However, we have decided to expand somewhat upon this theme and additionally also identify risk and negative factors, which we may encounter in this area. If we encounter an obstacle in the form of a risk or negative psychological factor which is negatively reflected in playing, we believe that in the ideal case we can work with or at least compensate for this factor in a certain manner. We can provide a guide to this procedure in the following Diagram 1.

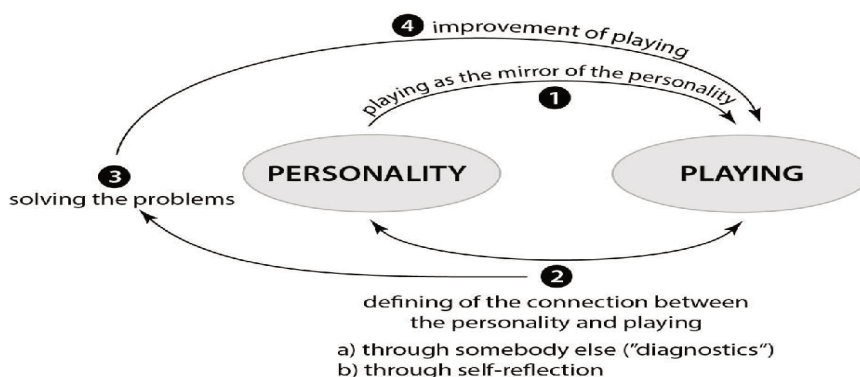


Diagram 1. Initial diagram

⁹ Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*; Kogan, *Před branou mistrovství*; Pazdera, *Vybrané kapitoly*.

¹⁰ Kogan, *Před branou mistrovství*; Pazdera, *Vybrané kapitoly*; Sedlák, *Základy hudební psychologie*.

¹¹ Kogan, *Před branou mistrovství*.

¹² *Ibidem*.

We are convinced that observations in this area have significant potential for use within the framework of the musical-educational process, specifically in the field of musical education, and also in psychological work with musicians, which may also lead, in addition to the regular objectives which we may encounter in consultancy or therapeutic practice, to an improvement in their artistic performances and overall support for their musical development.

Several studies hitherto have focused on the personality of musicians, many of which concentrated primarily on the issue of whether musicians have a kind of distinctive personality, or distinctive personality traits, and whether players of individual musical instruments have any kind of distinctive personal characteristics. If we ask whether musicians have any distinctive traits or qualities (in comparison with other people or the rest of the population), in answer we can say: probably yes.¹³ At the same time, however, the question remains as to whether people with a certain type of personality are predisposed or at least “attracted” to certain musical activity or to playing a certain instrument, or if it is rather the case that certain musical activity supports the development of certain personality or character traits.¹⁴ On the other hand, from previously conducted studies it also ensues that there is probably no explicit type of personality which would be typical precisely for musicians,¹⁵ and it similarly ensues from these studies that there is also no answer to the question as to whether any kind of personality traits, qualities or characteristics exist which are necessary for a person to become a musician, nor is there an answer to the question as to why some people become musicians and others do not.¹⁶ In this respect, however, we consider it important also to state the possible reasons for these results. Woody¹⁷ is of the opinion that to be a musician is a “complex matter”, and that the decision to be a musician or a person’s success in their musical career therefore cannot be only due to personality of itself. As a result, we should rather understand this as one of several factors necessary for musical development. In addition, professional musicians can be classified as composers, conductors, performing artists and educators, in which each of these disciplines places different, very specific demands. From this perspective it is also probable that the members of these professions should also have different personality types.¹⁸

Woody¹⁹ also considered the methodology of the studies conducted to date, which in his opinion may have distorted their conclusions, and specifically finds a number of deficiencies. Several studies hitherto have focused on a comparison of musicians with

¹³ Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*; Raymond A.R. MacDonald, David J. Hargreaves, Dorothy Miell, *Musical identities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Robert H. Woody, “The musician’s personality”, *Creativity Research Journal* 12, 4 (1999): 241-250; Robert H. Woody, Gary E. McPherson, “Emotion and Motivation in the Lives of Performers”, in *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Application*, eds. Patrik N. Juslin, John Sloboda, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 401-424.

¹⁴ Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*; MacDonald, Hargreaves, Miell, *Musical identities*; Woody, “The musician’s personality”.

¹⁵ MacDonald, Hargreaves, Miell, *Musical identities*; Woody, “The musician’s personality”; Woody, McPherson, “Emotion and Motivation”.

¹⁶ Woody, “The musician’s personality”.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ Carl E. Seashore (*The Psychology of Music*, 1936) in Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*.

¹⁹ Woody, “The musician’s personality”.

the remaining (i.e. non-musical) population, and in this sense it is evident according to Woody²⁰ that long-term musical activity in a certain manner influences or even forms the personality of the musician (whilst the same is also stated by Bogunović²¹). Furthermore, in the area of research into musicians, with only few exceptions, the factor of the overall socio-economic context and the factor of genre have been seriously overlooked, no attention has been paid to the factor of culture (the country in which the studies were conducted), and in addition the issue of the success or failure of the musicians who took part in these studies in their musical careers was essentially omitted. It is precisely this factor that can have an influence on the personality of the given musician, especially with regard to the issue of certain emotional aspects.²²

Within the framework of the research activity conducted to date, we also encounter the assumption that players of particular musical instruments or representatives of individual groups of instruments may have different personality traits. To a certain degree these assumptions have also been confirmed empirically.²³ On the other hand, the personal characteristics of people who play particular musical instruments may also become a source of certain stereotypes²⁴ and these stereotypes may subsequently further intensify these characteristics.²⁵ As regards the distinctive personality of violinists, we could for example mention the results of the study conducted by Langendörfer,²⁶ according to whom the violinists who took part were more careful and conscientious than other musicians.

Our aim was to describe the manner by which the personality of the violinist influences their style of playing, to identify the psychological factors important for the musical development of the violinist, to place these within the broader context of general factors, to answer the question as to why personal problems or themes are projected into the playing of some people but not of others, and then subsequently, on the basis of all of these observations, also to formulate practical recommendations which could be used in pedagogical practice and in psychological work with musicians. Through these recommendations, we would also like to answer the question of what – in accordance with our research – we should know about the personality of the musician/violinist within the framework of the musical-educational process. We are also aware of the fact that for success in musical activity, more factors are required than “merely” the right psychological constitution, and that personality is therefore one of several factors necessary for successful musical development – as Woody²⁷ states, to be a musician is a “complex matter”. In this respect, however, we understand personality in its entire bio-psycho-social-spiritual context, and as a result it is also our aim to place

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Bogunović, “Personality of Musicians”.

²² Woody, “The musician’s personality”.

²³ Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*.

²⁴ R. Scott Builione, Jack P. Lipton, “Stereotypes and personality of classical musicians”, *Psychomusicology* 3, 1 (1983): 36-43; Catrin Cribb, Andrew H. Gregory, “Stereotypes and personalities of musicians”, *The Journal of Psychology* 133, 1 (1999): 104-114; Franziska Langendörfer, “Personality differences among orchestra instrumental groups: Just a stereotype?”, *Personality and Individual Differences* 44, 3 (2008): 610-620; Woody, “The musician’s personality”.

²⁵ Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*.

²⁶ Langendörfer, “Personality differences”.

²⁷ Woody, “The musician’s personality”.

personality within the broader framework of the other factors – for example biological or social factors, or socio-cultural opportunities which are not and cannot be entirely under the control of the individual.²⁸

Methodology

Following Seashore²⁹ and his idea that musicians can be classified into composers, conductors, performing artists and instructors, in which each of these professions places different, very specific demands, we decided to focus only on violinists who are performing musicians. On the other hand, like Kogan³⁰ we hold the view that many of the results of our study should be applicable for all musicians regardless of the group of instruments to which they pertain. Due to the relatively insufficient number of previous studies on this theme, we decided first of all to conduct a referential survey conducted by means of semi-structured interviews with violin teachers. From our own experience we know that it is precisely teachers who have the opportunity to observe the musical development of their pupils and students over the long term, and if instructors are in a certain manner perceptive of their students' "human aspect", they have a very good opportunity to observe also the correlation between their personality and their playing and the correlation between their personal and musical development, as well as the factors, either general or psychological, which are applied in the musical development of the given students.

The semi-structured interview, which we made use of as the basic method of gathering data, is characterised by a basic, pre-prepared set of questions – the "core interview". However, this is further developed upon by various additional questions and themes which appear to the interviewer to be purposeful or to suitably expand upon the original core. Additional questions are usually demonstrated to be very useful and provide a large amount of contextually bound information which helps us better grasp the problem we are addressing.³¹

Respondents

The study sample comprised seven teachers (three women, four men), of whom the average length of their teaching experience was 21 years. Two criteria served for the selection of the teachers for the study sample. The first was the precondition that the teachers view their students not only from a musical but also from a "human" perspective, and that in their work they take into account elements of a complex, bio-psychosocial-spiritual approach. We presumed that only such teachers would be able to communicate their experiences to us relating to the influence of the personality of the musician/violinist on their playing. For this reason, the selection of the teachers also took the form of deliberate selection. The second criterion was experience in teaching at

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ Carl E. Seashore in Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*.

³⁰ Kogan, *Před branou mistrovství*.

³¹ Michal Miovský, *Kvalitativní přístup a metody v psychologickém výzkumu* (Praha: Grada, 2006).

a conservatoire (in which some of the teachers have experience also in teaching beginners), because it is precisely study at a conservatoire that is usually the important period which is as a rule decisive for further musical development, and therefore also the future of every musician. By this method we also eliminated an undesirable variable in the form of frequent insufficient motivation of pupils at basic arts schools and the extraordinarily high level of students at musical universities, which could have somewhat complicated the analysis of data.

Course of study

Given the fact that this represents a theme which has not as yet been substantiated by research, we used the method of a qualitative survey, which in this case is the ideal alternative thanks to its basis and possibilities.³² Hendl³³ sees its major benefit precisely in the possibility of orientation within the examined problem. During the study we conducted seven semi-structured interviews with seven teachers from a number of musical conservatoires in the Czech Republic. At the beginning of the study we created a basic framework of questions which were relevant to the theme of our study and to the survey questions. We supplemented these questions with the initial diagram (Diagram 1), which we discussed with the teachers. The entire interview was first of all verified by means of a pilot study. Due to the fact that the interview was semi-structured, room also appeared therein for new themes. If we came upon such a theme during the course of any of the interviews, we also included it in further interviews.

On one hand, we are aware of the relatively low number of these interviews, which was due to the insufficient number of suitable respondents, on the other, however, we are of the opinion that there was sufficient saturation of data and therefore also the possibility to respond to the research questions we set. In this respect we could also accentuate another of the specifics of qualitative research, namely that the classic construct of validity here is replaced with a more general conception of truthfulness or credibility, which comprises coherence, meaningfulness and communicativeness.³⁴

Data analysis

After all the interviews had been conducted, we first of all transcribed the audio material into the form of text material without any reduction of the obtained information, checking the transcription with repeat listening. With the help of open coding, we created individual categories from the obtained data, which corresponded with the research aims and survey questions.

During data analysis we took into account also the question of reflexivity, which is very important in qualitative research and also necessary in order to ensure that the interviewer constantly monitors whether their presence influences the subject matter being examined. The process of cognition here simultaneously becomes a process of

³² Ibidem.

³³ Jan Hendl, *Kvalitativní výzkum* (Praha: Portál, 2005).

³⁴ Miovský, *Kvalitativní přístup*.

constant interpretation, in which it is necessary to interpret reality rather than discover it, because it is possible to view this reality from an endless number of perspectives.³⁵ The task of the researcher is to find significant structures in the set of all the variables, and for the researcher's conclusions to be objective and relevant it is necessary to exercise a high degree of reflexivity.³⁶

Research results

CATEGORY 1: MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND PLAYING

From the study, it ensues that there is not merely a one-way relationship from personality to playing, and we should rather speak of a relationship between personality and playing which can be summarised approximately as follows: personality influences playing and playing retrospectively influences personality (Diagram 2). We could also describe or express this connection in the following words: "What we do makes us what we are" (Harvey Allen³⁷).

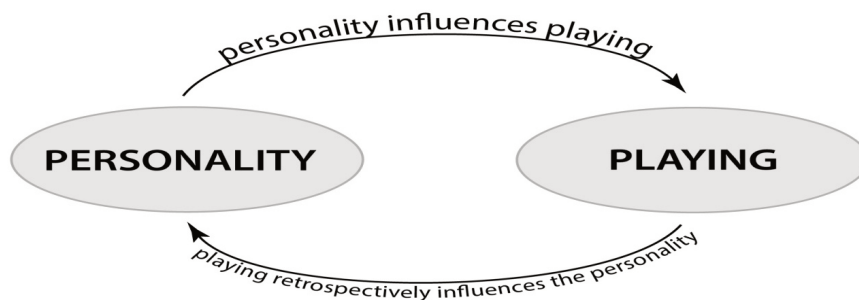


Diagram 2. Mutual relationship between personality and playing

HOW THE PERSONALITY OF A VIOLINIST INFLUENCES PLAYING

All the teachers in the study unanimously agreed that the personality of a violinist significantly influences their playing. According to their answers, it is possible in a certain sense to understand personality as a kind of basis for playing a musical instrument, as well as the basis from which all musical development springs. Concerning this theme, one of the teachers said, literally: "The way I see it, personality is the absolute alpha and omega of everything".

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ Miroslav Dismán, *Jak se vyrábí sociologická znalost* (Praha: Karolinum, 1993).

³⁷ Harvey Allen, undated in Vladimír Smékal, *Pozvání do psychologie osobnosti* (Brno: Barrister & Principal, 2002).

Playing as a mirror of personality

In the interviews, there also frequently appeared a correlation between the overall impression a person creates, how that person expresses himself/herself and how that person plays. One of the teachers said that “(in ninety nine percent of cases) a musician plays the way they actually are”, and added that “violinists or musicians who play string instruments in general can rarely hide behind this instrument”. In the teacher’s opinion, it is not possible to fake it when playing a violin. On the same theme another teacher stated “all the factors in this personality of homo sapiens are in the balance, and the person in question manages to work with or manipulate them, and this is immediately expressed”. As a classic example of an expression of personality in playing the teacher presents the vibrato, but gradually comes to the conclusion that the personality is reflected in the entirety of playing: “Once even celebrated educators stated in their books that the vibrato is a reflection of the state of mind of the violinist. I always laugh about it, but it’s true, because the reflection of the violinist – their state of mind – is in the glide of the bow, the intensity... it’s anything”.

On the other hand, it is evident that in certain respects exceptions to this rule also exist. The first possibility, stated immediately by several teachers, is cases of people who are highly intelligent, with great insight and with a broad range of interests (“which under normal circumstances would be expressed in playing”), but for some reason these qualities are not manifested in their playing. We can explain this phenomenon, according to the results of the analysis of all interviews, in a number of possible ways. It may be caused by an insufficient degree of talent or general dispositions, a failure to transmit between the conception – thus what the musician actually feels or would like to express – and actual playing, or as one of the teachers explained, it depends not only on “what a person has within”, but also on that person’s “need for realisation” and a kind of “emotional engagement”. In this teacher’s view, there are people who are “too distant from the object”, “so they consider this experience as such – emotional – in these extreme cases, to be superfluous... not as a fundamental pillar of the construction, but as unnecessary” (note: in this case we can understand the phrase “be too distant from the object” in accordance with certain Eastern currents, e.g. Buddhism).

However, there is also the opposite case, in which the person in question may not manifest the “highest human qualities” in their personal life, but “when they begin to play, nobody can believe their eyes (and ears)”. An explanation for this variant is provided by a teacher who stated that although the explanation of such matters is so to speak “somewhere between heaven and earth”, there is the possibility that some people show their true face only in their playing, whereas in everyday life they live with a kind of “negative mask” (“it sometimes occurs that this expression of human inadequacy is a manifestation of their feelings of rejection, betrayal, lack of energy... the person in question must pick up the shield of vulgarity so that nobody can touch them... to ensure that their spirit is not harmed even more than it has been already”).

Personality influences the direction which the individual’s musical expression takes

The personality of a musician may also influence the direction which their musical expression gradually takes. Every musician should therefore know what they wish to

express, and in order to determine this, they should be in a certain way “in touch with oneself” (“simply for a person to know themselves, what are their priorities, to recognise what they see as good in this art and in this playing, the direction they wish to go in, which is simply that which they are experiencing, what they want to communicate. That which connects to what that person truly is, and what is to be projected into their playing. This means that they must somehow identify their expression”). Every performer should therefore attempt to recognise themselves, even if on the other hand this journey need not take place in an entirely conscious manner (“there are a lot of people who travel down this road in a kind of natural, non-verbal manner of such self-recognition, which is not conveyed in words, but this does not mean that they are not on this road, that this person does not recognise himself or herself”).

HOW PLAYING RETROSPECTIVELY INFLUENCES PERSONALITY

Playing may have a positive, or conversely also a negative retrospective effect on personality.

Positive retrospective influence on personality

Playing a musical instrument/violin may have a very positive influence on personality in a number of possible directions. It may be a kind of therapeutic matter – e.g. in the case that a person succeeds in finding refuge from personal problems through musical activity. In the case when a person gains positive feedback thanks to playing a musical instrument, they may gain new insight into their problems through playing, and may regard them – even if only for a moment – from a somewhat different perspective, and this may be true even in the case when the person cannot directly influence or resolve these problems (“if this person doesn’t feel a certain pain, even psychological, all the time, but can take respite from it, then without doubt when the concert ends and the musician again realises that people are clapping, that it’s been a great success, they’re filled with euphoria and endorphins... and then, they again suddenly realise ‘yes, but my home life’s still a mess’... but perhaps they’ll now see it slightly differently, that the experience has helped them a little”).

Across the interviews there also appeared a theme which, within the framework of coding during the data analysis, we referred to as “self-realisation, self-actualisation and the feeling of meaning in the life of a musician/violinist”. In this regard, it is possible to say that the linking element within the responses of the individual teachers, within the frame of this theme, is the view that playing the violin can be a very valuable source of personal development (“what they produce in themselves, in their consciousness through art enriches them not only on this instrument, this violin, but in the wider sense of interpersonal relationships for the future, that they shall approach matters in a completely different manner...”).

Negative retrospective influence on personality

A less auspicious possibility is the situation in which playing has a negative retrospective influence on personality. Here there are several possible factors defined in our study which may be causes of problems in playing, and which may occur either sepa-

rately or in combined form – a lack of talent or general disposition, physical or health-related incapacity and manifestations of personal problems in playing. The last of these three is a relatively specific possibility for the negative influence of playing on personality, in which personal problems or issues of the musician/violinist are manifested in their playing, and thus complicate their musical development. If this situation occurs and the problems are not addressed or resolved, there is a great risk that the musician/violinist in question will – via circular causality – enter a kind of “vicious circle” between their personality and playing (“they will be unable to cope with badly managed manifestations of their own problems, which are expressed in playing and intensify the problem”). A number of the teachers independently of one another described this problem using the example of low self-esteem (“if a person does not believe in himself or herself, then the results are obviously never good. And in fact, if you don’t believe in yourself, then in these results you’ll always seek confirmation of why you don’t believe in yourself, and you’ll believe in yourself even less”).

CATEGORY 2: THE ISSUE OF (NON) MANIFESTATION OF PERSONAL PROBLEMS OR ISSUES IN PLAYING

However, in connection with this theme, in practice we also encounter another peculiar phenomenon, which is that personal problems or issues are projected into the playing of only some musicians, and not of others. For this reason, we also focused on the question as to why this is the case. From the results of the interviews it appears evident that the fact of whether or not a musician’s personal problems are projected into their playing is closely linked to that person’s **personality traits**, but also with the **types of problems** that person has. With the help of an analysis of this theme in all the interviews, we identified the following risk and protective psychological factors (Table 2).

Table 2

(Non) manifestation of personal problems or issues in playing

(Non) manifestation of personal problems or issues in playing	
Protective factors	Ability to disengage from one’s problems (of whatever kind) in a certain way (even at the price of taking refuge from problems in playing), or accepting them (if they cannot be resolved), but also extroversion, a certain “impertinence”, “toughness of character”, drive and not excessively large perceptiveness regarding feedback
Risk factors	Sensitivity, reflectiveness, introversion, intellectual orientation, excessive introspection and tendency to take things too personally

The most pronounced of all the factors which appeared across the interviews was the ability to disengage from one’s problems in a certain way. One of the teachers described it very aptly, when responding to the question of how it is possible that some people play very well even despite the fact that they have considerable psychological or personal problems: “they have an ability that actors talk about – they have dreadful toothache, then they get dressed into their costume, get on the stage and forget about it. Or they play a performance with a fever... they are able to somehow imbue it to such an extent that they are able to manage it.” Furthermore, one of the teachers also mentions his opinion

that those people whose problems are not projected into their playing have their problems “solved” – in the sense that they are aware of them and accept them as a certain part of their life (“there are things that can be solved or rectified, and there are things that simply cannot be rectified. A person has to find a certain balance, to accept that’s the way things are, and then it’s not reflected”). Evidently it therefore depends also on the type of problems these are and on the extent to which they are resolvable (if at all).

In the case of any personal problems or issues which are negatively projected into playing, in accordance with the conclusions of our study, this situation may lead to two possibilities:

- a) **Personal problems are addressed or resolved and playing improves, which retrospectively also has a positive influence on personality** (in which these problems may resolve themselves – by means of natural development or a targeted solution), as indicated in Diagram 3.

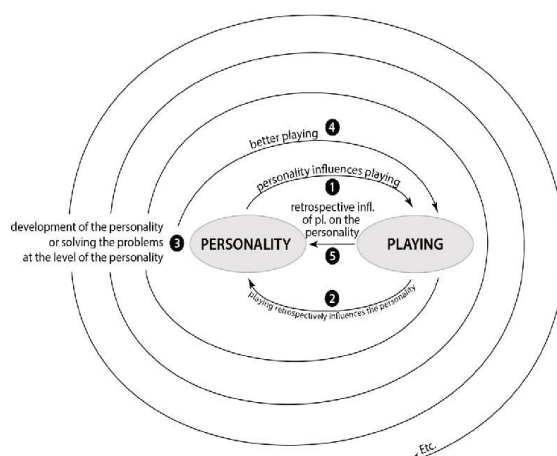


Diagram 3. Positive development between personality and playing

- b) **Personal problems are not addressed or resolved, and the entire problem is constantly deepened** (see Diagram 4)

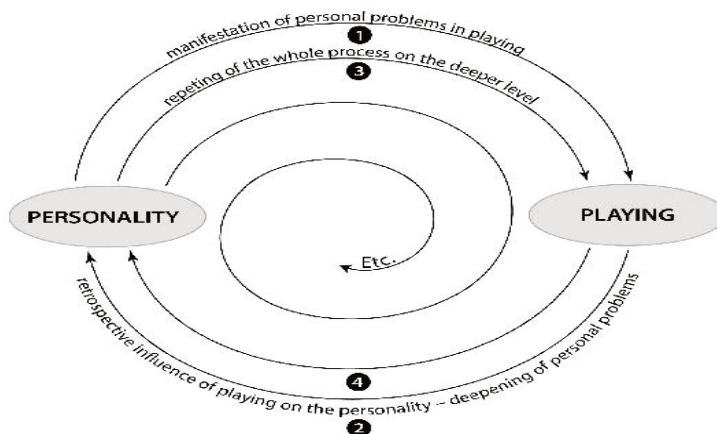


Diagram 4. Negative development between personality and playing

From our perspective, these two possibilities may be described or expressed very aptly in the following words: “If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what it within you, then what you do not bring forth will destroy you” (from the Gnostic Gospels³⁸).

CATEGORY 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IMPORTANT FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF A VIOLINIST WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENTIRE BIO-PSYCHO-SOCIAL-SPIRITUAL SPECTRUM

One of the objectives of our study was to identify the psychological factors important for the musical development of a violinist. With regard to the complex conception of personality in our study within the framework of the entire bio-psycho-social-spiritual spectrum, however, we decided in favour of simultaneously identifying relevant biological, social and spiritual factors. We subsequently divided all these factors into positive, i.e. desirable, potential risk factors, and negative (Table 3).

Table 3

Bio-psycho-social-spiritual factors in the musical development of a violinist

Protective	Potential risk	Negative
Biological		
Suitable physiognomy and motor skills of arms, good condition of health		Insufficient capacities in arms, health problems, physical tension, state of post-traumatic stress disorder
Psychological		
Intelligence and suitable ratio thereof to other personality components, appropriate self-esteem and self-assurance, ability to disengage from problems or accept them, “psychological balance”, psychological resistance, extroversion, exhibitionism, “impertinence”, “toughness of character”, not excessively large perceptiveness regarding feedback, emotional engagement and need for realisation, motivation, diligence, ambition and persistence, ability to concentrate, capacity for time management, relationship towards instrument and activity in general which person performs, capacity for dereflection.	Sensitivity, reflectiveness, introversion, intellectual orientation, ambition, single-mindedness, tendency towards perfectionism, exaggerated feeling of responsibility, greater respect and honour for music, experience of certain crises, arduous periods in life and potential experience of trauma, lower intelligence	Insufficient self-esteem and self-assurance, inner insecurity, excessive reserve, exaggerated diligence, excessive introspection, tendency to take things too personally, laxity, laziness, problems with concentration, being “flustered”, being spoilt (in the case of small children), general psychopathology
Social		
Good family background, stimulating musical – social environment	Family environment	Problematic family environment, unfavourable musical – social environment
Spiritual		
Being “in touch with oneself”, contact with “something higher”, which may be reflected in playing	Excessive inclination towards certain Eastern currents (e.g. Buddhism)	Condition in which person is “too distant from the object”

³⁸ Peter A. Levine, *Probouzení tygra: Léčení traumatu* (Praha: Maitrea, 2011).

CATEGORY 4: GENERAL FACTORS IMPORTANT FOR THE MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF A VIOLINIST

Within the framework of the endeavour to classify the personality of a musician/violinist within the context of broader factors, we also identified external variables which act upon personality during the musical-educational process. The most important identified variables in this were family environment, pedagogical guidance, the musical environment in which the musician/violinist in question operates, as well as a certain degree of order and general routine in life. All of the above factors impact upon both personality and playing, and as has already been mentioned, their mutual relationship is constantly intertwined (Diagram 5).

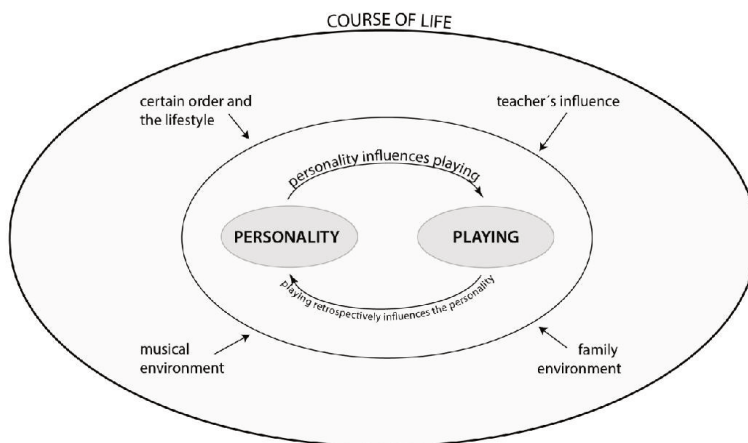


Diagram 5. General factors in development of a violinist

Discussion

It is probable that a new research topic has opened up during the course of our study, and for this reason at the beginning we chose the form of a referential survey. Due to our requirements for a select group of respondents and the ensuing lack thereof, we addressed only seven respondents. Nevertheless, we are of the opinion that there was sufficient saturation of data, and we see the potential continuation of this research topic rather in a more detailed focus on partial identified themes.

We only addressed teachers who we assumed were capable of perceiving their students from a “human” point of view as well, and who apply elements of a complex bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach in their teaching. In our opinion, the assumption that the individual respondents would meet these requirements was confirmed by the manner in which they responded to the individual questions, which was thus reflected also in the complex results of the overall analysis (e.g. Table 3).

All the teachers we interviewed unanimously agreed that the personality of a violinist influences their playing, and that this is a very important – it could be said fundamental – factor within the framework of musical development. These results inci-

dentally correspond with the opinions of other authors³⁹. We can state that the theoretical basis of our study, which we entitled “playing as a mirror of personality”, was confirmed. However, in addition to this, a further important matter ensued from the results, namely that playing also retrospectively influences personality. The fact that long-term musical activity influences or even in a certain manner forms the personality of musicians is also mentioned by Bogunović⁴⁰ and Woody⁴¹ (1999). According to Kemp⁴² it is also probable that within the framework of musical development both of these aspects blend together in a certain manner.

From the observations we made, it clearly ensues that the positive influence of playing on personality can lead to an overall development of personality, may share in the self-realisation and self-actualisation of the individual, and in some cases may even become a kind of “therapeutic matter”. This result corresponds with the opinion of Sedlák⁴³, according to whom musical activity may be a component in the overall personality development and self-realisation of the individual, in which according to Holas⁴⁴ the field of musical education itself should ideally be adapted to this fact. Conversely, a negative effect of playing on personality may also lead in its final result to a negative spiral between personality and playing, which may have relatively severe consequences if not resolved in an appropriate and timely manner. From our perspective this theme is also linked to the issue of the success or failure of musicians in their musical career, which Woody⁴⁵ mentions as one of the factors which has not been included in studies relating to the personality of musicians up to now.

The possibility of a negative spiral between personality and playing is also linked to a further, very specific theme, which is the issue of the (non) manifestation of personal problems or issues in playing. In this context, we identified protective and risk psychological factors. From our perspective, this is a very important observation, which teachers should be aware of and take into account in their teaching – for example in the method of feedback they give their students in relation to their playing, but also in the overall manner in which they approach their students.

We also identified important bio-psycho-social-spiritual variables which are applied in the musical development (of a violinist). However, unlike previous studies, our aim was not to identify psychological traits which are typical for violinists, but to identify psychological traits or factors which are in any way relevant for musical development (of a violinist) and which thus influence the course of this development. We start out from the assumption that the personality traits contained in the personality questionnaires (see previous study) may not necessarily have a direct correlation with musical development and need not therefore correlate with a musician's success, either. We identified desirable, i.e. positive, risk and negative factors. In connection with

³⁹ Kogan, *Před branou mistrovství*; Josef Micka, *Knížka o houslích a o mnohém kolem nich* (Praha: Panton, 1975); Pazdera, *Vybrané kapitoly*; Vadim N. Skibin, *Vývoj a teorie postavení rukou při hře na housle* (Praha: ARCO IRIS, 2004).

⁴⁰ Bogunović, “Personality of Musicians”.

⁴¹ Woody, “The musician's personality”.

⁴² Kemp, *The Musical Temperament*.

⁴³ Sedlák, *Základy hudební psychologie*.

⁴⁴ Milan Holas, *Psychologické základy hudební pedagogiky* (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1988).

⁴⁵ Woody, “The musician's personality”.

these factors, we can also see that this genuinely concerns specific factors which do not correlate with the psychological factors contained in the personality questionnaires (16 PF, NEO). Above all, we consider the identification of potential risk factors to be very important, because it is precisely here that in our opinion there is a large scope for supporting musicians/violinists with such factors. It is after all evident from a specification of these factors that providing that they are properly utilised, these represent very positive and desirable factors. Conversely, when their risk potential is manifested, they can lead to relatively negative consequences.

Our study was primarily focused on the personality of violinists. Results of scientific-research studies in the field of musical education and music psychology conducted to date often remain only on a theoretical level, and from this perspective it would therefore be very useful to elaborate them further into the methodologies of the individual disciplines⁴⁶. We believe that the correlation between personality and playing is valid for all musicians regardless of their instrument, and similarly in this respect we do not take account of the factor of genre, the factor of culture (the country in which the study was conducted) or the factor of the general social and economic context, which is mentioned by Woody⁴⁷. In our opinion, it is also not of fundamental significance to take these factors into account in relation to the identified factors, which are relevant for musical development. In this respect, however, we believe that in the case of certain variables, the factor of the specific musical instrument on which our study is focused may play a role here to a certain extent.

Conclusion

During the course of our study we examined the relationship between personality and playing and identified the bio-psycho-social-spiritual factors relevant for the musical development of a violinist. We also responded to the question as to why personal problems or issues are projected into the playing of some people and not others. One of the reasons that spurred us to conduct such a study was the endeavour to realise a functional linkage between music psychology and musical education via the interconnection of the theoretical observations of science together with the results of previously conducted studies in this area, and the long-term experience of individual teachers, which was mentioned as a certain idea by Holas⁴⁸. For this reason, we also strove towards the possibility of the practical use of our study, and on the basis thereof we also formulated practical recommendations which can be used in pedagogical or psychological practice. If we therefore ask what we should know about the personality of a musician/violinist during the course of the musical-educational process, we could formulate a number of recommendations in accordance with our research. We believe that we should know the fundamental correlations between the personality of the violinist and their playing – the personality of a musician is to a considerable extent reflected in their playing and subsequently also influences their musical development, whilst playing then retrospectively influences personality. During the course of musical develop-

⁴⁶ Holas, *Psychologické základy hudební pedagogiky*.

⁴⁷ Woody, "The musician's personality".

⁴⁸ Holas, *Psychologické základy hudební pedagogiky*.

ment there is therefore a constant circular causality between personality and playing. Playing can influence personality either positively or negatively. In the case of there being a positive influence of playing on personality, musical activity can be a significant source of self-realisation and self-actualisation in the life of a musician/violinist, and in some cases can even be a kind of “therapeutic matter”. In the case of there being a negative influence of playing on personality, this process is either resolved and crosses over into a positive spiral between personality and playing or is not resolved and in this case shifts into a negative spiral between personality and playing. From this perspective, it appears logical to us that this matter should be taken into account within the framework of the musical-educational process, e.g. in the method of providing feedback to students.

We should also know the specific factors that are relevant for musical development, as well as their classification within the context of the entire bio-psycho-social-spiritual spectrum (Table 3). We should know that it is possible to develop positive factors, but we should also know about the possibilities for solution or at least compensation of certain risk or negative factors. If, during the course of the musical-educational process, we encounter a student who needs to resolve precisely such issues within the framework of their playing or musical development, we could quote Galamian⁴⁹ who asserts that a teacher should also be a “good psychologist”. On the other hand, in accordance with the testimonies of the individual teachers, we also propose a procedure whereby if the problems or issues of such a student go beyond the professional qualifications of the teacher or the actual student-teacher relationship (in the direction of a potential therapeutic relationship), there should be the option of co-operation with a psychologist. In such a case we offer the following model of co-operation (Diagram 6):

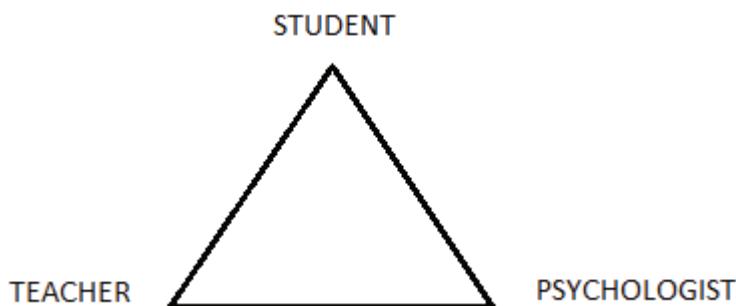


Diagram 6. Potential inter-disciplinary co-operation

We believe that the presented study has fulfilled the purpose of the referential survey. However, this study, at least in our opinion, could serve for further development in the form of a closer examination of individual themes, factors or categories. Nevertheless, we believe that the most important contribution which our study can make is an application of the obtained and identified observations in musical practice.

⁴⁹ Sheila M. Nelson, *The Violin and Viola* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1972).

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Summary

WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT A MUSICIAN'S/VIOLINIST'S PERSONALITY WITHIN THE MUSICAL-EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

The personality of a musician has a considerable influence on their playing. Deeper examination of this context has substantial potential for use within the framework of the musical-educational process. We focused on the relationship between personality and playing and identifying specific psychological factors which are relevant for musical development, including their place within a broader context of other factors. The research is focused on violinists, but it may be applicable analogously to all musicians.

Key words: *personality of musician, musical development, violin, violinist, musical psychology, musical education*

