The effects of Russian piano pedagogy on Vietnamese pianists, with comparisons of effects of Vietnamese piano pedagogy and UK piano pedagogy.

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The Effects of Russian Piano Pedagogy on Vietnamese Pianists, with Comparisons of Effects Of Vietnamese Piano Pedagogy and UK Piano Pedagogy.

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ABSTRACT

Cultures in contact over a considerable period influence intellectual traditions, practices and habits relating to musical expression and the manner of teaching it. This study investigates the effects of different cultural contacts on Vietnamese student pianists, especially from Russian-style piano pedagogy and associated educational ideas and methods in music conservatoires. The purpose of this study was to compare various teaching approaches and learning styles, and the reactions of Vietnamese students to three different sources of training of piano teachers: Russia, Vietnam and England. Different sources of training affected piano pedagogy, and different musical traditions affected expression in piano performance, especially where students are from a cultural background different from that of their teacher.

Observations of actual piano lessons were undertaken, and data were also obtained from interviews and questionnaires and analysed statistically. Results are reported and discussed in relation to four prominent features of the Russian piano school: achieving a powerful and substantial sound; the requirement for "singing" quality on the piano; the solid technical training which requires an enormous amount of practice time; and the necessity to play from memory. These are four prominent features of the Russian piano schooling. In addition, Vietnamese students' problems regarding rhythmic accuracy highlight an inherent difference between the Vietnamese and Russian piano school.

Major differences and similarities in teaching styles between Russian teachers and those from the UK and Vietnam were described and commented on under the following headings: use of mental practice; the role of listening; teacher demonstration; freedom for students in learning and making decisions (choice of repertoire; performance opportunities for students; students' emotional reactions); the more liberal approach of the UK teachers; and the piano teaching styles at the Hanoi Conservatory that have been strongly influenced by the Russian piano school through Russian graduates' teaching in Vietnam.

These findings have important pedagogical implications. The more teachers control there was in lessons, the less a student would contribute to lessons actively. More liberal or less authoritarian approaches to teaching do not necessarily inculcate the discipline required for high achievement technically and expressively. There needs to be a balance between liberal approaches and encouraging the student to become autonomous in their efforts, and ensuring that they realize the importance of being disciplined in their practice habits.

ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Today, in the first decade of the 21st century, the globalisation of education means that students from all over the world can be found in almost any major educational institution, studying and researching. Especially, one can find Asians studying in Europe, Australia, and North America, in large numbers. Prior to the last few of decades, the effects of colonization resulted in Asians, for example, studying in Europe with colonial powers as part of the process of colonisation. This situation had cultural effects as some Asians, for example, tried to assimilate what to many were alien ways of doing things and thinking, especially the older they were when they left their own country to study abroad.

I was born in the North of Vietnam when the Western influence was already weakened. The French had left 16 years ago and the country was at war where the Communist Government in the North was fighting the government in Saigon which was supported by America and her allies. Despite the history of Western intervention in Vietnam, there is still a strong sense of being Vietnamese. This thesis is motivated by my first hand experience as a teenager from Vietnam going to the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory at the age of 14, and the difficulties I encountered trying to fit my Vietnamese upbringing to the demands of my Russian teachers who helped shape my musical career in Moscow. Despite my traditional personality as a Vietnamese, I had to learn to play Western music as a Westerner.

This set me thinking about several things: culture, teaching styles, the effect of someone from one culture having to adopt the ways of another, either through colonization, or as in my case through being educated in a totally alien and foreign country: Russia. These thoughts led me to the idea of investigating many aspects of my own experience: effects of culture on teaching styles, effects of different musical traditions and requirements of expression in performance, problems such as those outlined above where a Vietnamese

pianist is suddenly required to play like a Westerner, and where Vietnamese pianists who were trained in different countries might develop different approaches to teaching, performing, and expression in music. As Gerig stated:

> "Cultural makeup will surely be reflected to a considerable degree in interpretation at the keyboard."
>
> Gerig (1974, p. 288)

Eventually I came to the conclusion that the main issue was teaching styles, and how all the factors listed above influenced the interaction between teacher and student. This thesis is an investigation into some effects of teaching and learning piano performance where students are from a cultural background different to that of the culture in which their teacher learned piano performance or where there are other differences of a cultural or musical type.

I decided, therefore, to investigate the teaching styles of three different types of Vietnamese piano teachers to whom I had access, including some English teachers from the Royal College of Music in London: 1) Vietnamese trained in Russia (Russian graduates); 2) Vietnamese trained in England and where I include British pianists teaching in England, who I experienced recently in my time at the Royal College of Music; and 3) Vietnamese pianists trained in Vietnam.

I have taught at the Hanoi Conservatoire of Music in Vietnam since 1995. Having experienced piano teaching from both sides of the equation, as a student and as a teacher, I am now researching the question of what differences, among piano teachers in Russia, Vietnam and a Western country like England, are to be found in their approaches to piano pedagogy. An important point is that I have experienced at first hand piano teaching in all three countries: Russia, the UK, and in Vietnam. I was taught in Russia, and in Vietnam as well as teaching there myself. To complete the picture I needed to visit England which I did in 2004. It was felt important that I witness personally the teaching of piano in England rather than just rely on my observations of English trained Vietnamese in Vietnam in order that my data from across all three source countries were compatible in all respects.

Since Russian trained teachers constitute the major source of the Piano Faculty of the Hanoi Conservatoire, this study will attempt to investigate the following issues: first, to draw a portrait of "typical" Russian trained piano teachers, and, second, to search for the extent to which the influence from the Russian School exists and what factors may weaken that influence on Vietnamese piano pedagogy. The Hanoi Conservatoire also employs piano teachers trained in Vietnam and England, and this thesis will compare their approaches, and the reactions of students to the three different sources of training of piano teachers found in Vietnam: Russia, Vietnam, and England.

The Impact of Culture on the Teaching Behaviours of English, Russian and Vietnamese Trained Teachers

Sociocultural values and norms determine and shape the concept of education and teaching behaviours. The economic, political, social, and cultural aspects of the environment can have a considerable influence on the teaching approach and on how it is evaluated. So although I am studying teaching styles, I am aware that the socio-political and cultural contexts will have significant effects on teaching. However, I will not attempt to estimate these effects, merely to report differences observed in teaching from a musical perspective: the focus of the thesis being musical pedagogy as opposed to socio- cultural or socio-political issues.

Nevertheless, in this study, the process of teaching is recognised as being influenced by social, political, and educational aspects of the environment and where necessary these aspects will inevitably be commented on. Three countries which might exhibit such potentially different environmental factors, and thus different teaching approaches, have been selected for this research: England, Vietnam and Russia.

Some Relevant Socio-Cultural Environmental Differences between England, Vietnam, and Russia

England and Vietnam differ in the form of their social institutions. The former is a typical individualist country where the society values the person's unique qualities,

initiative, and achievement, whereas the latter is perceived as a collectivist one which places more emphasis on consensus with the community, on conformity with others.

England and Vietnam also differ in the political regime each favours, with the former as a democratic state and the latter as a communist regime with more central controls. The differences in the political sphere are manifest in the role played by various authority figures in both Vietnam and England. For example, in Vietnam parents, elders, and teachers play a very important role in making decisions regarding such things as marriage, buying a house, and choosing a profession or a field of education. In England such things are primarily an individual's decision.

The political situation in the country influences the structure and the goals of educational systems and also the tradition of raising children within British and Vietnamese families. The Vietnamese educational institution is fully dominated by teachers. In contrast, research with teachers in the Western countries shows that they strive to develop the individual interests and abilities in their students that support critical thinking and creativity (Hudson and Hoffman, 1993). Lang Lang, a Chinese pianist and considered to be one of the greatest pianists of today, acknowledged that his Western teachers wanted him to play in his own way but also to respect the traditions. He revealed:

> "The good thing about all of them is that they never tell me to do the same things as they did."
>
> Muso (2004)

Similar tendencies are observed in parent-child relationships. English families are thought to raise outgoing, friendly and independent children; however, Vietnamese families tend to raise dependent and more obedient children.

In sum, authorities in Vietnam and England evidently differentiate in their political, social, and educational intentions. Russia, however, particularly now, seems to represent an intermediate position. Similar to many of the East European countries, Russia was traditionally considered as a collectivist country (Realo and Allik, 1999). However since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia and its former allies have become far more democratic, although perhaps not so completely as in England.

Originality

The differences in the originality in thinking between the representatives of the Western (England), South East Asian (Vietnam) and Eastern European (Russia) cultures provoke a question about the role of the teacher and student. Western teachers and students develop through expressing oneself and becoming different from others. On the contrary, people in South East Asian cultures are interdependent and focus on fitting themselves in with others. Their student credo is linked with subordination to the requirements of the teacher. Humility is very characteristic of the communication patterns of most Vietnamese. They seldom feel comfortable in taking credit for their achievements, good taste, or choice and tend to become embarrassed as a result of excessive praise. Independent non-traditional ways of thinking do not earn a high opinion. Individuals with very divergent views and behaviours are observed as unusual or strange, as opposed to interesting. This suggests that originality in thinking as an important trait of creative and active behaviour is perhaps only fostered within Western situations.

Students' active and creative expressions in a lesson are, it seems, specific to the Western cultural perspective, and rather atypical in comparison with the Vietnamese view. Passive learning has been explained by the specific factors of the socio-cultural environment that prevents individuals' divergent and original thinking. However, it would be premature to generalize these findings to broader populations of these large, diverse countries. Small samples of conservatoire students from these countries are possibly not representative of the entire population and these students may well have characteristics that are possibly not typical of the general population. These considerations, however, require more elaborate investigation and remain a potential topic for future studies.

Problem Statement

Up to now in Vietnam, music education research has focused on learning how to play the instrument, on mastering various aspects of its technique and on giving practical advice to teachers and students, yet little attention has been paid to the teaching

processes per se. Very little or perhaps no formal research has investigated specific pedagogical problems of piano performance, especially where comparisons are made between different countries and political systems. In this study, I employ the scientific method which can produce data expressed in numerical terms, making statistical analysis possible. This systematic and analytical approach facilitates evaluation of the processes involved in piano teaching at an advanced level. Another important aspect is that few researchers have investigated the different teaching styles and the effect of cultural differences in piano training found in Vietnam.

Methodological Approach

Complex questionnaires were devised to investigate many aspects of the problem outlined above. This study also uses a method of systematic observation and interview to analyse teachers and students' attitudes, feelings, and responses from the perspectives of pedagogy and cultural difference. The two strengths of this systematic approach to observation and interview are, first, that the categories of teacher and student behaviour are clearly defined and tested for validity. Second, the results are reported in numerical terms which make statistical analysis possible.

CHAPTER 2

A DISCUSSION OF HOW OUTSIDE INFLUENCES AFFECT CULTURAL PRACTICES IN MUSIC

Change is often engendered by contact between two or more cultures. The effects of cultural contact range from the making of slight adjustments within existing musical styles to the creative transformation of whole styles and the musical organizing principles on which they are based. Creative transformation usually happens as a result of convergence between cultures over a long period of contact. That convergence might produce new musical ideas, principles and new teaching methods. However, contact may cause collisions or clashes between cultures, for example when a colonial power submerges another culture and suppresses an indigenous music or when a traditional community rejects alien ideas. Alternatively, the energy generated by such collisions and conflict might result in new creative achievements or new pedagogical methods which have a partially or wholly positive effect on the musical context of the society (Kartomi and Blum, 1994).

2.1 THE EFFECT OF INTERCULTURAL CONTACTS ON VIETNAMESE MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

Intercultural contact is not a new phenomenon in the South-East or other parts of Asia. Additionally, internal contact within a culture between different groups occurred through social, economic and political activities. New contacts take place with more distant societies, both neighbouring and Western societies. This chapter focuses not so much on traditional relationships but on contact with Chinese culture, and especially contacts with Western culture.

Five main forces - religions, media, cultural shows, military activities and French influences - have been responsible for introducing new music into Vietnam. There have

been three main periods of musical cultural interaction in Vietnam's recent history. The first cultural interaction took place during the colonial period (1858-1954). The second occurred after independence when Vietnam divided into North and South for twenty years (1954-1975). Unification occurred in 1975 under a socialist regime and resulted in the third cultural interaction.

A short introduction to the three periods in Vietnam's recent history

The first period saw the development of an indigenous Vietnamese musical style and the beginning of a superficial influence from Western sources, mainly French music. The Vietnamese Communist Party won the 9-year long war against French colonial invasion in 1954. With the subsequent Geneva Agreement, Vietnam was divided into South and North areas. During the second period (1954-1975), though "the government of both the Republic of Vietnam and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Vietnam (which became the national government after 1975) tried to use music for propaganda" (Miller and Williams 1998a, p. 89), there existed two different cultural policies, one in the North and another in the South. In the North, Russian and European art music were mainly introduced, and there were attempts to restore the dying traditional music. However, the creation and development of a "new music" in the Western idiom saw the beginning of the implantation of Western music. In the South, the influx of American pop music (Miller and Williams, 1998c) and the absence of a cultural and musical policy to foster the development of traditional music from the government resulted in the establishment of new styles of American-influenced pop music (Hung[1], Email Communication, 2007). This situation comprised the second musical cultural interaction. Then followed the American invasion of Vietnam in 1963, which, after a long war, ended in 1975 with the American withdrawal.

---

[1] *Le Tuan Hung* is a composer, performer and musicologist, specializing in Vietnamese music, cross-cultural music and experimental music. He is a multi-instrumentalist with a strong background in Vietnamese traditional music and Western classical music. He has performed widely in Asia, Australia, Europe, America and Oceania. His compositions have been created for a wide range of instruments, ensembles and media. His compositions and performances have been released by Move Records, NMA, ABC Music and Australian Sound Heritage Association. He is also the author of various publications on Vietnamese performing arts and is regarded as an expert in Vietnamese musicology. Apart from being trained as a traditional musician in the Vietnamese tradition, he also has a Bachelor of Music from the University of Melbourne and a PhD in Music from Monash University

The year 1975 marked the establishment of a unified Vietnam under the leadership of the Communist Party. The country was then united under one government. In this third music interaction (1975 onwards) Vietnam continued to retain a Vietnamese musical identity as the official music, in order to represent Vietnam both to the outside world and within Vietnam, as it was considered politically advantageous to do so. At the same time, Vietnamese musicians acquired Western elements in order to attract modern audiences. In the colonial days Western-Vietnamese interaction was towards adaptation, syncretism, and parallel styles of music. The development of parallel styles of music started in the first period and continued in both North and South Vietnam during the 2nd and 3rd periods. The first period saw the rise of Western-influenced pop music and the stagnation of traditional music. In the 2nd period, Western-influenced music became the dominating force in both North and South Vietnam. However, performing arts companies specializing in traditional music, theatre and dances existed in both "countries" since 1954.

An early European cultural interaction

> "Before 1900, Vietnam had experienced around four centuries of exposure to European culture, first from Roman Catholic missionaries and then through French colonialism. Some high-ranking Roman Catholic with a good knowledge of Vietnam collaborated with French colonial forces as political advisers in planning an invasion."
>
> Nguyen (1998, p. 507)

The first invasion of a Military force comprising Spanish and French forces occurred on 31 August, 1858, at *Đà Nẵng* harbour. However, only after 30 years using weapons to impose neo-colonialism on Vietnam, the penetration of Western culture grew strongly. First in Hanoi, then it flared up over the whole country. After the French completed their invasion and founded a colony in the late 19th century, they set up a colonial policy and propagated Western civilization, mainly French culture, in order to acculturate and control the populace through their colonial system. During this time French culture and music spread throughout Vietnam very energetically in many ways (Nguyen, 1998).

Despite the wars and the influx of foreign music, Vietnamese traditional music survived. Although until the 1910s, most Vietnamese people remained a passive audience, a group of them worried that Vietnamese traditional music was becoming extinct since colonial music was pervading society (Nguyen, 1998). To find a remedy for this situation, they became involved in the movement for reform and modernization. "In the beginning, some Vietnamese used reform, renovation, and innovation as the key terms for change in traditional music and theatre" (Nguyen, 1988, p.508). The reform and innovation movement spread throughout the country, starting with the *Cải lương*, a form of theatre similar to opera originating in the South, followed by *Ca kịch Huế* meaning "*Huế* theatre troupes" in *Huế Chèo* in the North. *Cải lương, Ca kich Huế* and *Chèo* are three forms of regional folk/popular theatre. All these theatre forms use pre-existing melodies from a pool of tunes (folk, classical and some newly composed tunes) (Hung, Email Communication, 2007). To capture urbanites' attention, the artists of *Chèo* embraced modernisation. They named new forms *Chèo Cải lương* meaning "reformed *Chèo"* and *Chèo văn minh* meaning "modernized *Chèo"*. Between 1920 and 1945, the whole country was in the midst of modernization. Music students in French colonial and Catholic schools began to compose Vietnamese-language songs with accompaniment based on Western tempered scales and Western rules of harmony. These songs first were called modernized music (in Vietnamese: *Nhạc cải cách*), then new music (*Tân nhạc*) (Nettle and Stone, 2002, p. 449).

During the 20th century there was a trend which was called Vietnamization of Western-European music. French songs sung in Vietnamese were first heard during the intermission on the *Cai luong* stage in 1923.

> "People in Hanoi, Saigon, and some provincial cities enjoyed playing Western instruments, listening to the songs of Dino Rossi and Josephine Baker, and singing French songs with Vietnamese lyrics (in Vietnamese: *Bài ta điệu Tây* songs in the Vietnamese language with a French melody), including "*la Marseillaise*," "*Madelon*" "*J'ai Deux Amours*" the "*Chant du Martin*" and others Accompanying these songs were traditional instruments, though some Western instruments were also used."
>
> Nguyen (1988, p.509)

> "From 1940 to 1954, more than one hundred new modern songs were composed. These songs were of many types: romantic songs, poetic theatre songs, songs adopted from poems, Boy Scout songs, children's songs, revolutionary songs and religious songs. …Several of the nation's anthems were also composed. The "*march des Etudiants*" ("Students' March"), composed by revolutionist *Luu Huu Phuoc* in late 1941, which later became "*Tiếng gọi sinh viên*" (" Call for the Patriotic Students") and later "*Tiếng gọi thanh niên"* (" Call for the Patriotic Youth") was eventually used by the former Republic of Vietnam. At the same time, "*Tiến quân ca*" ("March to the Front") composed by revolutionist *Van Cao* become the National anthem of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam...More political songs, mainly marches, were prominent in the North and in rural areas of the South. The first Communist song of this kind, "*Cùng nhau đi hồng binh"* (March to the Red Army) was composed in 1930"
>
> Nguyen (1998, p. 510)

Thai Thi Lang (Ngoc *et al..* 2000) was the first Vietnamese woman who graduated from the Paris Conservatoire (1931-1935) as a pianist. Beside her talent in piano performance, she was also a composer of many Vietnamese songs arranged for Western instruments. She used Vietnamese traditional melodies, such as *Nguyen Dan, Ly Ngua O, Hanh Van, Binh Ban Van* as a basis for her compositions for piano.

Apart from adopting Western styles, a few musicians were interested in Western notation. *Nguyen Van Tuyen* - a musician who was active in the Vietnamese musical reformation complained in the newspaper *La Patrie Annamite* in *Hanoi,* France- *Annam* in *Hue* and *Cahiers de la Jeunesse* in *Saigon* that the popular style of "Vietnamese lyrics-Western music" was not typical Vietnamese music. He wanted to argue for adopting Western notation in order to notate Vietnamese music, and at the same time create new music based on the Vietnamese language and traditional melodies, which basically have great variety in timbre. He himself wrote two songs: one was *Kiếp Hoa,* and the other and a Heroic song on a poem of *Nguyen Van Con*.

The advantage of the Western notation system is that it provides a much more detailed notation of rhythm than the traditional Vietnamese systems, in which only the main beats were indicated. The use of the newly-developed systems of notation also provides performers with more information about technical and musical aspects of a piece and thus assists the music learner to understand the piece of music. The use of Western notation also enables the performers to employ two or more instruments to play one part in unison for ensemble arrangements. However this explicit and more detailed notation system discouraged students from developing the ability to improvise.

During the 1930s, contact with Western culture had an impact on the invention of new instruments and modifications to traditional instruments in musical theatre and traditional ensembles (Nguyen, 1988, p. 508). Following the influence of Western opera, the musical theatre in Vietnam added newly adapted stories, instruments and modified stage techniques such as curtains, scenery, lighting, sound amplification and costumes.

> "Since 1920, Western instruments have been adopted and successfully modified for use in this type of music called *Nhạc tài tử*: the instrument *Lục huyền cầm* derives from the acoustic guitar, *Vĩ cầm* from the violin, *Đại hồ cầm* from the cello, and *Hà uy cầm* from the steel guitar."
>
> Nguyen (1998, p. 484)

The zithers, lutes, and fiddles were also derived from Western instruments. Southern musicians used mandolins to play in the *Vọng cổ* style. Among these instruments, the guitar remains a favourite instrument in *adapting* foreign instruments to play Vietnamese music such as *Nhạc tài tử* and *Cải lương* (Nguyen, 1988, p. 508). In addition to this,

> *"Cải lương* employs a Western style band (guitar, electric bass, saxophone, trumpet, synthesizer, drums), played during the introduction, interludes, intermissions, and conclusion of the performance."
>
> Nguyen (1998, p. 494)

This development came about largely during the 1960s and 1970s (Hung, 2007).

A major cultural upheaval (1954-1975)

> "After independence (in 1954), Vietnam was divided into the People's Democratic Republic of Vietnam (the communists in the North) under *Ho Chi Minh* and the Republic of Vietnam (the Westernising south) under a succession of presidents. The north followed the models of the Russian socialist realism and Chinese revolution…"
>
> Miller and Williams (1998a, p. 88)

> "…the North turned to Eastern Europe for help, the conservatories and universities of such countries as the former Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania, the former Czechoslovakia, and East Germany began providing both European and Vietnamese teachers to maintain Vietnam's Western music. Despite the war, Hanoi still had an active symphony orchestra and a conservatory devoted to Western classical music."
>
> Miller and Williams (1998c, p. 81).

In the south efforts were less systematic and ideological. American influence grew. However, in both parts of Vietnam, music and many songs with political texts, together with theatre, served as weapons of propaganda and patriotism, "urging people to resist the enemy" (Miller and Williams, 1998a, p. 88).

The latest cultural interaction (1975 onward)

The present cultural policies of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, formulated and executed from the Ministry of Culture and Information in Hanoi, have been selectively kind to the traditional arts. While in the South, certain genres have received little support from government, in the North, some important genres such as the *Chèo* (a type of music like opera) and the *Tuồng* (a type of music for singing, dancing and drama)

have been revived and restored to extremely high artistic levels. The best-known examples of Western and traditional combinations which were composed during the 1980s are *Nguyen Van Doi's* Concerto for Zither *Đàn Tranh*, strings and percussion and *Quang Hai*'s Concerto "The Liberation of my Fatherland" for Zither *Đàn Tranh* and full symphonic orchestra. In these compositions, *Quang Hai* and *Nguyen Van Doi* combined traditional and Western instruments in the orchestra (Hung, 1994, p. 244). The government has financially supported groups by purchasing instruments, costumes, and props. Under official cultural policies, the traditional arts are generally allowed to flourish.

The history of Vietnam shares similarities with several other countries and cultures across the world. It is interesting, therefore, and perhaps helpful to put the Vietnamese situation into a more international context in order to highlight the various forces and effects which influenced musical practices. In order to do this, I compare aspects of Vietnamese music and the effects of intrusion by other cultures with some aspects of Indian music, Italian music, theatre music in Croatia, and music institutions in the Ukraine. All of these musical traditions share the effects of colonisation. Finally, in this chapter I discuss some issues arising from foreign influence and invasion, including censorship and other forms of alien control.

2.2 THE SYSTEM OF ORAL TRAINING IN VIETNAM AND IN INDIA AND THE PROBLEM ARISING FROM USING WESTERN NOTATION IN VIETNAM

As with North Indian music, one of the most important aspects of traditional instruction in Vietnamese music was the oral transmission process. Traditionally, notation was hardly ever used. The student learnt music orally and was compulsorily required to learn everything by rote. Since orality means the pervasive presence of sound, the student at the same time had to be as a listener and receiver in learning music and acquiring musical knowledge. He or she needed to rely exclusively on memory and oral recall of musical concepts.

> In North Indian music institutions the oral learning process and transmission depended on a close relationship and constant contact

> between teacher and student that required them to live in the same house. They were expected to treat each other as family members. The teacher was as a model for his student not only in musical matters but also in all aspects of life.
>
> Alter (1994, pp. 159-160)

Although this special relationship between teacher and student in North India was not required in musical instruction in Vietnam, the oral transmission process, which develops hearing and memory in music, was an essential feature in traditional instruction of music in Vietnam. It required students' ability for memorizing music, listening to one another, hearing-sense execution, in which, students listened to music and then repeated it on instruments, a method that Vietnamese ancestors used to transmit music from generation to generation. While students were learning court musical instruments, the skills were transmitted according to a traditional method under the conduct of teachers and as represented by experienced folk artists like Mr. *Trần Kích,* folk artist of *Huế*[2] court music. It means that before playing some traditional musical piece, students must learn by heart a musical piece according to traditional readings. The folk artist teaches through a combination of oral transmission with finger technique transmission. Students hear and see the teacher playing and then replicate what they have witnessed. In this way, Vietnamese musicians learned by imitation, repetition and experimentation, absorbing the rules for each modal nuance and developing their skills at improvisation.

According to the experience of some musical instrument teachers and folk artists in the South of Vietnam, there was another method using Western and reading music. The melody of a musical piece is written down by using note names *Hò-Xư-Xanh-Xê-Cống-Liu-U* and so on. This also relies on oral and finger technique transmission. However notation (either in Chinese characters or in *Quốc ngữ*) had already been in use in the traditions of *Huế* music and *tài tử* music in the 19th century.

Nevertheless, during the early part of twentieth century, Western ideas began to permeate many areas of Indian and Vietnamese society. The playing or enjoyment of

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[2] *Huế* is the name of the city located in central Vietnam. Between 1802 and 1945, it was the imperial capital of the *Nguyễn* Dynasty. As such, it is well known for its monuments and architecture.

Western classical music became a symbol of social prestige in Vietnam. Western features in music have been regarded as a representation of advancement. The popular belief among Vietnamese musicians between the 1910s and the 1950s was that Western music, with its system of detailed notation and fixed compositions, was superior to Vietnamese classical music (Hung, 1998 p.89). For this reason, Indian and Vietnamese musicians were aware of the need for including notation in teaching practices. Using traditional musical pieces with notation based on the Western method for teaching is designed to help students understand and remember easily because it is quite specific. This innovation not only contributed to the systematization of music education, but also helped to preserve many traditional compositions that might have been lost through purely oral musical training.

However, the introduction of notation and the requirement for students to follow faithfully the fixed notation of pieces created problems for Vietnamese performance of ancient traditional music. Vietnamese traditional music researchers found out that there are many problems when using Western notation for writing down Vietnamese traditional music. Western researchers themselves, when studying Vietnamese traditional music, concluded that it is impossible to use Western notation to write down genuinely Vietnamese traditional musical pieces (*E.Le Bris*)[3]. Considering the scientific aspect, there are many musical elements expressing the subtlety of Vietnamese traditional music but Western notation cannot express all this because the system of its notation has no symbols for such things. For example, Western notation cannot express a vocalization of "lesser or higher" (not sharp or flat), quick or slow vibrato techniques, accent techniques (accent combined with glissando, accent combined with vibrato etc.) and galloping techniques, etc. Unfortunately, at present, the notation of vocalization is taught according to the Western method, not that of tradition, in most schools for training professional musicians, including those who learn the specialties of traditional music. There are very few places applying the traditional Vietnamese musical script to teaching.

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[3] Studying the item "problem of notation" in the speech by Professor- Composer *Tô Vũ* in the summary of record of a conference on "Scale and mode of traditional music of some of ethnic groups of the south of Vietnam" published by Arts and Culture Institute in *Ho Chi Minh* city in 1993, (pages 23 and 24); and Professor -Dr *Trần Văn Khê* , the essay 'Vietnamese traditional music, translation in the Vietnamese language"(page 300).

The limitation occurs when there is restriction within one rigid style/ pattern and that hinders the creativity of performers. Many requirements are necessary for traditional musical identity, especially since the scope of each style of singing and playing of Vietnamese traditional music is wider than that of Western music. For instance, to play a Mozart piano piece, no matter whether an artist is European, Asian, African or American, they only play what is written in the score without adding local characteristics or individual characteristic expressions. If one hears a good folk artist playing some piece, one recognizes that each person has his/her own characteristics, but still keeps within the requirements of the expressive style and technical boundaries of the original skeletal melody.

Like many older traditions across the world which were based on improvisation, Vietnamese music has its own style through improvisation, extemporization, impromptu ensembles, ornamentation and individual creation. These were important features of the Vietnamese musical tradition. All the ancient traditionalists of Vietnamese performance shared a common principle in which every individual musician was allowed to put into full play his/ her creativity by making extensive use of ornamentation patterns, and passing notes, syncopation, vibrato and note bending based on a certain “melody skeleton” (Arana, 1994). Thanks to this, whenever playing the same melodic skeleton, the performer of ancient traditional music could offer the audience a fresh experience. However, with the use of Western music notation, the indigenous emphasis on improvisation in performance was weakened and gradually disappeared.

Vietnamese traditional music has no such thing as absolute pitch and many tones in Vietnamese scales are not equivalent to those of the West (Nguyen, 1998, p. 456). Vietnamese musical intervals are variable in the size of intervals, some of which can vary as much as between 165 to 175 cents (100 cents equals a Western semitone). Vietnamese traditional music has additional tones created by pressing on the strings. Soft and flexible strings enable performer to produce passing and additional notes (Nguyen, 1998, p. 457). Traditionally in vocal music the notations are only approximate in order to allow a high level of flexibility and spontaneity and enable the singers to improvise on the basic tune-structure and show their skill by adding ornaments to the line, including trills, vibratos of various speeds and widths, grace notes, sliding notes, and appoggiaturas. The frequent use of bended tones (*luyến láy)* in melodies was to give a sense of "softness" and "flexibility" (Hung, 1994, pp. 132, 134).

> "Traditionally, skeletal melodies and a highly – developed sense of mode and rhythm serve as the basis upon which musicians elaborate"
>
> Arana (1994, p. 93)

However, this indigenous emphasis on improvisation in performance has been neglected since Vietnam's School of Music (Now Hanoi Conservatory of Music) was established in 1956 together with a number of schools of Culture and Arts in 1960s. The teaching method and the use of Western notation in these schools were modelled after the European conservatory system. This problem was further intensified when Western ear training became a compulsory subject because that affected the pitch perception of many students. They tended to change the pitches of traditional music to those of the Western scale of temperament (Hung, 1994, p. 90). The use of Western standard notation, consonant tones and dissonant tones, and a number of other similar concepts are all measured according to the standard of Western music theory, which has taken deep root, and affected the hearing sense as well as the perceiving ability of the Vietnamese music professionals via curricula modelled on the Western style at conservatories. Most students who have acquired a professional hearing sense find that it is all based on outcomes of a continuous series of conditioned reflexes over the long period studying Western music. Indeed, it is the 15 years' full-time training course in music at the Hanoi Conservatory for 7 – 21 year olds that provides the longest training and impacts most profoundly.

Recently, I and my colleagues in Hanoi have realized the disadvantages to ourselves that our ears, once Westernized by the long training time, were already fixed into standard notes of the Western diatonic system and thus we could not get accustomed to the tender and flexible tones of our Vietnamese ancestors. As a result, the unfamiliarity of these ancient traditions leads to difficulty in their acceptance. It is strange and uncomfortable for a Western trained professional musician to hear Western-notated Vietnamese melodies sounding on traditional Vietnamese musical instruments. Such a sound would be very strange if the unison is played using many instruments, and this can often be heard in reformed traditional ensembles of Vietnamese musical instruments. It was also probably because of the growth of Western professional hearing abilities that many people in Vietnam in the past rushed to reform and modify the role

of traditional instruments and endeavoured to set up integrated ensembles of traditional musical instruments with instrument grouped like the pattern of a symphony orchestra.

Indigenous Vietnamese music is interesting and attractive due to its scope for improvisation and spontaneity (Arana, 1994, p. 109). However with fixed notation, played the same every time, together with the requirement of teachers and examination for students to play faithfully fixed compositions (Hung, 1998), various tonal and microtonal ornaments of traditional music were either simplified or entirely abandoned. This fails to create a wish among listeners to hear more. To some extent, a similar thing happened with Western music, especially during the Baroque period where improvisation was the main basis of performance. In the West this practice also disappeared as music notation and printing became more predominant, especially during the 19th century and 20th centuries.

2.3 COMPARING THE SUPPORT FOR MUSIC OF BRITISH COLONIALISM IN INDIA WITH THE SUPPORT FOR MUSIC OF FRENCH COLONIALISM IN VIETNAM

> "The British administration in India fostered the traditional aristocratic patrons; they also introduced Western ideals of institutional education and thus encouraged a new system of patronage and musical training"
>
> Alter (1994, p. 161)

The British did not attempt to destroy traditional Indian music or culture. They did not particularly want the people of India to change their culture; they just wanted money from the Indian subcontinent. Many Indians were not converted to Christianity – quite the reverse – the British did not want them converted. So Hindus and Muslims in Indian were left with their own religion. This was a major difference between the way the French controlled Vietnam and the British controlled India. Although the French administration established the Conservatoire Francaise d' Extreme-orient in Vietnam in 1927, this was forced to close after a short time. Consequently, music training was offered in Roman Catholic churches and French schools for religious purposes. The

colonial policy was aimed at preventing Vietnamese people from following their traditional culture. Instead the aim was to develop French religious, political and commercial activities, education and art. One of these activities is music, which served as a vehicle for introducing new cultural ways, especially Western, into Vietnam. Their purpose was to make the Vietnamese prefer French culture and get away from Vietnamese traditional music and then eliminate it. This was a major difference between India under the British and Vietnam under the French.

Through contact with French culture, the colonialists attempted to loosen the grip of the old traditions and change the outlook among many members of the educated class in order to weaken the Vietnamese spirit and the resistance of nationalists. The French called this a moral conquest. From the rise of preference for French culture, their intention was to train Vietnamese staff to serve the French colonial regime. However the social status and position of the Vietnamese was not equal to that of the French. The salary of a highly-skilled Vietnamese was lower than that of their French counterparts.

The British used Indian people to serve them, but they did not want to make them British. The British saw themselves at the time as superior, and the people of India as inferior (except for the Indian aristocracy who were largely educated at expensive private schools in England).

Between 1939 and 1945, since the French had the Nazis in their country as conquerors, and they wanted to protect their colonial out - post in Vietnam, so the French loosened their previous policy. They created a policy which was called “Franco-Vietnamese equality” and “Franco-Vietnamese friendship”.

> “To ease the increasing criticism by Vietnamese patriots of the fact that the colonial policy was trying to destroy the native culture, the French reformed the curriculum of Franco-Vietnamese schools in 1939 by re-introducing studies of Confucian classics, Vietnamese classical literature and history. The development of the teaching of Hue music in high schools was a part of this program of curriculum reform”.

Hung (1998, p.87)

The colonial government granted permission to publish the first text book of *Huế* music for use in Franco-Vietnamese schools. *Huế* music was a form of entertainment among the mandarins and aristocrats. This music derives from Hue, an important cultural and political centre in Vietnam between 1678 and 1945. Hue songs and Hue music can be performed as a solo, a duet, a trio or a quintet. The Hue tradition is kept alive by musicians who continue to teach their art to the younger generation. Some of the best known pieces in *Huế* music are *Lưu Thuỷ* (Running water), *Mười bài ngự* (Ten royal pieces or Ten Chinese pieces), *Nam Bình* (Peace in the south). Nhac Hue was then modified and became known as *Tài tử* music. The indigenous concept of the *Huế* and *Tài tử* music was characterized as a means for emotional expression and reflecting the inner feelings. Emotional terms such as sadness, happiness, joyfulness and tranquillity have been used in Hue music and are associated with specific melodic modes. The nature of modes and skeletal compositions allow performers to add their significant contribution and elaborations in the performing process. Besides giving permission to introduce *Huế* music into the curriculum of *Huế* schools, the colonial government also invited prominent masters of *Huế* music to teach at high schools (Hung, 1994).

2.4 COMPARISON OF MUSIC INSTITUTIONS BEFORE THE PERIOD OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE WITH MUSIC INSTITUTIONS IN VIETNAM BEFORE VIETNAM REGAINED INDEPENDENCE FROM THE FRENCH.

Vietnamese institutions of music education and Indian institutions of music education remain a legacy of the conflict and problems between their traditional instruction in music and Western music instruction. The adaptive strategies employed by Vietnamese and Indian musicians in their respective institutional environments demonstrate an important aspect of intercultural contact through music in both Vietnam and India.

The Western style music institutions in India were established much earlier than those in Vietnam. The earliest Indian music institution was established in 1871, in Calcutta (Kartomi and Blum, 1994, p. 162), while the earliest known formal music school was formed in Vietnam in 1943 by the Association for Music studies (*Hội Khuyến nhạc*).

> About three thousand students were initially enrolled. A thirty-musician brass band was formed, followed in 1945 by an orchestra. There were 320 solfege students, forty-eight violin students, and forty-five piano students. This school ceased to function after the reestablishment of the French colonial administration in 1946
>
> Nguyen (1988, pp. 511-512)

In general, whereas institutional music education was opened up throughout the larger Indian public (Kartomi and Blum, 1994, p. 162), in Vietnam, music was taught on a smaller scale under the French, "formal compositional training at that time remained an impossibility" (Gibbs, 1990, p. 10). During the colonial period, since almost no formal music institution was available, Vietnamese musicians studied Western music by themselves and through French books on such topics as music theory, music history, harmony, and guide to piano, guitar, violin, and mandolin. The French authors of the books such as Marmontel, A. Lavignac, Proud, T. Dubois and V'Indi were well known in Vietnam at that time (Ngoc *et al.*. 2000).

2.5 COMPARISON OF THE WAY NORTH INDIA HAS TACKLED THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION OF TRADITIONAL MUSICIANS WITH THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

The music educators in the present North Indian music institutions today have a different point of view from Vietnamese music educators concerning modern/ Western institutional systems. Teachers in the Sangeet Research Academy and the Bharatiya Kala Kendra think that the modern/Western institutional system has significant shortcomings compared with their oral traditions and do not wish to see their teacher's role weakened by examinations, degrees and curricula. They rejected certain features of the Western style that had compromised the oral transmission process (Kartomi and Blum, 1994, pp. 165, 166, 263). In contrast, the Vietnamese highly respect the Western system and teaching methods. They "followed the French model by creating conservatories in the European style" (Miller and Williams, 1998b, p. 119). Vietnamese musical institutions adopted the Westernized model to preserve and develop traditional music.

> "Western notation and instructional methods became the primary vehicle for teaching traditional Vietnamese instruments."
>
> Arana (1994, p. 92)

After the unification of Vietnam in 1975, only Western notation has been used in all music departments in Vietnamese institutions and conservatories, including classical, contemporary and traditional music. The core of the curriculum is based on European music of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras. The students have to study mainly Western music theory, ear training, music concepts and practices. This is true for all schools of music in North Vietnam. In the South, Vietnamese music theory, history and ear training had been taught in the Conservatoire of Music in *Saigon* between 1956 and 1975. These subjects were abolished after reunification in 1975. Recently, there have been efforts to restore these subjects. Because of this approach, the graduates are more familiar with European classical music than their own traditional music (Hung, 1998 p.110). They have had experience playing in various-size ensembles (which was traditionally only a small-size ensemble) of combinations of both traditional and Western instruments. Students of the faculty of traditional instruments graduate with a competent and accurate ability to play fixed note compositions in the Western style.

The studying time in Vietnamese institutions of music is also different from that in the North Indian institutions of music. According to teachers of vocal music at the Sangeet Research Academy and the Bharatiya kala Kendra, the music teaching cannot be structured into the time-restricting framework of a degree course. They want to remove time-bound classes. Their students may prolong the studying period as long as they and their students want (Alter, 1994, pp. 164, 166). In Vietnamese institutions of music this is not this case. Classes are taught in scheduled, time-bound sessions and are structured into the time-restricting framework of a degree course.

Examinations and degrees are also integral parts in Vietnam music education. Although Vietnamese music education was somewhat similar to Indian institutional music education during British rule and before India's independence, it is unlike the present Indian music education system in North India, as regards to examination, assessment and qualification. While the awarding of degrees and diplomas after examination is important in Vietnamese music education, for Indian students, "the highest accolade for

which students strive is positive appraisal of teacher and peers, not a Bachelor of music degree". The traditional music teachers in North India want to eliminate curricula, examinations and degrees (Alter, 1994, p. 166). The reason why Vietnamese music education provides a degree and diploma is partly because traditional musicians with official training and institutional certification provide an advantageous position in terms of performing and teaching opportunities. Festivals requiring Vietnamese traditional music are depending more and more on conservatory-trained groups, rather than encouraging musicians from within the community and inviting local people who have been singing traditionally for most of their lives but with no formal musical training and diploma or degree.

As far as student selection is concerned, in a North Indian institution of music, a single teacher is in full control of his student's selection and formal instruction. In Vietnam, music education maintains the domain of a single teacher over a given student's training, but a single teacher cannot be the only person to decide student selection and assessment. It is done by committee.

Although Vietnam and India have experienced intercultural contact affecting music education, their music institutions' objectives are different. Institutions of music in North India aim to recreate the atmosphere of traditional instruction named guru-*shishya parampara* (Alter, 1994) and make it as close as possible to the oral nature of Hindustani music and oral traditions. In contrast, Vietnamese musical conservatories and institutions have been innovative and have modernized traditional music and traditional instruments. Instead of maintaining the original integrity of Vietnamese traditional music, Vietnamese musical institutions adopted the Westernized model in order to develop traditional music. This practice has resulted in a gradual process of Westernization of music for Vietnamese traditional music.

2.6 COMPARISON OF ITALIAN FOLK MUSIC WITH VIETNAMESE MUSIC

> "Much musical diversity is also found in Italian folk music, which is due to cultural contact with both the European mainland and the Mediterranean."

Keller (1994, p. 40)

This is similar to the case in Vietnam. Vietnam has musical variety partly due to cultural contact with both the Chinese mainland and the French. I will examine to what extent this similarity exists.

Like Italian folk songs, Vietnamese music is remarkably diverse when compared with its art music, which has a unity of its own. That does not mean, however, that many of its constituents cannot be recognized in other traditions. The following evidence resulting from cultural contact is due to a combination of historical and geographic factors.

> "Some Italian ballads are similar to British ballads...and some even have exact correspondents in that repertoire."

Keller (1994, p. 41)

Italian lyric songs bear a resemblance to many of those in Bulgaria, in Arab countries, in Greece, and other European countries as well as the Mediterranean (Kartomi and Blum, 1994, pp. 42-46). Some Italian ballads were found to have come to northern Italy from the Francophone territories. A French musical flavor such as fanfare-like tunes is heard in Italian music. Following the exploits of the Napoleonic army,

> "…the cultural ties between northern Italy and French were reinforced. This is evident in literary motifs still to be found in folklore and folksongs."

Keller (1994, p. 44)

Vietnam has a similar situation. After the French completed their invasion and founded a colony in the late nineteenth century, they promoted Western civilization, mainly French culture.

> "During the twentieth century, French culture and music overflowed into Vietnam very dramatically and vigorously in many ways (from the military, the Roman Catholic Church, and nightclubs). Many

> Vietnamese songs have fanfare-like tunes, which were derived from French military brass band music."
>
> Ngoc *et al.*. (2000, p. 141)

These were the sounds Vietnamese people usually heard from French army barracks during the colonial period. The preference for Western culture among the population was the main motivation for the composition of mixed music pieces. Songs with texts in the Vietnamese language sung to Western-European melodies appeared during this time. Vietnamese musicians created song texts using Western music. Firstly, they sang an original French song, and then they translated the lyrics from French into Vietnamese to gain popularity. Furthermore, they used popular Western song melodies and created Vietnamese lyrics. So for each song, there may be different versions of lyrics arranged by different musicians. This movement was labelled "Vietnamese lyrics - Western music", and it lasted until the beginning of 1940s.

A number of composers have tried to combine Vietnamese and Western musical aspects in their compositions. They blended European compositional techniques and Vietnamese lyrics and, where applicable, traditional melodic idioms. This music, however, completely adopted Western instruments, including the mandolin, banjo, harmonica, guitar, violin, piano, saxophone, clarinet, flute, double bass, and steel guitar. In their music, Vietnamese musicians employed the Western diatonic system combined with Vietnamese traditional five main tones or five degrees that constitute the Vietnamese pentatonic scale. These tones use the special tuning system of Vietnam. The scales used are pentatonic with or without two auxiliary degrees. In fact, any of the five notes may begin the scale as the "tonic" or rest point. In addition, the scale may be transposed to the same pattern on a new note (Addiss, 1971). They also borrowed Western textures and forms for their works, including chords, multipart writing, contrapuntal textures, sonata form, variation form, and ternary form in Western classical music. Vietnamese composers admired what they regarded as the superiority of Western classical music. They tended to use Western technical features to try to revitalize traditional Vietnamese music.

> "If *Ca Mừng Đời Ta Tươi Đẹp* by *La Thăng* and *Quê Tôi* by *Văn Chung* are typical for the compositions based on Vietnamese

> traditional five main tones with typical mode in the melodies of the North, the compositions by *Hồ Bắc*, *Xuân Oanh* are close to the character of European music."
>
> Ngoc, *et al.* (2000, p.353)

Diversity

Many song types can be found in both Italy and Vietnam: ritual songs (for weddings, burials), calendrical songs, recreational songs (such as dance songs), family songs (such as lullabies and children's song) and religious songs. Some Vietnamese religious songs bear the marks of Chinese influence and its chant and texts share many traits with those of China (Nettle and Stone, 2002, pp. 502-503). This has resulted from its geography, the close proximity of the Chinese mainland and the Chinese invasions[4].

Chinese culture was introduced into ancient Vietnam through Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism during periods of Chinese occupation between 43 and 938 A.D. These religions have influenced the philosophical life of the Vietnamese throughout the centuries. The Buddhist religion or *Phat*, based on Chinese pronunciation of the Indian name, is related with Vietnamese culture and music at all levels of society. This religion is considered the national religion (Nguyen, 1998, p. 502).

2.7 COMPARISON OF SONG TEXT MAKING BETWEEN VIETNAM AND ITALY

A form of text fragmentation was found to be used in the Greek islands of the eastern Mediterranean and in southern Italy. In ancient times southern Italy was in all aspects part of Greece and the Greek language was used in everyday life. That this was true in musical terms as well is confirmed by the fact that in southern Italy one still encounters

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[4] There were ten centuries of Chinese domination (from the first century to the tenth A.D.) and Vietnam adopted Chinese ideas for the Vietnamese monarchies between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries.

a particular form of text fragmentation, in which lines or even words are left incomplete to be repeated and completed in the next line:

Oi di sira ci

Di sira ci passai

Oi di sira ci passai da ssa vinedda

Da ssa vina ia

Ssira ci passai da ssa vinedda

This form of text fragmentation is still in use in the Greek islands of the eastern Mediterranean, central and southern Italy (Keller, 1994, p. 43). This is different to Vietnam in the way Vietnamese composers employed the song text. Vietnamese musicians rewrote French songs but employed Vietnamese lyrics. The difference in the use of song texts between Italy and Vietnam can be explained by the fact that France is geographically far away from Vietnam and its linguistic background and culture are completely different, which is why the French language was not used in Vietnamese songs. The big difference is that French is not a tonal language but Vietnamese is and sounds like a melody with its intoned spoken syllables. It has special signs of tones and depends on them for understanding (Phong, 1989, p. 27).

Figure 2.1 *Example of the tonal qualities of Vietnamese (Vietnamese online)*

Vietnamese words	**Tone**	**Northern dialect**	**Meaning**	**Vowel**	**Phonetic vowels in English**
Ma	Mid-level	—	Ghost	a	**a** as in “f**a**ther”
Má	High-rising	⌣	Mother	á	**a** as in f**a**ther but rising in pitch
Mà	Low-falling	╲	That	à	**a** as in “m**a**rgarine”

Mả	Questioning		Tomb	ả	Long **a** but in the word “m**a**tch”
Mã	Mid/high-rising		Horse	ã	**a** as in “f**a**ther” with longer pronunciation
Mạ	Low-rising		Bine/ burgeon	ạ	Very short **a** in “m**a**tch”

Because of the strong tonality of the Vietnamese language, a falling melody cannot be sung with a high rising tone, and a high rising melody cannot be sung with low constricted or low falling tones. In other words, the words may dictate part of the actual melody, because a high-rising inflection on a word cannot be sung on a downward melody (Addiss, 1971, p. 129). This is different to the use of French text in singing because French is not a tonal language.

However, historically the Chinese language was strongly involved in Vietnamese music-making. From 40 to 939 A.D. Vietnam had been ruled as a part of the Chinese Empire and adopted Chinese characters for writing (Addiss, 1971, p. 131). Between the 15th and 19th centuries, the Vietnamese courts began to adopt Chinese, especially Confucian, ideals, as the principle guidelines for social, cultural and political activities. The organization of Vietnam’s government and system of education were closely modeled on its Chinese counterparts.

> “The preference for borrowing Chinese words and titles among the population was further intensified by the fact that the Vietnamese monarchies adopted Chinese as the official written language for all government documents and communication. As a result of these policies, the Chinese language and Confucian values were highly respected among the Vietnamese elite and “literati” and most of the important terms in art, music, literature and other areas were found to derive from Chinese.”

Hung (1998, p. 20)

This led to a tendency to create song-texts in Chinese. In a collection of twenty-five pieces of *Hue* music dating from c.1863, the song-texts of ten pieces are Chinese (Hung, 1994, p. 237). The Vietnamese also tended to base their song texts on many Chinese stories, and on historical and classical novels. Many of the characters from Chinese stories such as *Manh Le Quan, Khong Minh* are favored in Vietnam. "The Vietnamese also borrowed Chinese words in the titles of their compositions." (Sadie, 1980, p. 744). In fact, all compositions in the classical repertoire of *Huế* and *Tài tử* music have borrowed Chinese words in their titles. Some of the titles, such as *Lưu Thuỷ* and *Phung Cau Hoang* are direct transliterations of the titles of well-known pieces mentioned in Chinese literature (Hung, 1994, p. 237).

2.8 COMPARISON OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCES ON OPERA AND THEATRE IN VIETNAM AND CROATIA.

Similarity

Both Vietnamese and Croatian cultural lives have strong alien influences: Vietnam from China and the West particularly France, and Croatia from neighbouring Italy.

> "Everything coming from Italy was fashionable: people were playing Italian music, reading Italian literature, and looking for Italian clothes…and the Italian language was used in everyday life by the middle class."

Blazekovic (1994, p. 52)

It was similar to the case in Vietnam, people enjoyed playing Western instruments, listening to French songs, reading French novels and wearing a French style of suit. The French language was preferred among the Vietnamese population. As a result of this preference, the music in Vietnam was a combination of Vietnamese-French elements and many aspects of life were a combination of Croatian- Italian elements in Croatia.

> A prominent Croatian composer, Ivan Zajc, "developed a taste for specifically Italian forms of stage music" and Italian opera deeply influenced Nikola Strmic's music.
>
> Blazekovic (1994, pp. 50-53)

Likewise, French music influenced the Vietnamese reformed theatre and Vietnamese musicians began to compose Vietnamese-language songs with accompaniment based on Western tempered scales and Western rules of harmony (Nguyen, 1998). Since 1932, Western songs and music scores of films produced in movies stimulated a great deal of interest among the Vietnamese young people and students in urban areas. The period 1954- 1961 marked a major change in the reformed theatre due to the influence of movies. The flow of foreign films easily influenced the Vietnamese reformed theatre. Together with the movies, sound recording systems were gradually brought into Vietnam. The interest in Western music was intensified with concerts and songs performed on the radio. A steady diet of Western culture through the media has markedly influenced urban Vietnamese musical attitudes and ideas.

Another similarity is the political influence on opera and theatre. Both Vietnamese music and Croatian music were politically based and were intended to awaken a patriotic awareness and national consciousness. Opera and other music were often a stimulus in a fight against foreign political domination.

Difference

However, what happened in Croatia was in the nineteenth century, while the struggle against enemies in Vietnam occurred in the twentieth century. The difference also lay in the fact that a number of Vietnamese operas borrowed the history and stories from other nations such as the Chinese and the French, but

> "…the action in almost all Croatian historical operas is taken from Croatian history."
>
> Blazekovic (1994, p. 55)

Although the Chinese and French culture influenced Vietnamese culture by force, there was a preference for Chinese and French culture among the Vietnamese population. This explains the reason for the popularity of French and particularly Chinese stories in Vietnamese musical theatre (Duy, 1975).

2.9 SOVIET INFLUENCES

Owing to the influence of the Leninist Ideology, art in general and music in particular were classified into two areas according to class distinction and social division: one for ruling class (the Vietnamese aristocrats and monarchies before the socialist period) and the other for the working and peasant classes. After 1975 the music of the Vietnamese court and monarchies was regarded by the communists as unwholesome, reactionary, out of date and therefore lacked support from government. The art of the working and peasant classes was seen as traditional, people music (such as *Chèo, Tuồng, Cải lương*) and this should be developed positively. As a result of this Leninist concept, most of the music studied and the performance of folk songs, such as *Chèo, Tuồng, Cải lương* were preserved.

Other Soviet-orientated innovations were the formation of large-scale ensembles which are different from ancient traditional ensembles and the innovative folk songs influenced by opera singing introduced by Soviet artists. Traditionally, ensembles of Vietnamese chamber music were small and include one of each type of instrument, since each instrument has a distinctive timbre and idiomatic instrumental style for each part. Most Vietnamese melodic instruments are designed to play microtones, bending individual notes around loosely-fixed non-tempered pitches (Arana, 1994, p. 97). However, instructors at the Conservatory in Vietnam invented music for traditional instruments by using two or more instruments to play one part in unison (Hung, 1992).

Since the 1960s, contemporary traditional ensembles displayed the following characteristics: components include both traditional instruments and invented instruments which are standardized to equal temperament; traditional performing techniques are substituted with new ones; instruments are classified in the same way as those of the Western classical symphony conceived from Soviet Russia; up to one hundred players were recruited from the department of traditional music to play Russian

folk songs and classical symphonies such as those of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff or an adaptation of a piece by Bach or Mozart and a repertoire of newly-arranged Vietnamese folk tunes set to a Western format (Arana, 1994 p. 94). The Vietnamese musicians have created new types of traditional instruments with different sizes to demonstrate acoustic resonance and high, medium, low sounds in order to meet the demand of new composition for large ensembles and serve the growth of innovative, political songs. Typical examples are "*bộ đàn tứ tiểu, tứ trung, tứ cao, tứ đại* which are modified Western mandolins and banjos taking the shape of the *đàn đáy"* (Arana, 1994, p. 108).

Đàn đáy is found only in North Vietnam, where it is used to accompany professional female singers. Today, it is played only by men. No other country in Southeast Asia has this instrument, which is believed to have been invented in the eleventh century. The example shown here has a rosewood body. It is held vertically, and its silk strings allow the musician to display great virtuosity. (*Đàn Đáy*, 2007)

Figure 2.2 *Đàn Đáy*

Figure 2.3 *Đàn Tỳ Bà*

Figure 2.4 *Đàn Tranh*

To the wide ranging register of the *Tỳ bà* instrument (Figure 2.3), more frets were added. It is a four – string instrument. Although *Tỳ bà* had its roots early in other countries especially China, it has been localized as time went by, and nowadays it has become an instrument of Vietnam, and has a personality of its own. In Vietnam, *Tỳ bà*

is usually performed with orchestras such as Royal orchestras in music such as *Nhã nhạc* (Elegant music) and *Thi Nhạc* (Poem music), the *Thiền nhạc* orchestra of Buddhism, the *Tài tử* orchestra, *Bát âm* orchestra (an orchestra consists of eight musical instruments), and integrated traditional orchestras. The technique for left hand, which presses the strings, includes glissando, staccato, arpeggio and tremolo. The player uses a plectrum which she holds in her right hand and plucks either upward or downward in a quick run. The *Đàn Tì Bà* music is light and cheerful. (*Tì Bà*, 2007).

The number of strings on the *Đàn tranh* (Figure 2.4) increased from the standard version of sixteen strings in 1970s to seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty-one, twenty two and even twenty five. This increase in the number of strings relates with the process of creating new musical styles, which demand a larger register to be made available on the *Đàn tranh*. The *Đàn tranh* makers also increased the size of the instrument. "Between 1890 and 1994, the average length of the instrument was increased from c.98cm to c.120cm" (Hung. 1998, pp. 12-13). The Đàn Tranh is also known as *Đàn Thập Lục* or sixteen-stringed zither. Its shape resembles a bamboo tube that has been sliced vertically in half. The *Đàn Tranh* has mostly been performed by female musicians in Vietnamese traditional dress (*Áo Dài*). When played, the instrument is placed in front of the musician, who uses her right hand to regulate the pitch and vibrate the string, while plucking the strings with her left hand. Players will usually wear picks made of plastic or tortoise shell on their fingers to facilitate plucking. The sound reverberates through the hollow wooden box below the strings. Sounds can be altered through cupping, pressing or stroking the strings instead of simply plucking. The *Đàn Tranh* originates from the ancient capital city of *Huế*, where women once played it for royalty, and the instrument is still considered a symbol of the *Huế* city (*Đàn Tranh*, 2007).

Another example of Soviet influence was the innovation in the performance of Vietnamese folksongs.

> "Many of the new compositions have a strong Russian flavour with a quick tempo. Arrangements of traditionally slow, mournful, or pensive airs are often rendered with upbeat, cheerful tempos, or supplemented with a contrasting fast section."

Arana (1994, p. 103)

Many Vietnamese composers have inspiration from Russian compositions. However retaining a "Vietnamese character and soul" in compositions has also remained a concern for Vietnamese composers through to the present time. A typical example was a symphony *Đất Nước Anh Hùng* (Heroic Poetry) by *La Thăng*, who is one of the leading Vietnamese composers (Ngoc *et al.*, 2000, p.420) "whose strengths are creativity in tune, melody and themes. Their rich expression and inspiration are usually linked with poetry which are liked by the large population" (Ngoc *et al.,* 2000, p.338). In this composition, his romantic inspiration is derived from Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 but the traditional and lyrical melodies of Vietnam fall within a pentatonic scale corresponding to the mode in Vietnamese music to express love for the country.

One significant change in performing Vietnamese folksongs was the influence of opera and chamber music introduced from Soviet Russia. The soprano, tenor and bass were used to sing Vietnamese folksongs with strong dynamics and without the graceful ornamentations of indigenous folksongs (Hung, 1996 p. 46). Vietnamese traditional songs originally are poetic, lyrical, not polyphonic, and vocal ornaments were added to the line, including trills, vibratos of various speeds and widths, grace notes, sliding tones, and appoggiaturas (Addiss, 1971, p.134)

Censorship

The touring musical ensembles and public performance in both Soviet Ukraine and North Vietnam since 1954, and the whole Vietnam since 1975, took their directions from specific administrative units. In the Ukraine, in Soviet Russia, from 1923 one such prominent unit was the

> "Council of Repertoire that decided such matters as which pieces to allow in public performance and which to prohibit. This "Council of Repertoire" determined the percentage of a performance that would be devoted to revolutionary melodies. Over the six or seven years of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Council of Repertoire proscribed most of the Ukrainian content of the repertoire of the Bandura Chorus, substituting revolutionary and mass song fare that was being

> widely propagated throughout the Soviet Union. After World War II the style and repertoire were to be more tightly controlled and further standardized."
>
> Noll (1994, pp. 213-214)

In Vietnam, the programs of all public performances were under the direction of organization and management of the Party and government.

> The "officials of the Information and Culture Service maintain a strict control over cultural activities under their purview"
>
> Miller and Williams (1998a, p. 88).

The programs had to be censored through preliminary and general examinations by the government officials before permission for performance was allowed. These government representatives make suggestions as to which item should be included and how it would be modified to meet political requirements according to their political content or implication. As a result of this policy, political songs had the highest priority in most public performances (Hung, 1998, p. 95). Live performances of pieces that had been composed in the south before unification were also banned and heavy penalties imposed. The state took control of the broadcasting of music in all public venues as cafes, restaurants, clubs and parks, and it also controlled the repertoire of public performances. These policies remained active until the early 1980s, when a gradual relaxation reportedly occurred (Taylor, 2000). In this way, the repertoire in both Vietnam and Ukraine included new songs with texts on socialist themes. "This practice remained common, with old or new melodies in a wide variety of genres being used to set new texts" (Noll, 1994, p. 213). In Vietnam, existing folk songs were selected and Vietnamese composers used the melodies of these folk songs to make new political lyrics (Hung, 1998, p. 99).

Some musical genres associated with religious music in both countries were banned (Hung, 1998). Religious music in the Ukraine was considered to be an unacceptable practice for public display (Noll, 1994, p. 215). In Vietnam,

> "The *bát âm* ceremonial music, music associated with spiritual activities (such as worship of village deities, shamans' activities, and

> mediumship *lên đồng*) and many types of authentic folk songs were among the musical genres that were gradually silenced after 1954. Authentic performances of *Chầu văn* (mediumship music) were banned until the late 1980s because of its association with "backward" and "superstitious' spiritual activities... After the unification of the country in 1975, the same policy was applied in South Vietnam. All genres of spiritual music were banned."
>
> Hung (1998, pp. 96-97)

Musical Olympics

One of the distinctive features of musical life in Vietnam and Soviet Ukraine was their emphasis on competitions for awards, including the musical Olympics and festivals. There can be little doubt that the prospect of receiving recognition from society and from agencies of the state has motivated countless young people to participate in these musical events. However this tendency was realized earlier in the Soviet Ukraine than in Vietnam. The first competition there was held in Kharkov in 1931 and included 61 ensembles with about 2000 participants. In 1937 there were approximately 482 musical Olympics taking place in the Soviet Ukraine with 360,000 amateur musicians as participants (Noll, 1994, p. 213).

In Vietnam this kind of musical festival started on June 20th, 1954 at *Deo Nhe- Nui Dong, Thai Nguyen*, with only 22 ensembles with 576 amateur musicians. The musical Olympics became a common feature of the various provincial networks, and numerous regional events were established. A musical Olympics for amateur musicians was held in 1962 with the growing number of 4703 ensembles from all parts of Vietnam (Ngoc *et al..,* 2000, pp.301, 319). One of the reasons that contributed to the extension of musical Olympics in Vietnam was this approach based on Soviet culture and art.

A comparison of cultural contact affecting music in Ukrainian lands between 1920 and 1948 and in the North and South of Vietnam

Like the Ukraine, the north and south of Vietnam have historical differences. In Ukrainian lands, before World War II, much of the Western zone was a part of Polish or Austrian states. Regions of eastern Ukraine have at various times been a part of Ukrainian, Mongol, Ottoman Turkish, Cossak, Polish and Russian states. In Vietnam, after the Vietnamese victory over the French in 1954, Vietnam was divided into two parts, as described above. Interestingly, until World War II, both Western and Eastern Ukraine were incorporated into the Soviet Union. In Vietnam, after 1975, the whole country was united under one regime which received the support and significant influence from the Soviet Union (Miller and Williams, 1998c). These political situations were important in the development of both Ukrainian music institutions and Vietnam's music institutions.

Similar situations, respectively, can be seen in North Vietnam and the Ukraine after the incorporation of Eastern Ukraine into the Soviet Union in 1920 and the independence of Vietnam in 1954 with the models of Russian socialist realism in North Vietnam between 1954 and 1975 and in the whole country between 1975 and 1986.

In North Vietnam, the socialist revolution aimed to turn Vietnamese society into an ideal socialist state, to eliminate negative aspects of the old society and to build a new socialist culture. In the process of building the new culture and the arts, the Vietnamese Communist Party, where all of the first generation leaders were loyal supporters of the Leninist concept and the Third International (1919-1943), found that it was important to learn, borrow and adapt ideals from the Soviet Union as the fundamental guideline for Vietnamese revolutionary arts.

> "The official view was that arts should always serve the political needs of the Party and contribute to the task of educating and inspiring the masses in the socialist revolution. New artistic works were required to be Partyistic (*Tính Đảng*), nationalistic (*Tính Dân Tộc*) and popular (*Tính Đại Chúng*). These concepts were direct borrowings of the Soviet principles of Partiinost (Partyism), and narodnost (nationalism)... The Stalinist concept of social realism in the arts, which required an optimistic description of social events and problems to strengthen the confidence of the masses in the Party,

> was also adopted as the basic method of Vietnamese revolutionary arts."
>
> Hung (1998, pp. 93-95)

In order to turn Vietnam into an ideal socialist country, the Vietnamese Communist Party from 1975 implemented many programs of social, political, economic and cultural reform under the processes of the Cultural and Ideological Revolution. Blending indigenous and Soviet socio-cultural concepts and practices was a fundamental idea for musicians. In the Ukraine, the Communist Party established a music network in order to promote what was described as a new musical culture and to liquidate the old primitive village culture (Noll, 1994, p. 210). The main objective of the Communist Party of both Vietnam and the Ukraine was to create a national culture on the Soviet model.

After the communist takeover in 1975 in Vietnam, bans were put into place against playing the music that had been composed in the South before unification, that had existed in the North before the creation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, or that had been borrowed from the wider, capitalist world. Tapes, records, and printed musical scores were systematically collected from private homes and commercial establishments, to be destroyed in "campaigns to eliminate the cultural vestiges of the former regime (*Chiến dịch bài trừ những di tích văn hóa của chế đô cũ*)" (Taylor, 2000).

Like the Ukraine, in order to eradicate the old culture, the *Hồ Chí Minh* City Party leader, *Võ Văn Kiệt*, who was responsible for supervising the city's artistic and cultural fields, called on people not to be influenced by the

> "…harmful cultural vestiges of neo-colonialism and the dangers of the Republican era's musical legacy that had been used by the Americans to dominate the people of the south…"
>
> Taylor (2000)

Cassettes and records needed to be destroyed in campaigns against this music. One of these types of music was called "yellow music". The etymology of the term "yellow music" was traced to Chinese communist campaigns to eliminate "reactionary bourgeois musical vestiges" in Beijing and Shanghai in 1952-3". "Yellow music" brings

people into a state of suffering from love, separation, loneliness, sadness, and nostalgia, the opposite of happiness that people seek to find there (Taylor, 2001, pp. 43-45).

Võ Văn Kiệt also told that music had played a vital role in the North's military victory. This view corresponds with General *Trần Độ*:

> "We must clearly realize that culture and art are weapons for class struggle and that artists are warriors."
>
> Taylor (2000)

Communist Party Secretary *Lê Duẩn* said:

> "We must use the light of the new culture to dispel the dark shadows of the past, save the decadent souls, and return them to the soul of the nation and, along with all the people, advance to a glorious, socialist, Vietnamese culture."
>
> Taylor (2000)

Like the situation in Ukraine, the old culture was substituted and revolutionary mass songs helped this process. The Hanoi musicologist *Đào Trọng Từ* commented that:

> "…never before had Vietnamese songs resounded with such brilliance and vitality as during the particularly hard years of anti-U.S. resistance."
>
> Taylor (2000)

Vietnamese composers began to compose many works with social, political, or patriotic titles to serve the political needs of the proletariat and the Party. New compositions were supposed to educate and stimulate the masses in the socialist struggle. Some of them were: *Quê tôi Giải Phóng* [The Liberation Of My Motherland}], *Tình Ca Quê Hương* [Love Song For Motherland] and *Khúc Tâm Tình Quê Hương* [Lyric of Motherland], *Dân Mường Đi Theo Đảng* [the followers of Communist Party], *Niềm Vui Giải Phóng* [Joy of Liberation], *Tiếng Trống Ra Quân*. In both parts of Vietnam, the powerful revolutionary songs with the expression of marching like rhythms linked

people politically (Nguyen, 1988, p.514). Traveling troupes performed political songs, music, and theater on movable stages. Like Vietnam, in eastern Ukraine,

> "Music was one aspect of the larger ideological campaign. A series of publications and music performances were established with the aim of propagating the new musical culture. Musicians who specialized in the new musical culture participated in large touring ensembles that went from village to village, performing a new revolutionary repertoire interspersed with political lectures."
>
> Noll (1994, p. 211)

Intervention of foreign styles affected teaching methods in Vietnam

"The Hanoi government received generous support from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics". Since 1956 the Soviet Union has helped train a large number of Vietnamese musicians. Russian instructors regularly taught at the Hanoi Conservatory. Today, in conservatories in Vietnam, the current administrators, the leaders and most instructors who have professional graduate and postgraduate level qualifications were trained in Eastern Europe, especially in Russia (Nguyen, 1988, p.512). A few instructors at the former Saigon National Conservatory of music in the South (before 1975) studied in France and elsewhere in Western Europe (Miller and Williams, 1998c, p. 81). After 1975, the North Vietnam instructors of music trained in Russia were sent to this conservatory in the South. From this time onwards the music of the network in Vietnam has been under one direction which has been strongly influenced from Russia as the model for Vietnamese conservatories. This reflects the type of central control exerted over institutions in Vietnam.

With the guidance of the steering committee of the Art Organization and the Minister of Culture, long term and short term courses were opened under the instruction of experienced teachers and experts in music from Russia between the years 1970 and 1990 until the Soviet Union collapsed. The training programs have covered all subjects, including composition, conducting, theory, musical instruments and vocal. Before 1990, each year, Soviet experts came to Vietnam to teach. With Soviet assistance, Vietnamese

students have been awarded many internationally recognized prizes. This has enormously affected teaching and musical content in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese pianist *Dang Thai Son* studied at the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory and was awarded the first prize at the 10th International Chopin Competition in Warsaw in October 1980. Since winning the Chopin Competition, his international career has taken him to over thirty countries. *Ton Nu Nguyet Minh*, who also graduated from the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory, was the winner of International Smetana Competition in Czechoslovakia. Their success was even more remarkable when one considers that their early training and development took place in their war-ravaged homeland. In recent years, many Vietnamese young people who trained in Russia have gained various international prizes, such as *Bui Cong Duy* (first prize in Tchaikovsky Competition for young performers), *Nguyen Bich Tra* (won the first prize in the Rand A – Piano Competition in Birmingham, U.K). In addition, there are more than 40 other international awards and prizes won by Vietnamese classical music performers in recent times.

Vietnamese musicians and educators who have graduated from Soviet institutions have, therefore, significantly contributed to developing Western music professionally and academically in Vietnam. Among them is *Trọng Bằng* who was Director of the Hanoi Music Conservatory and Director of the Vietnam Symphony Orchestra. He has been Secretary General of the Vietnamese Composers Association since 1995. *Nguyễn Trung Kiên* graduated from the Kiev conservatory of music in Ukraine as a singer. He was Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Culture and Information. He was a teacher at the Hanoi Conservatory of music and trained many famous singers in Vietnam. *Ngô Hoàng Quân* is director of Vietnam National Symphony Orchestra. Professor *Trần Thu Hà* was a director of the Hanoi Conservatory. Dr. *Ngô Văn Thành* is currently director of Hanoi Conservatory of Music. Dr. *Nguyễn La Thương (Minh Anh*) is in charge of the piano faculty. There are around 40 more people who have leadership roles in developing music in Vietnam. All of the above people were trained in the Conservatoires of Music in Russia. In this way Soviet Russia gained almost complete control over musical institutions in Vietnam.

CHAPTER 3

A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE RUSSIAN METHOD OF PIANO TEACHING

In Chapter 2, I discussed the different ways in which cultures and their music can be dominated by influences from outside. It involves two, three or several cultures in contact over a considerable period. Kartomi and Blum (1994) mention several ways in which this occurs. In Vietnam during my lifetime (i.e., from the 1970s) the overwhelming outside influence was that of the Soviet Union, especially on piano performance and pedagogy – the focus of this thesis. After growing up in this milieu, and being educated as a pianist in Moscow, Russia, I became interested in the various cultural perspectives involved, whereby a Vietnamese pianist like me earned a scholarship to the prestigious school in Moscow and where I received my musical education.

In particular, I began to focus on the role of the teacher and student within the larger canvas of culture as reflected in the case of a Vietnamese pianist studying in Russia. As a result, I developed three questionnaires which were designed to discover as much as possible about the interactions between teacher and pupil in this type of situation. However, as time went on, other influences were apparent in Vietnamese piano performance and pedagogy. These came from England, and eventually from Vietnamese pianists who were trained entirely in Vietnam. On further reflection the cultural issue became more complicated in that there needs to be a comparison between those teachers trained in Russia teaching Vietnamese pianists, those trained in England, and those trained in Vietnam. Accordingly, I designed the questionnaires in order to make such comparisons. However, the main focus is the overwhelming influence of Russia on Vietnamese piano performance and pedagogy. For this reason, I made a special study of Russian teachers alone, since the number of teachers trained in England or Vietnam was much smaller than the former.

3.1 ISSUES OF ENCULTURATION

It is a well known fact that enculturation into specific cultural ways of thinking occurs during the first 10 - 15 years of life. During this period the child absorbs the thinking, viewpoints, ways of behaving etc., and the sounds of the culture they live in. When young Vietnamese went to study music in Russia, it is not that it is difficult, but rather that it is probably impossible to totally eradicate one's birth culture after experiencing it up to the age of 14, and just adopt the new culture. The issue therefore is to what extent one is influenced by the new culture and to what extent the ways of the birth culture is submerged in the new culture.

However, Deutsch *et al..'s* (2004) empirical study of how spoken language affects music in a culture does suggest the importance of the influence of language on music and the potential for acquiring absolute pitch may be universal at birth. The influence of language on music is supported by *Dang Thai Son*, an internationally well known Vietnamese pianist (see Chapter 7 for his comment). Deutsch's study raises the possibility that parents may be able to encourage the development of absolute pitch in their children during the "critical period" when infants are learning the main features of their native language.

> Her new results follow up on a 1999 study, in which she made a startling discovery while exploring the realm of language rather than music. The 1999 study tested native speakers of two tonal languages, Mandarin and Vietnamese. In tonal languages, words get their meaning in part from the pitches in which the vowels are pronounced… The study found that Mandarin and Vietnamese speakers displayed a remarkably precise and stable form of absolute pitch in reciting lists of words. Based on these findings, she proposed that absolute pitch originated in human history as a feature of speech. She further proposed that tonal language speakers naturally acquire this feature in the first year of life, during the period in which infants acquire other features of their native language. On this line of reasoning, absolute pitch for music might then be acquired by tonal language speakers in the same way

> as they would acquire the pitches of a second tonal language. They might therefore expect to find a much higher prevalence of absolute pitch for music among tonal language speakers than among speakers of nontonal languages such as English.
>
> Deutsch *et al.*. (2004)

Many Vietnamese pianists were teenagers when they went to Russia, so they would have been enculturated in Vietnamese sounds and music. Anecdotally, many of them always earned high marks in melodic dictation in Russia. This was probably due to the early experiences with Vietnamese tonal language and music. But of course the matter is for discussion based on empirical data.

Many Asian musicians are now accepted as the very best performers of Western classical music. Some of them, however, like Midori, a famous Japanese violinist, moved to a Western country as a very young child. So in effect she grew up as a Westerner. Others were trained in Asia and also achieved great success. The same might be said of the wonderful African-American singers who grew up as African-Americans, but managed to become extremely successful as Western classical musicians.

So the issue is not simple, and not something which can be easily explained. There are obvious problems for someone brought up in one culture and exposed to another, especially in music. But somehow, it seems to work. This study examines the teaching styles and students' responses of those who were brought up in the Vietnamese culture, but were taught music of European culture. The results are interesting, because they explain what actually happened, and do not suggest simple solutions to complex problems. In other words, it is not absolute that someone who grew up in Vietnam until the age of 14 cannot become a really fine performer of Western European music, and conversely, someone who moved to a Western country as a very young child in order to learn Western music is not certain to become a great performer. This is a difficult problem. The questionnaires and the commentary on the results shed some light on this.

3.2 MY OWN EXPERIENCES

I went to Russia one month after selection at the age of 14 without my parents, and I did not know any Russian words. I was quickly sent to piano lessons with a Russian teacher Nikolayevna Egiazarova, a student of Alexander Goldenveiser [5] (1875-1961) who was a well-known Russian and Soviet pianist, musicologist, professor and principal of the Moscow Conservatoire. According to Sviatoslav Richter:

> "The three pillars of the Russian piano school (apart from Rachmaninoff, who left the country and who, as far as I know, never taught) were Goldenveiser, Igumnov and Neuhaus"
>
> Monsaingeon (2001)

My teacher Nikolayevna Egiazarova belonged to this generation, she was, together with Dmitry Bashkirov, a student of Goldenveiser. So as her student over long period of time, I was very much influenced by this Russian school.

I was somewhat nervous. There were two grand pianos for the student and the teacher. Although our lessons started without any Russian language understanding, I could guess what she wanted to convey to me from her playing demonstration. All I had to do was try to imitate what she did on her grand piano.

Coming to Russia from Vietnam, where people seem to get used to passive learning, I experienced a certain amount of culture shock. One of the difficulties in learning was playing from memory. For young people who came to Russia from age 14 to 17, they all were required to play from memory in the first few lessons. This was an expectation. If I could not play from memory, I rarely dared to come to the piano lesson.

One of the changes in my experience was the long hours of practice time required to meet the demands of the teacher and the quality of learning. We practiced much more in Russia (between 6 to 10 hours/a day), even all day, because the learning environment demanded an enormous amount of practice time.

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[5] A. B Goldenveiser was a great pianist and teacher who brought up a whole generation of outstanding pianists. Among his pupils, two names stand out, well-know not only within the former USSR, but outside- Tatyana Nikolaeva and Samuel Feinberg (Tatyana Alexeyeva, 2007).

Another adjustment was with the requirement of weight and depth of tone, one of the prominent features of the Russian school, and with which most Vietnamese music students seem to have problems. A possible reason can be suggested. The difference is in terms of physical strength and body weight. Russian people are generally much bigger than Vietnamese. Although there can be the exception that people with fine-boned bodies still can produce a powerful sound, it is easier for Russian people with a larger body to play powerfully. This is supported by Russian graduates from the interview:

> "It seems that the Russians possess the advantage of physical strength from nature as compared to Vietnamese that allows them to produce a massive sonority on the piano easily."

My experience of Russian pianistic training revealed numerous differences in approach compared to the training in Vietnam. In particular, the approach to rhythm, technique and sound were substantially different as detailed below and these factors often have a cultural dimension.

3.2.1 RHYTHM

One year before my selection[6] to study in Moscow, I was taught by my brother who had just graduated from the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire. Although my performance[7] was complimented by the examiner, I still had rhythmic shortcomings when I arrived in Moscow. My time studying in Moscow really helped me to understand the differences between musical cultures that have affected many Vietnamese students' tempo and rhythm at the beginning of their studying. Vietnamese musical traditions generally favoured slow and moderate tempos. Its traditional music for dancing is mostly gentle, slow and charming. Vietnamese students were not accustomed to the fast tempo which

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[6] In 1984, the Deputy Director of Tchaikovsky Conservatoire came to Vietnam to select young talent around the country including *Hanoi, Ho chi Minh* and *Hue* cities. In that year, nine students from the age of 14 to 24 were selected competitively: 2 pianists, 2 string players and 5 brass, trumpet and clarinet. One of the reasons I was selected was that my performance was Russian influenced due to my one year of training from my brother who had studied in Russia.

[7] My repertoire was Sonata by Mozart in C major, no 7 K.Nr.309 first movement, Etude no.2 from 15 Etudes by Moskowsky, Bach D minor Prelude and Fugue, volume I, and a Barcarolle by Tchaikovsky.

often pervades classical Western music. Free rhythm is also found in the chanting of Vietnamese poetry, in theatrical declamation and in improvised vocal or instrumental preludes. This tradition of Vietnamese tempos, especially in regard to free rhythm, often produces problems for students when they play classical Western music which requires a strict or steady tempo (see *Dang Thai Son*'s comment about Vietnamese students' rhythmic shortcomings in Chapter 7).

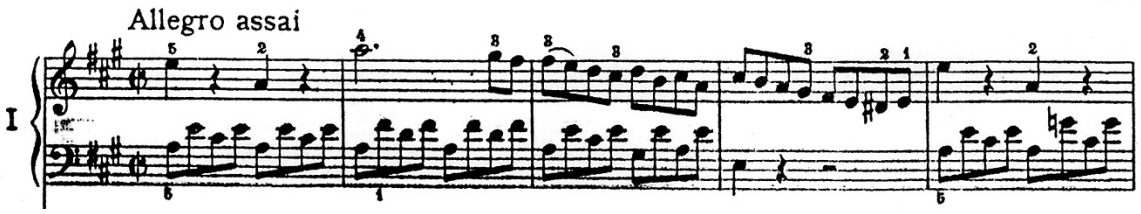
In the Russian piano tradition, rhythm is considered to be so important because it underlies the creation and projection of "spirit" in music. To help Vietnamese students to be able to play fast, steady, strict tempos, one of the methods Russian music teachers used was arousing the spiritual qualities of the student, stirring the imagination and impressionability by making her feel, think and experience art as the most real, the very substance of life. The students are required to have artistic adequacy, a sufficient receptivity to the mood, intent and emotional content of the music in order to get into the proper rhythmic mood, since many tempo and "rhythmic inadequacies are due to an insufficient understanding of the composer's thought, spirit and the style of an era. The artistic image is not clear and this affects the rhythmic and tempo elements" (Neuhaus, 1974, pp. 41,46). Too slow a dance will not sound like a dance, and a light and elegant classical sonata will lose all the sparkle if the passagework is slow and has no flow. Another way to be able to play with great rapidity is developing the habit of playing with an extremely loose, floating hand, because heavy hands and velocity never go together.

The Russian school put great emphasis on speed and velocity. Some Russian performers and teachers play at incredible speed. In their performance, the unit for measuring the rhythm of the music is not the bar, the phrase, the period or the movement, but the composition as a whole. They can manage a large-scale composition by perspective thinking - i.e., horizontally, not short-term thinking which is vertical (Neuhaus, 1974). If the beats are seen vertically, the phrases cannot move on or be expressive. If one wants to express happiness or excitement, one would most probably speak more quickly, and it is the same in music.

Although it is very hard to teach rhythm because it must be felt (Lhevinne, 1972), I had to find the best way of developing it. To develop a good sense of rhythm, I was advised to play as often as possible in an ensemble so as to develop coordination and deeper

listening skills requiring that a player listen to each other in tempo. Chamber music was one of the main subjects in my school in Moscow. Accompanying an instrumentalist or a singer every week was another main subject at school that helped me to overcome my rhythmic shortcomings. Hearing a great deal of strong rhythmic music while attending live concerts and listening to recordings was essential. These approaches correspond to Lhevinne's point of view (Lhevinne, 1972).

Figure 3.1 *Mozart's Piano Concerto in A Major, Third Movement K.488*



My teacher taught me to understand that playing in time and observing the accents methodically is not conducive to playing with a good sense of rhythm. Rather, it should be felt with the pulse of the life- blood of music running through it. I always needed to make my rhythms lively and beautiful. This was the case when I played the last movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in A Major, K. 488 (see Figure 3.1). If every strong beat is emphasised with the accents on each bar, the music stops at each one. In this example, if I play the accent on the first note of the first bar (E), I would run out of steam in the middle of the passage and slow down at the end of phrase. So my teacher suggested for me to place the main emphasis on the high A on the first beat of the second bar in order to have enough energy to carry through to the end of the phrase easily without slowing down. E and A in the first bar should be regarded as leading notes forward to the downbeat of the second bar which would produce momentum. Feeling this leading quality, I could continuously regenerate forward-moving energy.

3.2.2 STACCATO AND LEGATO IN FINGER TECHNIQUE

It was really my Russian teachers who put a stamp on my technique. The contact of the fingertips on the keys is the crucial factor for tone quality. The fingers have an active role and should always be firm.

As a student in Russia, I was taught from the earliest age to strive for an excellent technique. In the first year of the conservatory's high school, there was a requirement to play scales in all twenty-four keys so well so that everything becomes instinctive and the best fingering in any key becomes automatic. Practicing scales facilitates the learning process because whenever I see it in a new piece, my hands seems to lean instinctively to the most logical fingering, even though this might not be the fingering learnt in scale playing. This saves a huge amount of time in later years.

In the following years, however, my teacher did not encourage me to practice scales. She said that she did not like scales because having too much scale practice would make the mind become lazy and the habit of moving the fingers without musical feeling. She thought that I could find and practice plenty of scale passages from the actual musical pieces (Figure 3.2), since music and technique are indivisible.

Figure 3.2 *Schubert, Fantasy in C Major, opus 15 ("Wanderer")*

According to Josef Lhevinne, the famous Russian teacher, "technique was never a goal in itself; rather, it was only a means to express the ideas of the composer" (Lhevinne, 1972, Foreword). I played a lot of etudes that require musically expressive performance. I was always taught that musical expression and technique should be coordinated hand in hand. My experience was reinforced by a Russian trained teacher's comment from the interviews:

> "My teacher encouraged me to practice all 24 Etudes by Chopin. According to Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatoire's Curriculum it was a requirement for students to play all 24 Chopin's Etudes.

> However, etudes by Rachmaninoff, Liszt, and Scriabin were optional."

In order to develop good fingers and avoid having lazy fingers, I was advised to play a piece without pedal in order to check the accuracy and clarity of each note. This was also backed up by a Russian trained teacher's comment:

> "My teacher suggested that I minimize the use of right and soft left pedal when practicing for good finger development. I found that it is true."

Alongside this remedy for good fingers, it is sometimes useful to play softly and not too fast with careful, painstakingly, conscientiously concentration. This correction of any inaccuracies that surely appear during temperamental and quick performance was frequently repeated during my lessons.

To have sureness in playing and avoid a colourless and blurred sound, I learnt in Moscow to play the keys down to the bottom. This fashion also helps my fingers memorize the keyboard well. This way of playing corresponds with that of Neuhaus, a prominent Russian professor who laid the Russian foundation school, who states: "to get a tender, warm, penetrating tone you have to press the keys very intensively, deeply, keeping the fingers as close to the keys as possible"(Neuhaus, 1974 p.72). This technique is sometimes described as "controlled singing tone". The method of playing down to the key bottom is further explained by Neuhaus as follows:

> "To come back to the question of acquiring sureness, let me say that the old principle of slowly and with force when applied to technique not only has not lost its meaning but has, perhaps, acquired new significance." (Neuhaus, ibid, p. 90)

Staccato

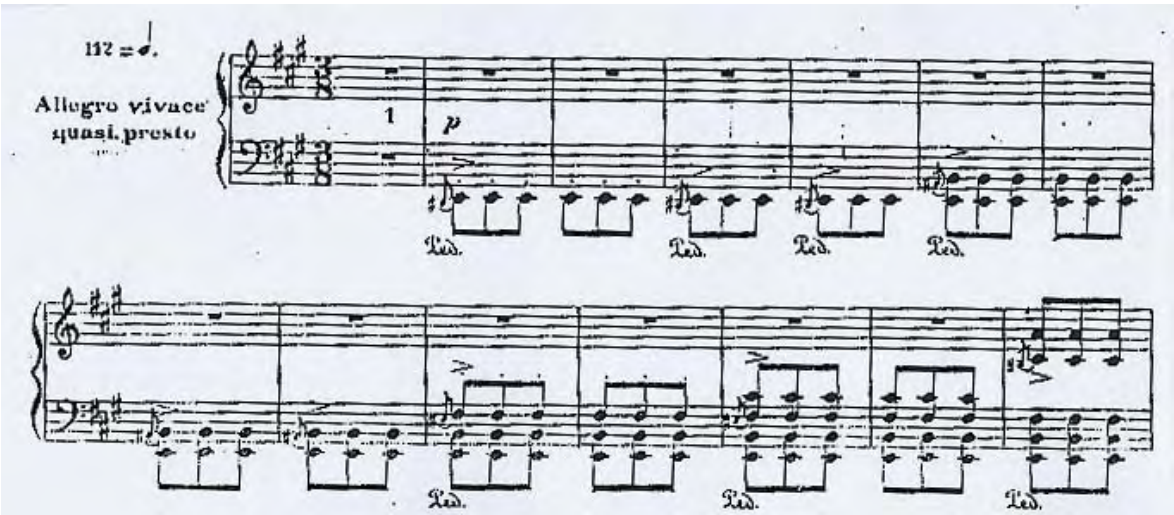
The technique of staccato involves an active and coordinated arm, wrist, hand, and finger motion in which all the components participate simultaneously. We can alter slightly the amount of finger action, wrist action, forearm action, and upper-arm action

and vary a combination of any of them according to the musical demands. For instance, a light sound results from using more finger and wrist action than other components such as forearm and upper arm action. This was supported by a Russian trained teacher's comment in the interviews reported in more detailed in Chapter 6.

> "In Baroque music such as Haydn and Mozart, I use the staccato, crisp finger tips together with flexible wrist which can help me to produce fast, clear, even and light sounds."

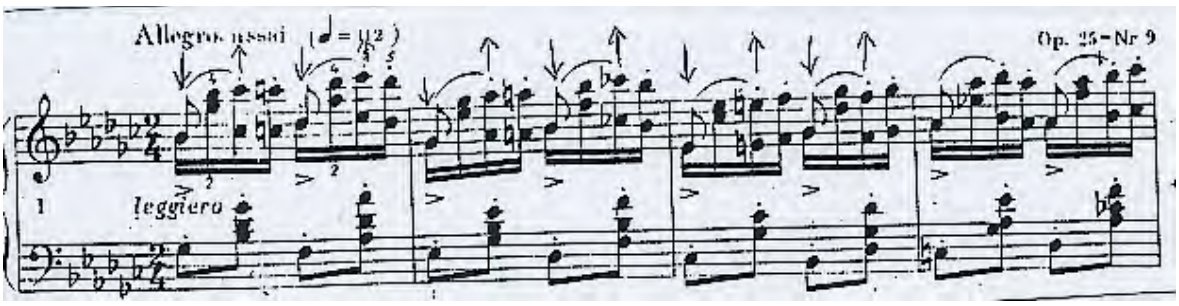
To avoid surface noise of the fingers tapping on the keys, I was instructed in a simple expedient which reduces this noise and increase the lightness, the speed and character of the staccato. It is merely the raising of the wrist (Figure 3.3: Liszt's Mephisto Waltz). By raising the wrist, the stroke comes from a different angle, is lighter, but nonetheless secure and makes for ease:

Figure 3.3 *Liszt, Mephisto Waltz*



A similar case is in Chopin's Etude, opus 25 no. 9, where raising the wrist plays an important role. The arrows indicate that the wrist need the downward movement (Figure 3.4) for every first note of the beat and upward (raising the wrist) for the semiquavers. Raising the wrist allows the light staccato.

Figure 3.4 *Chopin, Etude, opus 25 no. 9*

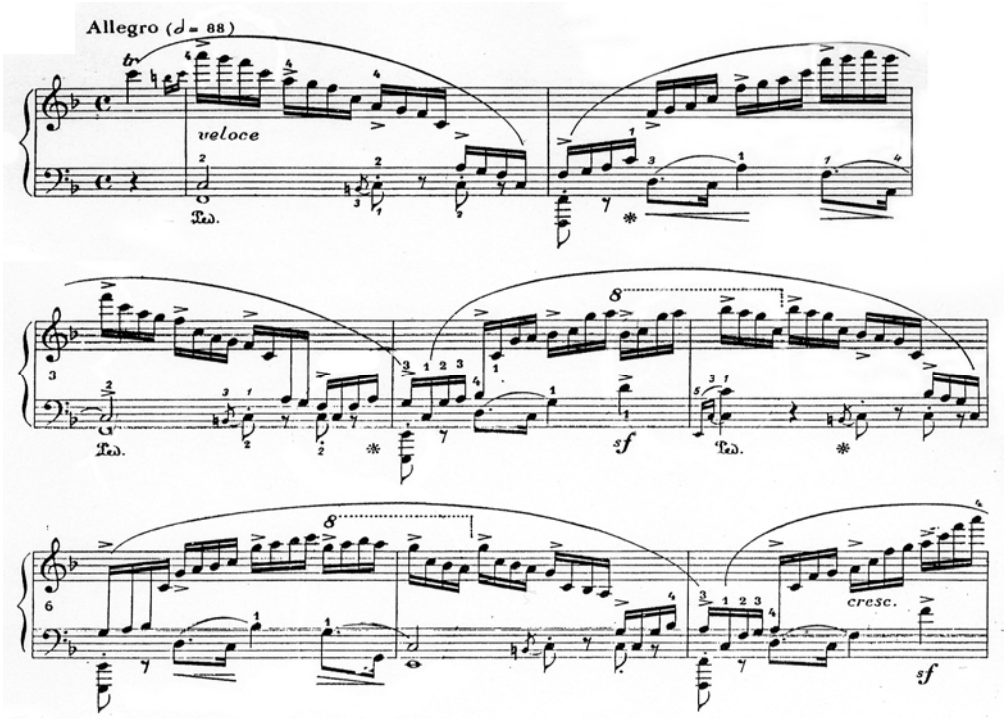


This also corresponds with the experience of a Russian trained teacher in the interviews:

> "I think staccato is not always indicated in the score. When we see two notes slur in Mozart piano sonatas for example, regardless of which finger plays, the higher wrist position is on the second note of the slur with light staccato which can produce a graceful slur, typical and important feature in Mozart performance."

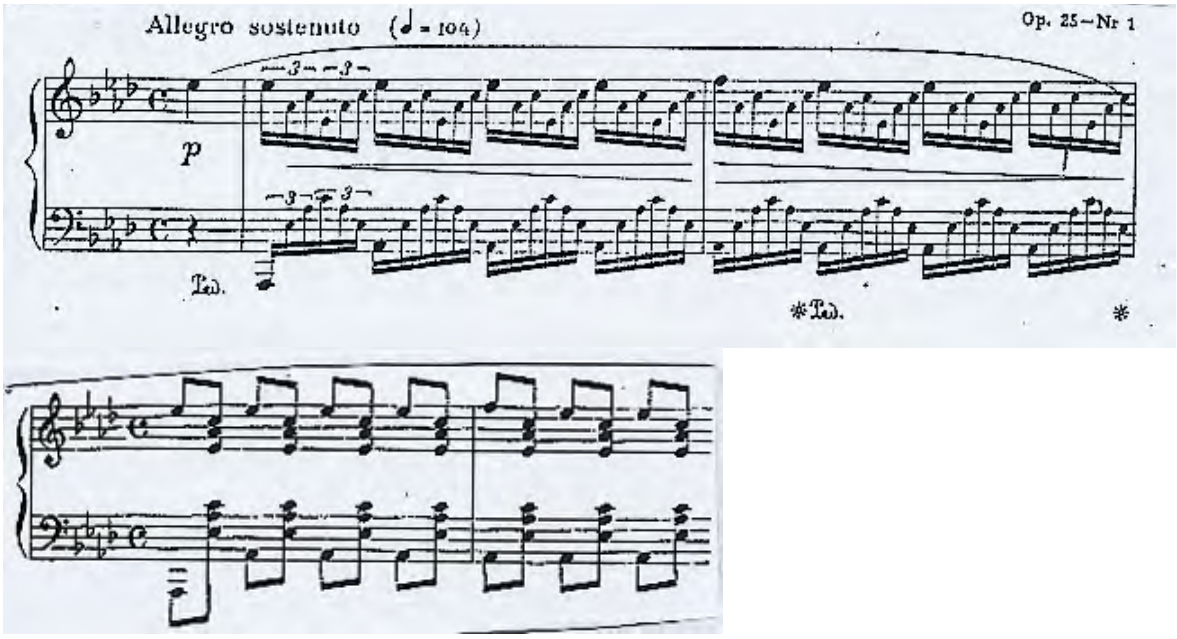
"Finger staccato, produced by wiping the keys are also effective when properly applied" (Lhevinne, 1972, p. 36). The fingers are curved normally, it is not held straight. As the finger touches the key-surface, it feels as though it were grasping the key, not striking or hitting it. In the case of Chopin's Etude, opus 10 no. 8 (Figure 3.5), to acquire the clarity, the active, good automatic reflex, crisp finger touch, and to have the speed, I was taught to practice with quick staccato but in slow tempo. The fingers are firm and close to the keys with loose and legato wrist. The arm and hand were completely relaxed and light to lead the fingers. If the weight of the hand was heavy, it would prevent the fingers from playing fast. First I played slowly, and gradually advanced the speed. This approach has worked very well for me and my students.

Figure 3.5 *Chopin's Etude, opus 10 no.8*



The same is true for Etude op 25 number 1 by Chopin (Figure 3.6), where finger staccato is applied with a free and light arm.

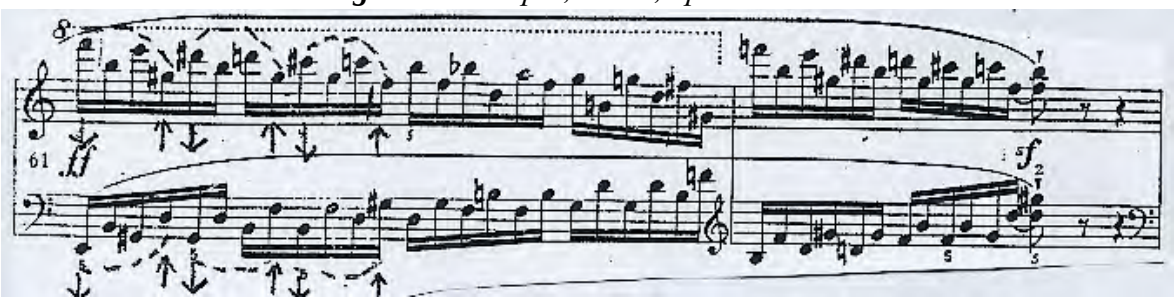
Figure 3.6 *Etude No. 1 op 25*



In this etude I was also advised to play in chords in two hands in order to feel the mutual chords between them.

When loud and effortless activities are demanded of the fingers as in Chopin's Etude, opus 25 no.11 (Figure 3.7), the extra up-down motion of the wrist is needed to add maximum speed and power to their activities. The arrows indicate a slight downward position on the first note of each group (F, D#, C# in right hand and E, G#, B in left hand), and a slight upward motion of the wrist is needed toward the fourth note of each group(G#, F in right hand and D, F, G# in left hand). The up-down motion of the wrist in both hands coincides.

Figure 3.7 *Chopin, Etude, opus 25 no.11*

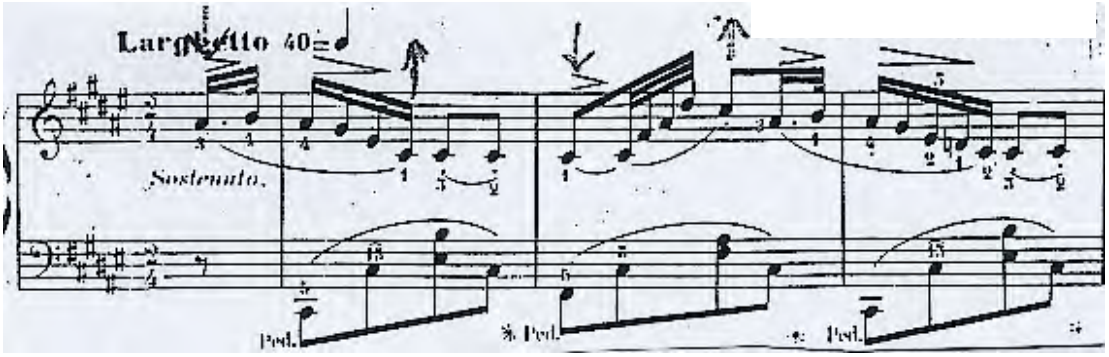


Beautiful legato

Legato playing is one of the most spectacular effects in piano playing. My teacher demonstrated how to achieve a true legato. There is no way to play a real legato with the fingers alone. This is supported by Brigitte Engerer's comment- a prize-winner in the Tchaikovsky Competition and studied with Neuhaus for five years in Moscow- about Russian school of piano playing. According to her, articulation in the Russian school is not done just with the fingers, but also very much with the use of the upper torso like wrists and arms (Timbrell, 1999). Since legato playing requires that notes blend into one another, we need to combine the mechanical devices that can help to achieve this blending. The actual legato effect can be accomplished only by a unifying motion of the arm, the fingers and the wrist. In the Russian technique, with the fingers very close to the keys, the wrist is raised and dropped according to the design of the melody. When playing the notes tied together by a slur, I was taught to begin the phrase with a relatively low wrist position and end it with a somewhat higher wrist. The beginning of

Chopin's Nocturne, opus 15 no 2 (Figure 3.8), is an example of a passage in which horizontal, vertical, and in-depth adjusting motions of the arm and wrist are required. In the example below the group (A sharp, B, A sharp) is initiated with relatively low wrist position and move gradually higher until the last note of the group (C# in the first bar) has been played. The same occurs to the second bar (a lower wrist at C# and a higher wrist at high C#) and the following bars. Extremely low or high wrist positions obviously need to be avoided. The ways the phrases are ended are different according the context. I was advised to choose the length of the last note. It can be short, medium, or long. This depends on the amount of time the finger remains on the key to vary the touch, colour, and dynamic.

Figure 3.8 *Chopin Op.15 No2*



I was also taught to try and attain a perfect legato in a very long legato passage in which smaller subdivisions may be necessary. Although the groupings are not always marked in the score, the binding of notes into groups is possible. In the two examples below, the dotted slurs represent subdivisions of the printed slur (see Figure 3.10). A lower wrist at the beginning may be used and a higher wrist at the end of each of these subdivisions.

Figure 3.9 *Beethoven Sonata 23 (Appassionata), opus 57*

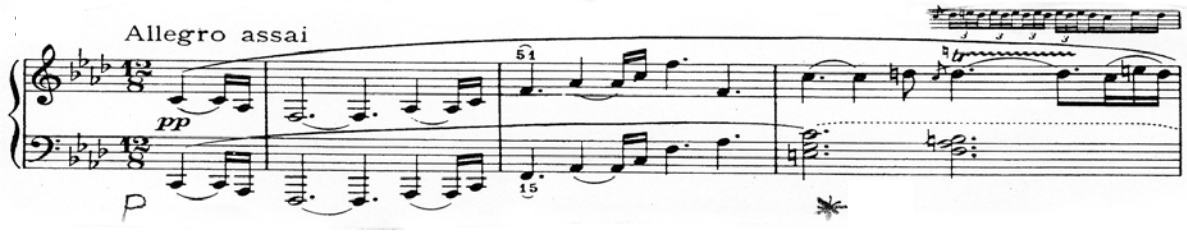
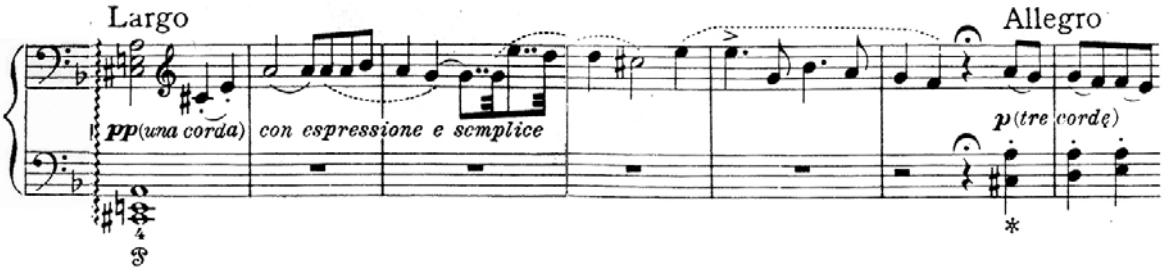
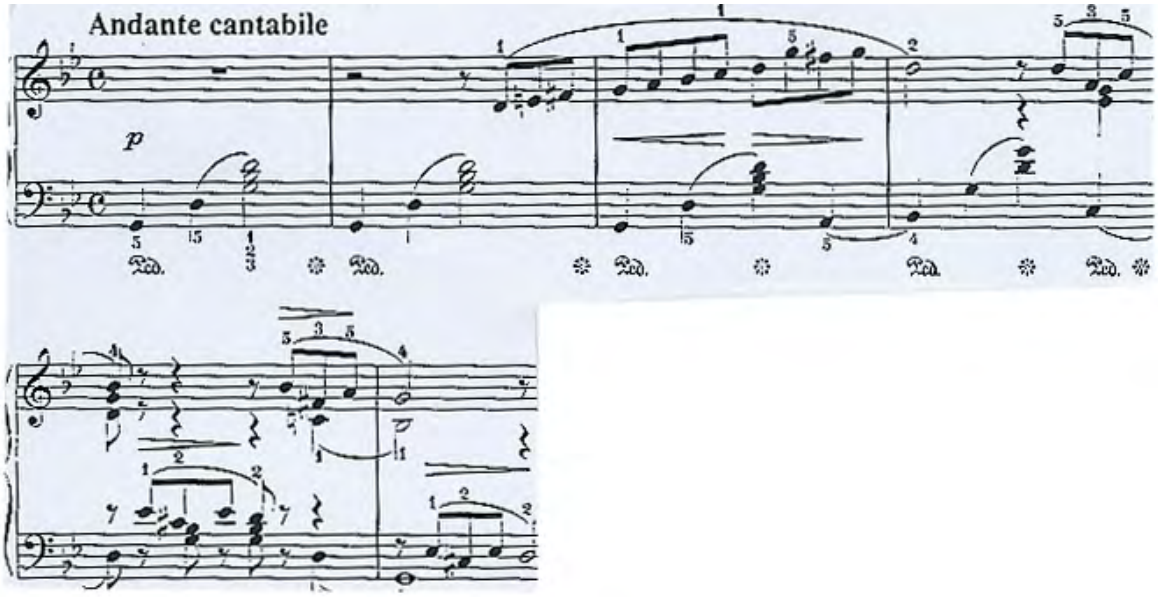


Figure 3.10 *Beethoven Sonata* ***17*** *(The Tempest), opus 31 no 2*



The method of releasing the sound of the note is quite as important as the method of sounding it. In melodic passages it is very offensive to have a sound bump at the end of the tone. In the example from Tchaikovsky's Barcarole (Figure 3.11), at the end of the tones in melodic passages the process by which the tone is produced is reversed. The wrist is gradually raised until the fingers leave the key D in bar 4 and chord D G B in bar 5 as well as BG in bar 6. The key itself ascends gradually and the damper touches the wire without the bumping off sound. I was taught to master this very simple but vital principle of releasing the keys so that there is no jerkiness.

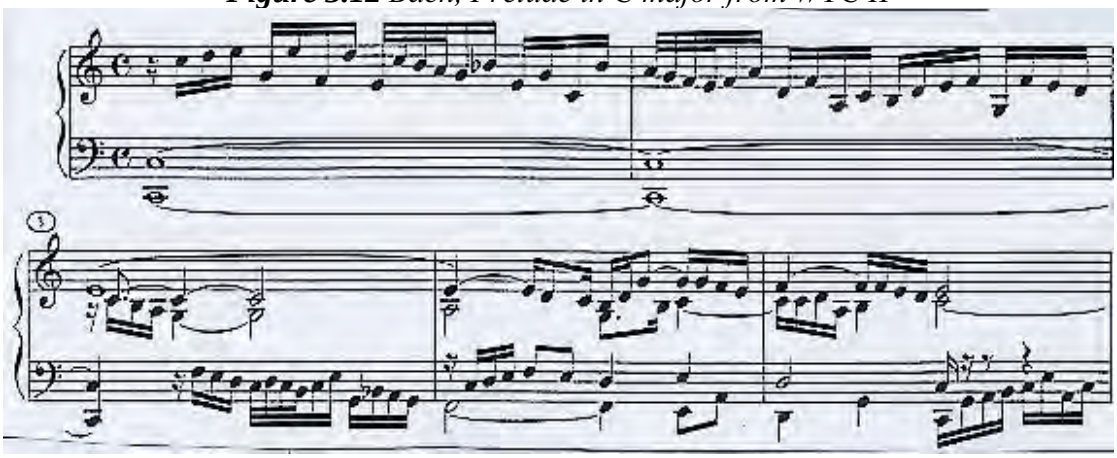
Figure 3.11 *Tchaikovsky, Barcarole*



I was taught that the weight and power need to be communicated to the keyboard from the shoulder, the upper arm and the forearm need to be light like floating in the air with entire absence of tension or stiffening. The fleshy parts of the fingers need to be coordinated with loose wrists. This is supported in Lhevinne's approach (Lhevinne, 1972). The same is true when I learnt Bach's C major Prelude of WTC II, which has the

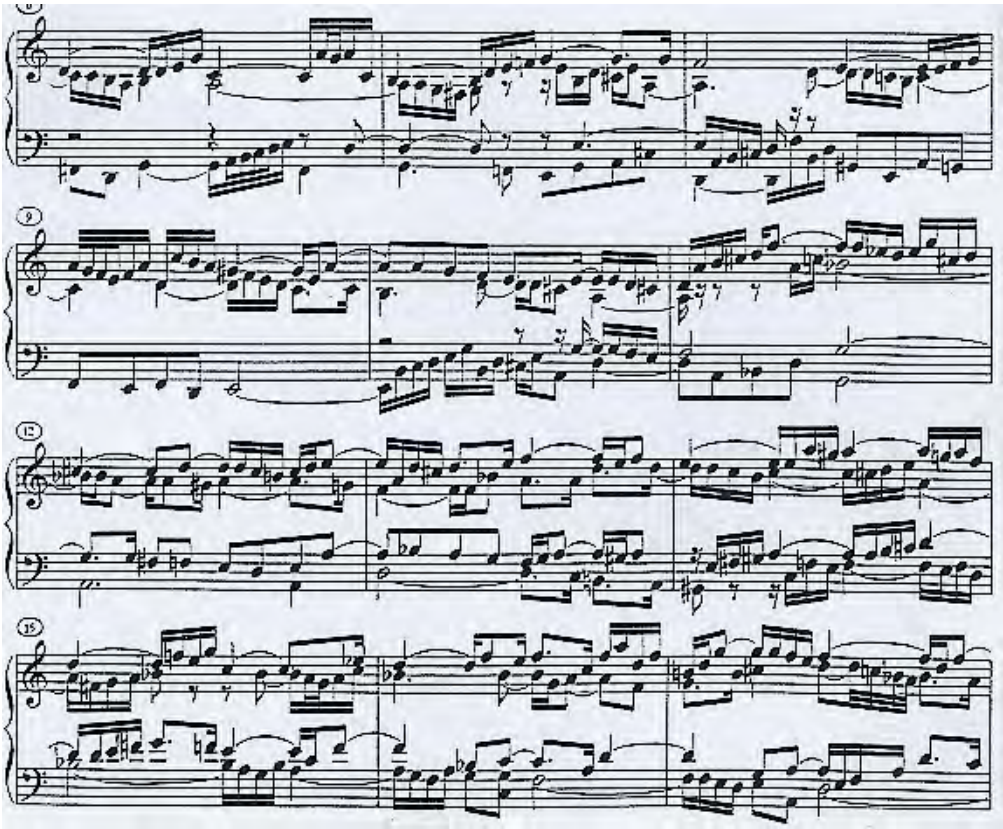
character of church-organ music and should surely be performed legato. The greater the length of the notes, the more difficult the legato. Because the piano's sound starts to diminish the moment it is struck, the note must sound with sufficient ringing tone so that it will not disappear before the next note; and in striking the succeeding note one must consider the diminution so that the new note will not be introduced with a bump. For this reason, I had to strike the C of bars 1 and 2 in left hand and E, C, G of bar 3 and A of bar 4 in right hand, F of bar 4 in left hand all the way down to key bottom (Figure 3.12). In addition, when I raised my fingers, I was instructed to keep my fingers on the surface of the keys. This shields my playing against forceful a stroke and makes the sound more uniform. I practised this at a slow tempo so that I could analyse my finger and arm conditions.

Figure 3.12 *Bach, Prelude in C major from WTC II*



The essential point about this prelude, I was taught, was the meaning of a real acoustical and physical legato. Legato demands that a note must blend into the next note without a break. The break does not occur when we hold over the previous note. To have a church- organ sound effect, the semiquavers and quavers (Figure 3.13) throughout the piece are released only after the next one has been played and not an instant sooner.

Figure 3.13 *Bach, Prelude in C major from WTC II*



The key needs to be left slowly; the damper halts the string gently and gradually. Playing in this way with the semibreves, minims and crotchets struck to the key bottom, allows the sound to continue to resonate for longer. This approach to legato playing helps to overcome the fact that the piano is a percussion instrument and could not be made to sing because the sound of the piano decays as soon as the note is struck. I was also taught to form and play this prelude in chords so that I can feel the harmony and the effect of church-organ music.

3.2.3 OCTAVE AND CHORD TECHNIQUE

Octaves are one of the most spectacular techniques in piano playing. The Russian school is well known for efficient playing of octaves, double notes: thirds, fourths, sixths, and sevenths, possibly because of the dynamic quality, the immense volume of sound, the excitement and the irresistible sweep of crescendos. According to what I learnt in Moscow, the key elements are concentrated fingers, keeping close to the

keyboard and complete freedom of the arm and shoulder with the hand hanging freely down from the wrist, with minimum of effort and strain and maximum economy of movements. This comment was supported in the interview with a Russian trained teacher (see Chapter 6), who was taught by Russian Professor Victor Nosov and Alexander Romanov for eight years. He said that he was required to practise a number of double sixths, triple and octave etudes to strength his fourth and fifth fingers. Another Russian graduate revealed the similarity in his training (see Chapter 6):

> "My teacher had me practising octaves for hours and hours using free arm and firm fingers. For the first year of my Moscow time, I practised technique for at least two hours everyday: octaves, thirds, sixths etc…in order to gain a lighter, better controlled technique."

The way I was taught to play octave passages was that:

1. First playing them with medium degree of force and speed (sometimes even slowly) but absolutely accurately and without any strain, then playing them a little bit faster and louder. By gradually increasing the speed and force with careful listening for accuracy and quality of tone, I realized that I could reach the desired result for the whole passage. However it required lengthy training and patience to achieve the result I wanted.

2. According to the Russian pedagogues, octave passages should be practiced with the fifth finger alone (or alternating with the fourth) while the thumb is held at the distance of an octave above the keyboard (Neuhaus, 1974). Do the same way with the thumb alone. For the legato and melodic octaves, medium or even minimum force plus full finger movement with "singing" the fifth finger is very useful. All this should be done with high imagination, musical content, careful listening to oneself and without any strain. This is supported by Russian graduates from the interview:

> "I remember my teacher advising that the sound of octaves should be lightened up by bring out the upper notes in both hands."

3. The correct position for playing octaves is the palm and fingers that form the shape of a rounded hollow but not too high, the wrist cannot be raised higher than the hand.

3.2.4 PEDAL

"The pedal is the soul of the piano."

Rubinstein (1974, p.294)

In the piano class in Russia, the pedal was considered an important property of the piano. Since the piano seems capable of producing about a hundred dynamic gradations, a variety of levels are needed in pedalling. My teacher used pedal as much as possible. For about 85% of the music she played, she used a half-pedal or quarter pedal or used it on sixteenths, twenty seconds and only a quarter or less of a full pedal. Her foot rested on the pedal whether she used it or not. It is hard to find any single piece by Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Liszt or even Bach in which her foot was not in constant contact with the pedal. Neuhaus's point of view is that "Bach must be played with the pedal, but with an intelligent, careful and extremely sparing pedal" (Neuhaus, 1974, p. 157).

What I was taught in the piano lessons was how to produce the different effects in using the pedal: a full pedal, half-pedal, quarter-pedal, simultaneous and syncopated pedalling and the gradations between these, or even how to change the foot rapidly to keep up with sixteenth notes (vibrato pedalling). The different effect it produces depends on how far down it is skilfully pressed. Some lower notes are sustained by the pedal while others are lighter. However, my teacher instructed me that since pedal indications in the music cannot be absolutely precise, so the pedal can not be separated from the tonal image that is governed by a discriminating ear.

To make preparations beforehand with the pedal sometimes achieves a good effect. My teacher suggested that I touch the pedal before my hands settle on the keyboard. For instance, in the beginning of the Beethoven's Sonata 8 (Pathétique), Opus 13 in C minor, the very air is to be filled with the expectation of the C minor chord before this

acoustic resonance is truly heard. When the right pedal is pressed down, the dampers on all strings are raised, the chord played on the keyboard is enriched by the full and thick sound.

3.2.5 POWERFUL AND SUBSTANTIAL SOUND

Russian students are usually physically very strong as compared to Vietnamese students who have a thin and smaller body. There is no doubt that the great masterpieces require real physical strength. In Russian piano training, it was demanded that students produce a powerful tone. This view was supported in a interview with a Russian trained teacher (see Chapter 6):

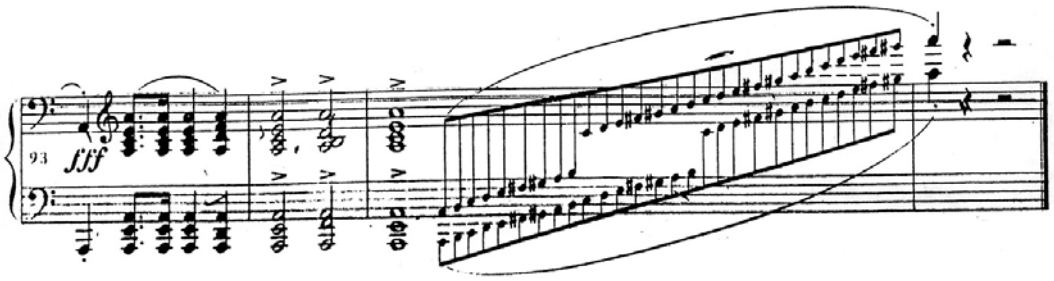
> "The Russian school stresses the importance of sound volume. I was required to produce the sound that must be big, rich and warm. So I had to get rid of tension and stiffness which I had had before coming to Russia. Since strain prevents you from having a deep and substantial sonority."

How much physical strength is needed to play the piano is debatable. When the music requires a heavy, massive and sonorous sound, I was taught to use free fall and thrust that are quite interchangeable. The former motion is produced mainly by the force of gravity while the latter is generated solely by the muscles. It was explained to me that thrust is more appropriate for chords with wide intervals, while free fall is involved in passages in slow or moderate tempo. In doing so forearm, upper arm action and shoulder must be actively involved at all times. This was backed up by a similar method from a Russian trained teacher's experience mentioned in the interview in Chapter 6:

> "To have a powerful sound, I need to use my back, relaxing shoulders and hands with strong finger tips, together with an imagination of musical image."

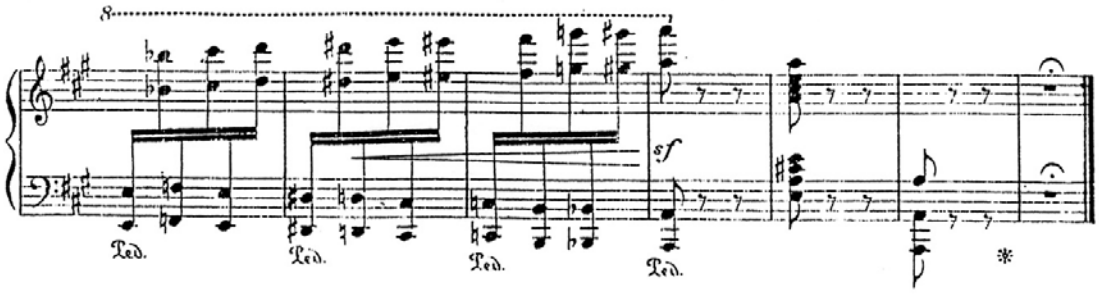
Free drop and thrust should not be employed from a great height since only extreme closeness to the keyboard can guarantee accuracy. The maximum sound can be produced by free fall like in the Chopin, Etude op. 25 no. 11:

Figure 3.14 *Chopin, Etude op 25 no 11*



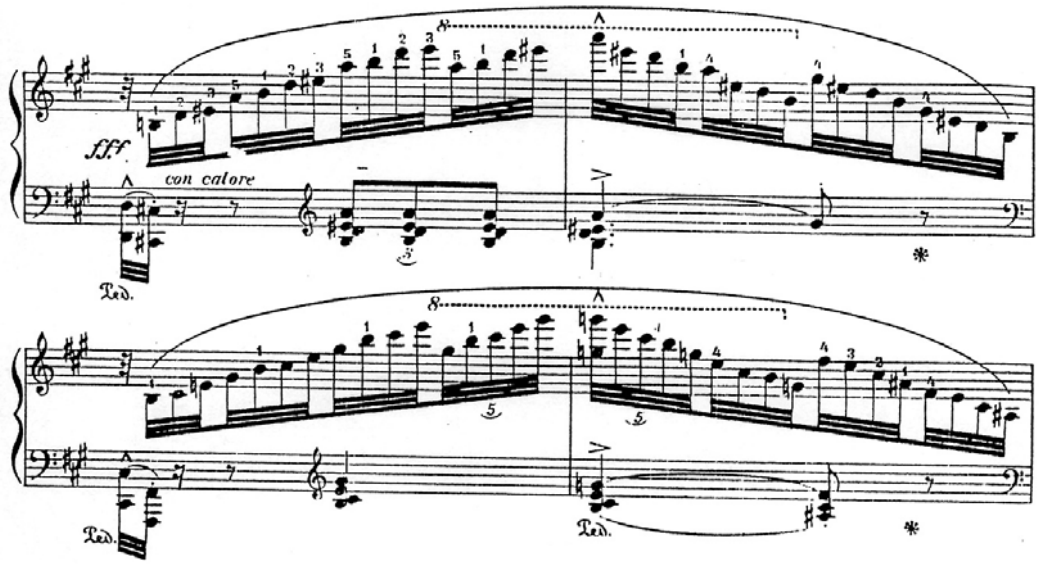
The same free fall was recommended for the chord and octave in the ending of Lizst's Mephisto Valse:

Figure 3.15 *Lizst's Mephisto Valse*



While both thrust and free fall serve in the Liszt's Mephisto Waltz in example below,

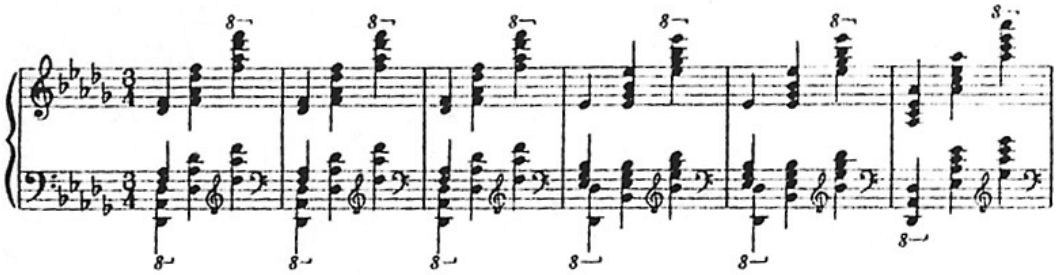
Figure 3.16 *Lizst's Mephisto Valse*



free fall would be more suitable for the first octaves of the beats (D and C) and thrust for the following chords:

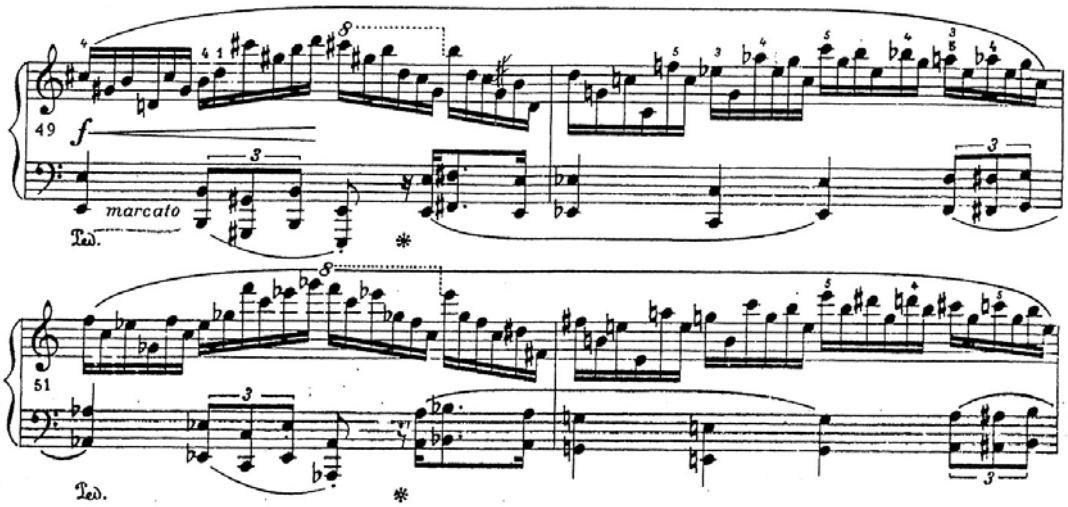
Total effortlessness is achieved by a sensible distribution of energy. There is a way of conveying the strength to the piano so that I could economize my force. For instance, instead of sitting bolt upright, it was suggested that I be inclined decidedly toward the keyboard. In all forte passages, I employed the weight of my body and shoulders (Figure 3.17). In supporting this view, Lhevinne (1974) observed how Rubinstein employed the weight of his body and shoulders and free use of full arm movement in order to be heard over the entire orchestra playing *fortissimo.*

Figure 3.17 *Tchaikovsky, Piano Concerto No.1, first movement*



When the passage has to be played very loud, like the octaves in Chopin's Etude opus 25 no. 11, I was taught to use the thumb in the left hand as often as possible so that I could take advantage of rotation, swinging movements since this is the easiest way of producing force (Figures 3. 18a and 3. 18b).

Figure 3.18a *Chopin, Etude opus 25 no 11*



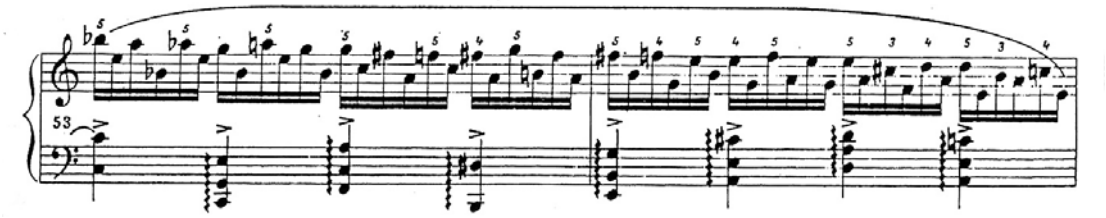
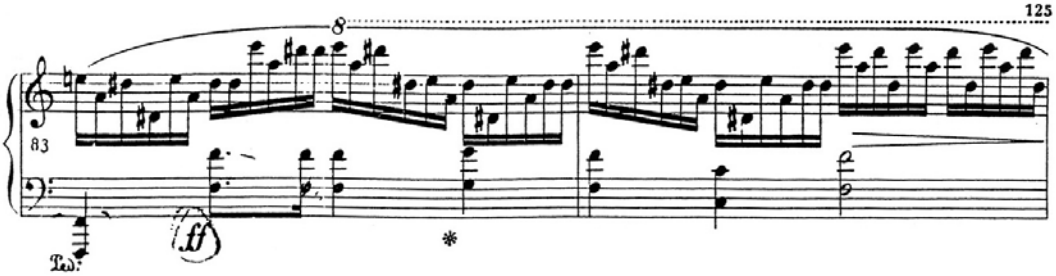


Figure 3.18b *Chopin, Etude opus 25 no 11*



3.2.6 RELAXATION AND FLEXIBILITY

Relaxation and flexibility are a corner-stone of Russian technique. The best position of the hand on the key is the one that can be altered easily and speedily. This is impossible without relaxation. The most favourable and convenient position of the fingers cannot be achieved without complete flexibility. Neuhaus also stated that “legato is unthinkable without flexibility” (Neuhaus, 1974, p. 101).

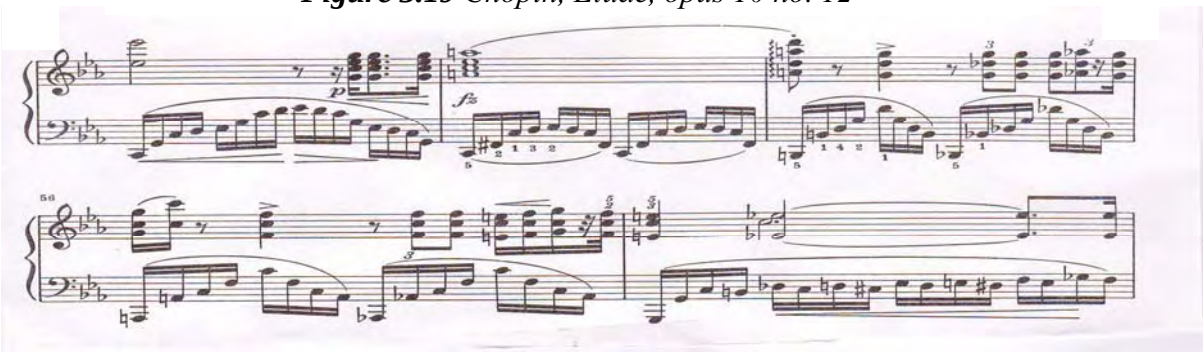
The problem of balance between flexibility and control arises when we move the hand up and down the keyboard to the right and left as there is the possibility of too much movement. The Russian school of piano playing is concerned with flexibility tempered by great control that can result in a substantial sound. Relaxation does not mean to play sloppily, unevenly, and inaccurately.

Flexibility is impossible without the wrist, forearm and shoulder taking part. My teacher helped me to understand what relaxation is and to feel how wonderful flexibility, resilience and freedom of movement of the whole arm together with the firm fingertip clinging to the key can be. My teacher showed me this by swinging in every direction, to the left, right, up, down but always resting the fingers on the key. The hand and arm from the wrist to the shoulder are completely relaxed (that is no stiffening) and

no potential flexibility is lost, making only those movements which are absolutely essential. Achieving the greatest results with the least expenditure of energy is the optimal solution. It was also suggested to use weight instead of force to feel relief.

When I learnt in Moscow to master widely spaced passages such as in Etude by Chopin, op. 10 no 12 (Figure 3.19), to distribute the weight properly, I was taught to relax my hand instantaneously after striking the note. In bars 55, 56 and many other similar places, I was taught to close the palm in left hand right away after the finger 1 played to avoid stiffness that may cause the feeling of paralysis of left hand. This has become a widespread technique in Eastern Europe.

Figure 3.19 *Chopin, Etude, opus 10 no. 12*



To master this complicated figure, the teaching method was to play slowly, step by step and watch carefully the necessary movements of hand, wrist and forearm to ensure that they were carried out completely smoothly, gradually, without the slightest jolt. Then the tempo should gradually be brought to the speed required (see Chapters 4 and 6-Slow Practice).

The Nocturne Posthumous op. 72 and Chopin's Nocturne, opus 55, no 2 are examples of passages in which smoothness and flexibility are required (Figures 3.20 and 3.21).

Figure 3.20 *Chopin, Nocture Posthume, op 72*

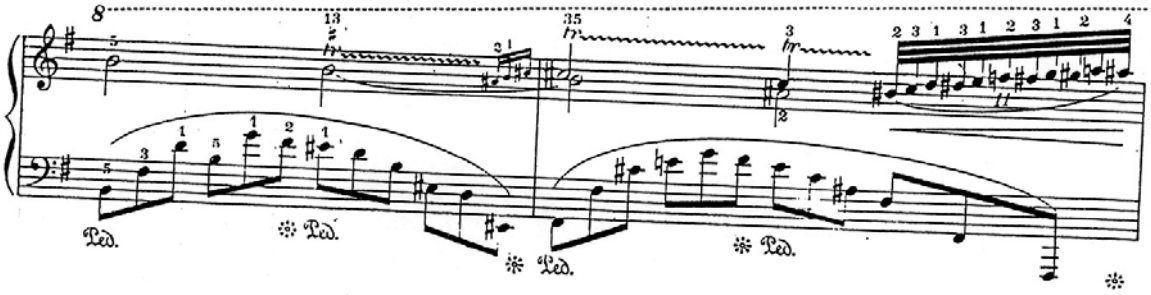
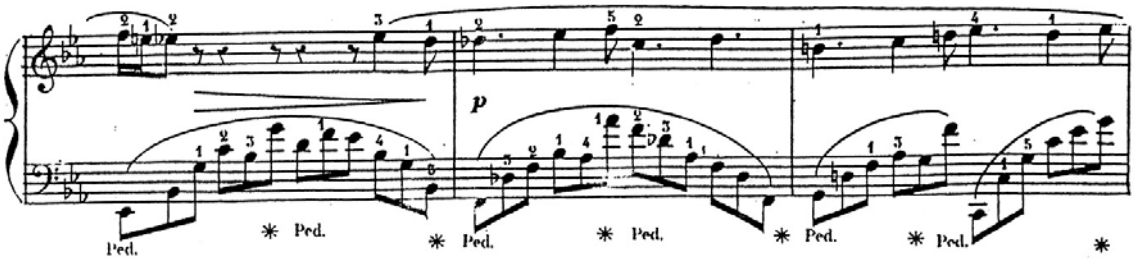


Figure 3.21 *Chopin, Nocturne, opus 55 no 2*

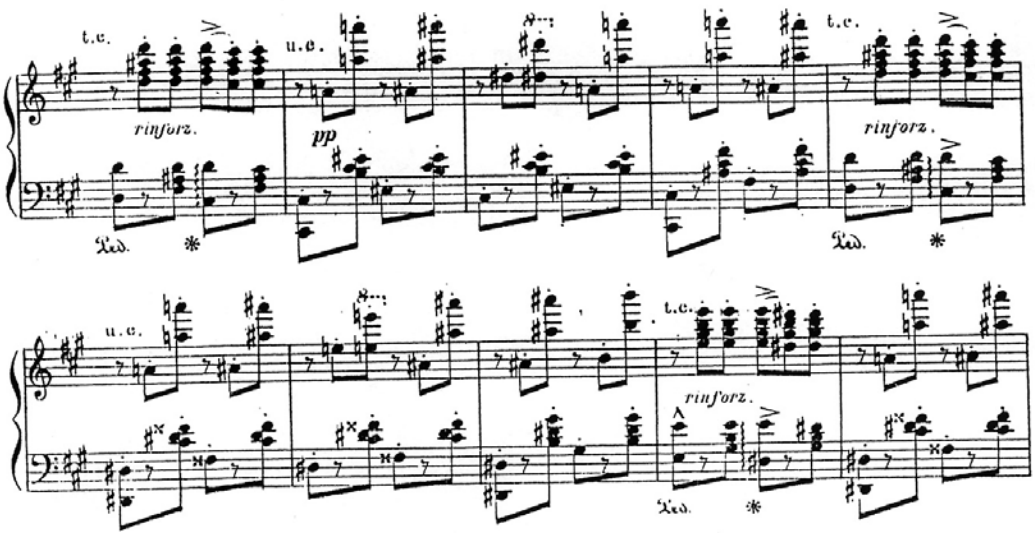


I was made to play left hand slowly as in a slow-motion film. My forearm was in constant and smooth motion, the wrist turned when needed for the most favourable and convenient position. This position needs the involvement of the hand, wrist and arm including the back. Since the difficulty of the passages lies in the thumb in the left hand that may destroy evenness, I was encouraged to prepare the thumb beforehand very lightly over the key which it must occupy in the near future and should be ready in good time. That is, I gradually turned my hand to the right (inwards), and prepared the thumb in advance (I spaced my thumb and third finger for the interval of the sixth) and quietly, supply and smoothly the thumb took the required G. This was done many times. My attention was given to the movement of the hand (also the wrist and forearm, etc.) while my fingers were quiet, remaining on the keys without superfluous activity.

Mastering large intervals, quick transfers of the hand, leaps and jumps is impossible without complete flexibility and is achieved through foresight. When I learnt the Mephisto Waltz by Liszt, although I could do the leaps (Figure 3.22) by instinct, I was taught to do the work with fingers as much as possible because only extreme closeness to the keyboard will guarantee accuracy. I was told that the shortest distance between two points is a natural curve and I needed to reduce movement to a minimum. That is only one movement is required for the leap in right hand between A natural and octave

A natural. The same is applied for the following leaps in the next bars. Meanwhile I had to prepare the position of fingers on the keys with foresight and determined intent it next requires. This method would guarantee my playing of leaps and jumps simple, natural and completely effortless.

Figure 3.22 *Liszt's Mephisto Waltz*



When I was about 15 years old in Moscow, one of the subjects I took was Piano Methodology for young children. The subject required me to observe piano lesson to learn how a Russian teacher taught young children. Giving the piano lesson for young children was a compulsory activity I had to do. I remember the very first lesson I attended as an observer. The relaxation exercise that the Russian teacher asked the child of 5 years to do was raising the wrist and hanging the hand loosely down play a note on the keyboard from above, gradually lowering the wrist as fast down as possible in a quick movement. Then raising it again above the keyboard until the finger can naturally no longer hold down the key and is carried away quickly and smoothly together with the hand and wrist. This was repeated many times with each finger. Another exercise was done without the piano. The child was asked to stand and let the right arm drop lifelessly alongside the body, then let the left hand pick it up by the fingers and raised it as high as possible and then suddenly drop it from highest point.

3.2.7 DEVELOPING "SINGING" QUALITY ON THE PIANO

The Russian school prefers to make the piano "sing". It has been well known, we were told, that under Russian hands, the piano can "sing". That is an essential element of Russian piano technique. Across all piano lessons for Vietnamese in Russia, the singing requirement is a prominent feature. The methods to make the piano sing that the Russian technique employs and how to develop a "singing" quality on the piano will be discussed in Chapter 6.

While the student should desire the creation of a singing tone, the extensive training frees it by loosening the hands and teaching how to open the shoulders. In this way, the teaching helps to get rid of harsh sounds.

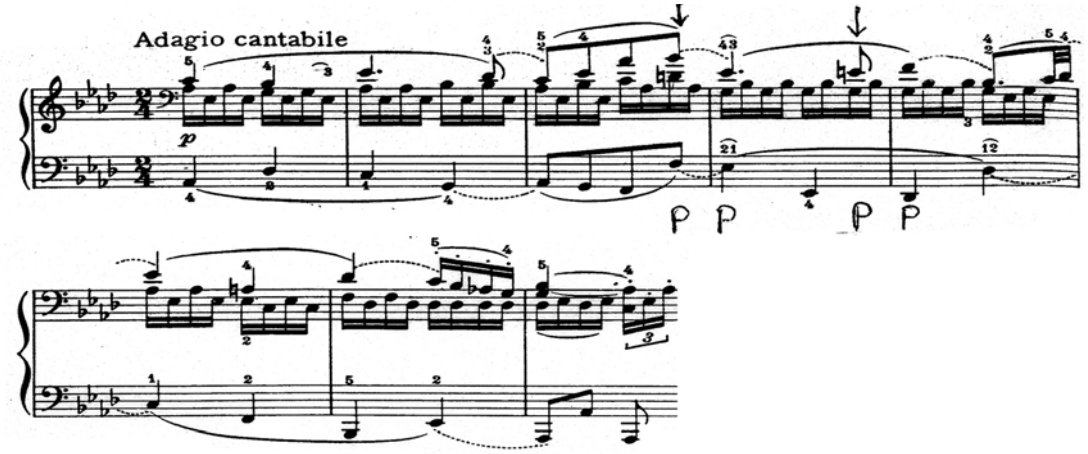
With proper instruction in Russia, I have certain fundamental principles in mind that the ringing and singing quality of the tone depend very largely on the amount of key surface covered with cushions of flesh of the finger accompanied by a loose wrist. The key is touched with as large a surface on the first joint of the finger as is feasible.

3.2.8 CREATING A SENSE OF PULSE

When I was a student in Moscow, one day, my teacher played two different interpretations for me of the same Beethoven work (see the Figure 3.23) to illustrate the difference between these two approaches. The first performance emphasized a every strong beat, which I felt chopped up the music into small pieces and gave it a plodding quality. The second performance was just the opposite: it underplayed the strong beats, and the natural forward movement of music was uplifting.

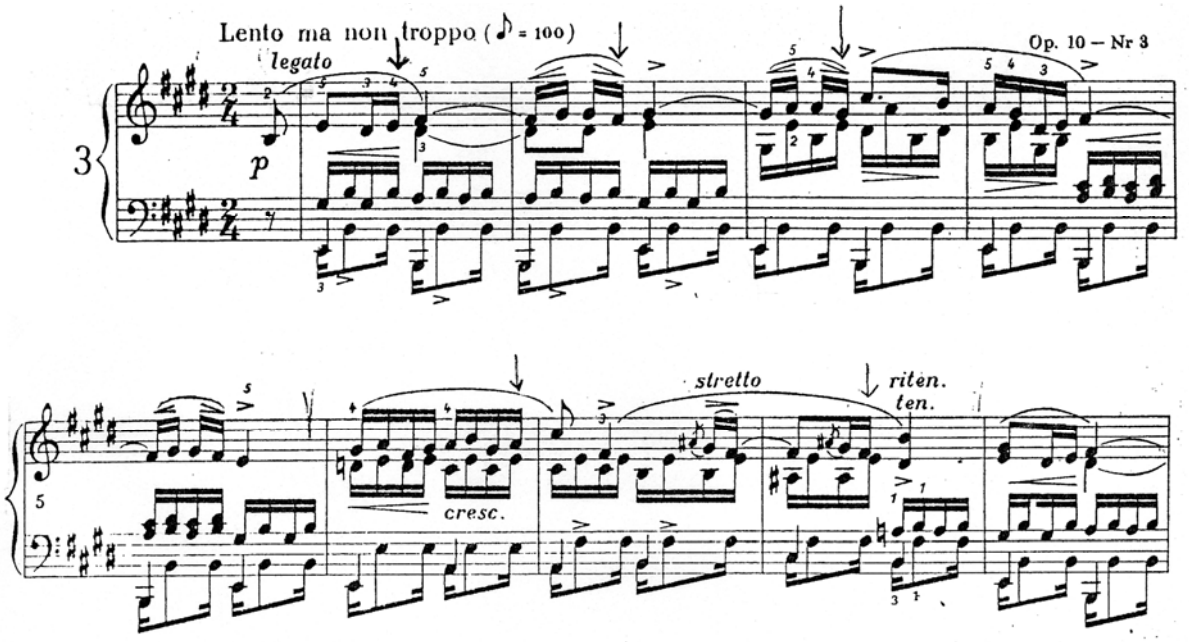
The example of piano music below is marked with arrows indicating where downward motion are used to link groups of notes into an unbroken chain. The arrows mark notes receive emphasis which increases the impact of the harmonic changes and the feeling of the offbeat moving toward the beat is strengthened, which creates a sense of momentum.

Figure 3.23 *Beethoven, Sonata No. 8, Op13, Second Movement*



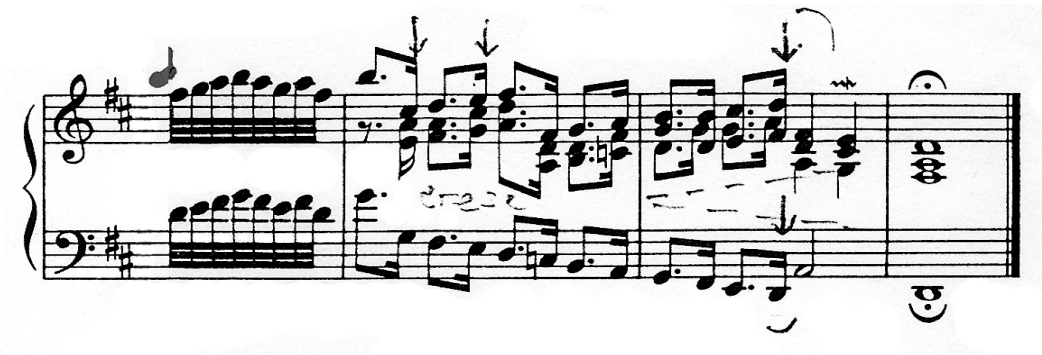
A similar example of offbeat notes with downward motions can be seen from Etude No. 3 op. 10 by Chopin (Figure 3.24). The arrows' function as offbeat notes can initiate forward movement. With downward motion, the arm weight can be transferred from the tip of fourth to the tip of fifth finger. The arm has to move toward that outer corner of the hand creating a diagonal motion.

Figure 3.24 *Etude No 3 op 10 by Chopin*



The example of piano music below (Figure 3. 25) is marked with arrows indicating one downward motion for two chords. The emphasis on offbeat notes creates the phrase moves:

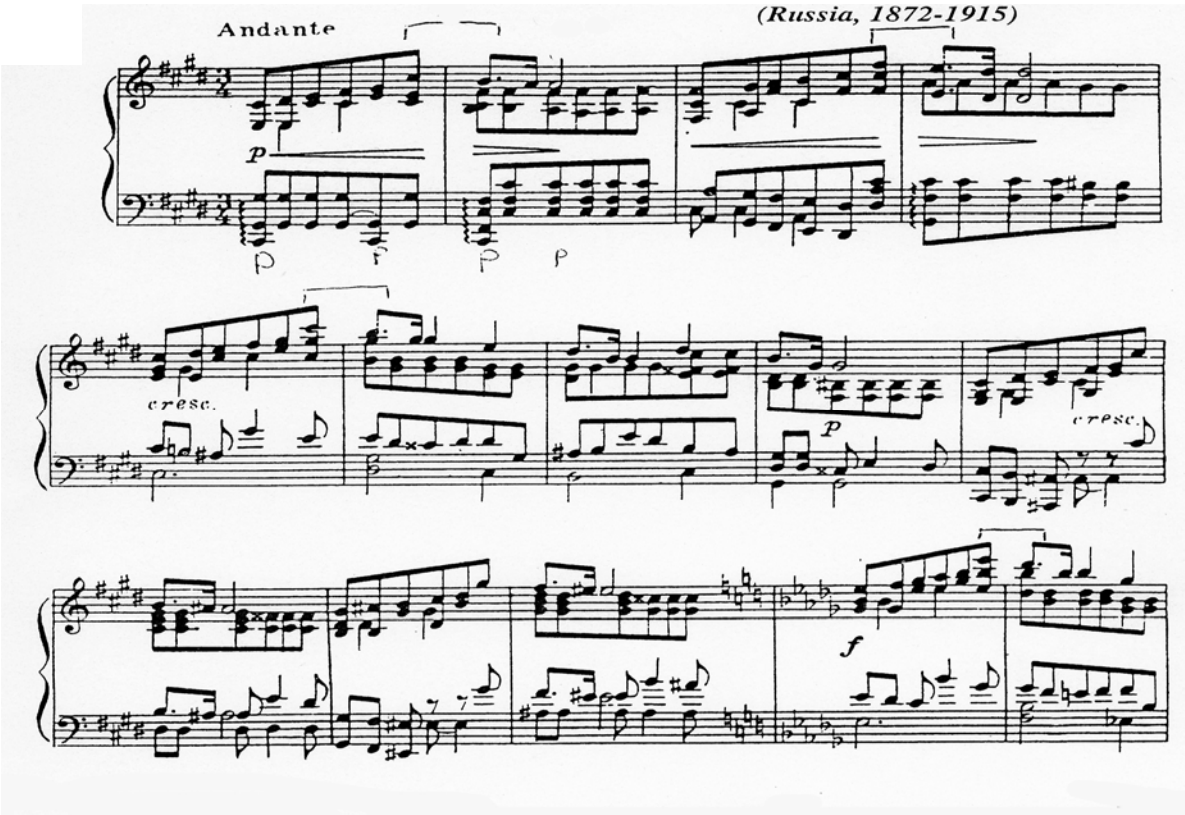
Figure 3.25 *Bach Prelude and Fugue No. 5 Vol. 1*



3.2.9 IDENTIFY THE STRUCTURE OF THE MUSICAL PHRASE

To be able to make the piano sing, my Russian teacher always asked me to identify where the musical phrase began and finished and that it is very important to know the culmination of each phrase as well as that of the whole piece. In the figure 3.26, the culmination of the phrase is in the middle between bars 1 and 2. The last chord of the first and third bars requires downward motion with arm weight. It functions as an offbeat note leading to the next beat, providing a sense of forward movement. To save energy for those crucial notes at the culmination of phrase, I was instructed to start the phrase softly and increase the volume to the culmination of phrase, then come down at the end of the phrase in the last beat of second bar. The same principle applies to the next phrase. However, the culmination of third phrase in bars 5 and 6 should be higher than those of bars 1 and 2 and 3 and 4. And the culmination in bars 13 and 14 should be higher than the previous ones.

Figure 3.26 *Scriabin Etude, op.2. No.1*



A good understanding of gradual dynamic changes is vital. From the very first piano lesson, I was taught to play *piano* when the score indicates *crescendo* and play *forte* when the score indication is *diminuendo*. The explanation was that if a protracted crescendo is rendered immediately with outright forte, it weakens the growth and culmination of the phrase or the section. The same rule applies to a rendering of *ritenuto* and *accelerando*. For the good effect of the culmination, the whole swing of the fingers and hand is needed with a completely flexible *legato* to get an open, broad, flowing tone.

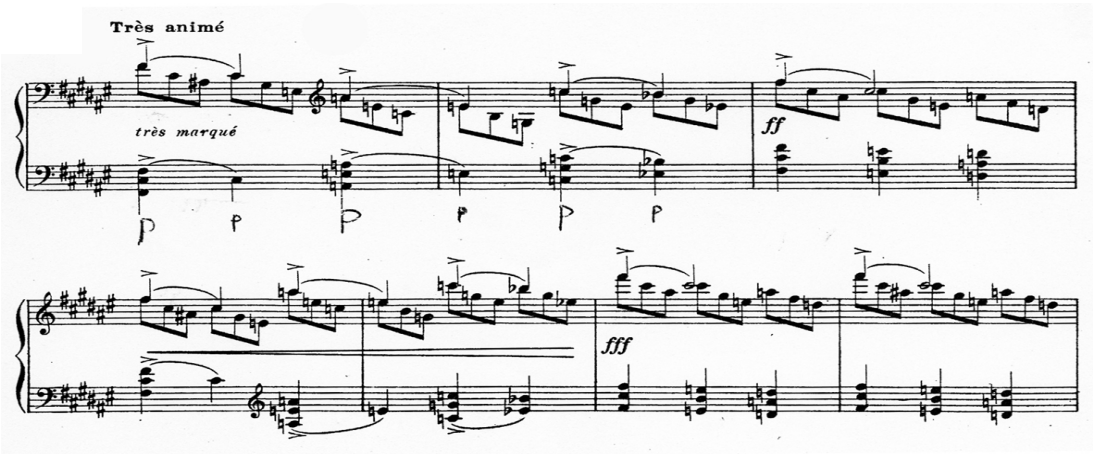
Identifying the highest culmination within the piece and the balance between *fortes* is very important. In Figure 3.27, if I get overexcited with two *fortes* in the third bar then the volume of sound does not increase and there is no culmination in bars 6 and 7. So my teacher reminded me of the need to know where the music goes and leads to. This is supported by Bella Davidovich, the Russian foremost pianist who won the Chopin Competition. She said that

> "One has to be able to calculate one's sound as an engineer would, and to portion it so that you give the impression that you always have more to give. You cannot put it out all at once so that you have nothing to fall back on, but you have to distribute the sound evenly

to know how much you have to give. Give a little *diminuendo* to create the impression that you can give a little more, and then a little more."

Davidovich (1987, p. 41)

Figure 3.27 *Ravel Sonatine, Third Movement*



Dynamics and clear intonation in a phrase is necessary not only for melodic parts but also for runs and passages. When I learned the Concerto No 23 in A major by Mozart in Moscow, my Russian teacher very frequently asked me to increase the volume when the pitch rises and decrease it when the pitch descends. She used the method of exaggeration by singing and playing the rising and falling passages slowly. She encouraged her students to imitate the voice of a singer when playing on the piano.

Figure 3.28 *Concerto No 23, A major by Mozart*

CHAPTER 4

A SUMMARY OF SOME EXISTING STUDIES

The focus of many existing studies is on the student with comparatively little on the teacher and teaching strategies or styles. The following topics illustrate the range of student and teaching behaviours in some important extant studies, and help to explain the different focus which is used in this study. I summarise some important studies here, rather than go into great detail, because I discuss previous research and its relevance at some length when I examine the data and results of my empirical work in Chapter 6. Finally, the studies described here, together with others I mention later, have been an important source for construction of my questionnaires, interviews, and observations reported in Chapter 6.

4.1 PRACTICE TIME

Practice strategies and the amount of formal practice are recognized as vital ingredients of high musical achievement. It was discovered in Sloboda *et al.*.'s (1996) study that there was a strong positive relationship between musical achievement and the amount of formal and deliberate kinds of practice activities. The data also revealed that high achievers tended to be more consistent in their practice from week to week. Relevant are the findings by expert musicians Manturszewska (1990), Sloboda and Home (1991) and Sosniak (1985) that regular practice is essential for acquiring and maintaining high levels of ability. These strongly support the theory that continuous practicing is crucial in order to reach a professional level of expertise (see Chapter 6: Factors 4 and 5 from 100 questions for Russian graduates and Factor 10 from 60 questions for students-Practice Time).

In support of this position, Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer (1993) found that there was a strong correlation between proficiency and accumulated practice. The best students in the performance class of a conservatory had accumulated around 10,000

hours of practice by the age of 21, while less skilled students had accumulated only half that amount on average. To achieve grade 8, the highest level of the British Associate Board examinations in music performance required an average of around 3300 hours of practice (Sloboda *et al..*, 1996). This means that practice is a direct contributor to achievement level (Howe, 1998). A number of other studies have provided similar evidence of a high level of sustained practice over many years among high achieving musicians (Manturzewska, 1990; Sloboda and Howe, 1991; Sosniak, 1985). Most of the findings take the form of data showing that even those who are believed to be exceptionally talented, whether in music, chess, sports or mathematics require lengthy periods of instruction and practice (Charness, Krampe, and Mayr, 1996; Ericsson and Charness, 1994; Ericsson, Tesch-Romer, and Krampe, 1990; Starkes *et al..* 1996).

Howe and his co-researchers, Davidson and Sloboda, (1998) have reported large amounts of regular practice were found to be essential for excelling. Studies of long-term practice and training suggest that individual differences in learning-related experiences are a major source of variance in achievement. Although the observation by Sloboda *et al..* (1996) that comparisons between more and less successful groups of people may not have revealed differences in the amount of practice needed to achieve a given amount of progress, no case has been encountered of anyone reaching the highest levels of achievement in chess-playing, mathematics, music or sports without devoting thousands of hours to serious training (Howe, Davidson, and Sloboda, 1998).

Some researchers have argued that attainment simply increases with practice and as a result, that accumulated practice time can directly predict achievement (Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer, 1993; Sloboda *et al..* 1996). However this is not always the case. Some research (Hallam, 1998; Williamon and Valentine, 2000) has suggested that while cumulative practice may be a good predictor of the overall level of expertise attained, it may not predict the quality of performance at any point in time. Practice alone may be inadequate to produce the highest levels of mastery of a skill. Mere repetition does not necessarily improve performance (Barry and Hallam, 2002). Wagner (1975) found that musical performance and improvement are not only determined by the amount of time practiced. His study investigated the effect of a practice report on practice time and musical performance. 48 music students were randomly assigned into 4 groups. After the eight-week experimental period, each subject was asked to play his/her performance which was rated by a panel of three judges. The results show that

although subjects in Group 3 practiced significantly more than subjects in Groups 1 and 2, but they did not perform better and scores among groups were not significantly different.

4.2 PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Kliegl, Smith and Baltes (1989) have confirmed that the quality of practice is as important as the sheer amount of it. The innumerable hours spent practicing must be purposeful and consciously controlled by the mind. The mind must be on what one is doing every minute, or the value of one's practice is lessened enormously. By intense concentration, one can do more in a half hour than in an hour spent purposelessly (Lhevinne,1972). The practice approach should be organised and goal-oriented in manner. The correct principles of practice strategies produce the best results and use the enormous time consumed in the process more efficiently. Wasteful practice which is purely mechanical, and inefficient practice strategies, both produce poorer results. Mechanical practice is not only time-consuming but also shapes harmful habits of playing incorrectly. The results of repetition of ineffective practice can be frustrating. Conscious practice diminishes the number of repetitions needed to establish good habits.

Ericsson, Krampe, and Heizman (1993) have advocated that the most effective activity for skill acquisition is deliberate practice, where explicit goals were set through structured activities for improving performance. "Specific tasks are invented to overcome weaknesses and performance is carefully monitored to provide cues for ways to improve it further" (p.10). If the correct approach is well established, continuous improvement will follow. This is the reason why it is so important to employ the correct strategies with conscious attention (see Chapter 6: Factor 3 from 100 questions for Russian graduates-Practice Strategies). One goal of playing as fast as possible is valuable only when the intended motions are completely controlled. A passage should not be played any faster than the control one has achieved.

Slow practice is a helpful way to control every aspect of the motion with absolute accuracy (see Chapter 6: question 13 from 100 questions for Russian graduates- Slow

Practice). To support this view, Firkusny (1987), a soloist with the world's leading orchestras and conductors, believes that slow practicing is very helpful and useful to him because he can have much more control of what he is doing and is prepared for most things. Taylor (1981) also supported the method of slow practice as essential to give ample time for the ear to register the right sounds, which is a vital necessity in memorizing, enhancing the degree of aural and touch memory. This corresponds with Armand Ferte's belief that slow practice is very helpful. He said: "Play it slowly nine times, and up to tempo once. Not the reverse!" (Timbrell, 1999, p. 126). Henriot Scheweitzer, a student of Marguerite Long, has a similar view:

> "I believe in very, very slow practice, deep into the keys, ….I like to think of slow- motion films, with absolutely smooth and hypnotic movements- and I recommend this regardless of what the final tempo must be"
>
> Timbrell (1999, p. 97)

Similarly, Isidor Philip believes that

> "The best way to practice is to play very slowly, like Rachmaninoff recommended, learning all the positions and knowing exactly every movement that you must make. Then gradually you work with fast motions, section by section. If the motions are not ingrained in this way, you can become flustered by a concert, and that can be disastrous…. I remember that Turczynski, a Busoni pupil who edited the Polish Chopin edition, told me that he always practiced slowly, and that fast tempos always came naturally after that."
>
> Timbrell (1999, p. 82).

Prokofiev's slow practice was evident from Dmitri Kabalevsky's remembrance of Prokofiev playing his own Third Concerto:

> "When I was staying at the Hotel Europe in Leningrad, I heard some familiar sounds on the piano coming from the next room. At first I could not make out what it was, but after a while I recognized passages from Prokofiev's Third Concerto the one he had played so brilliantly for so many years in nearly all the concert halls in the

> world. What puzzled me was that they were being played so slowly, each figure being repeated over and over again with such persistence that it was hard to recognise the music at once. This painstaking work was continued on the following day as well. The next day he gave a concert in the Large Hall of the Phil-harmony and played the concerto with his usual brilliance."
>
> Kabalevsky (1974, pp. 309-310)

4.2.1 COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

> "The full acoustic picture of the music must be lodged in the mind, before it can be expressed through the hands."
>
> Hofmann (1967)

Mental practice in combination with physical practice is another effective cognitive strategy (Coffman, 1990; Rose, 1985; Rubin-Rabson, 1941). Mental practice involves analysing scores, conscious awareness of the key and time signatures which helps musicians to play more accurately (McPherson, 1994). In mental practice we do not play wrong notes, do not miss notes, and do not play mechanically. When we look at the score, we can associate musical passages with their technical solutions. We can save time and energy. Ashkenazy (1987), who was trained at the Moscow Conservatory and won first prize in the second Tchaikovsky Competition, said that he could look at scores and analyse the form to know what happens in the piece of music and the relationship of the individual parts without the need to play it. He could learn mentally a piece by Mozart or early Beethoven where the textures are not complicated. However, he said for involved romantic pieces, a coordination time is needed to get the physical touch right with the piano and have the fingers mechanically find the right places.

Robert Schumann wrote: "Only when the form is clear to you can the spirit speak clearly". This statement suggested that more or less the composer has a clear idea of the scope and the style of the work he intends to write. From that point he expresses his thoughts and motions in coherent, organized sound. So it would be helpful for the performer to grasp the inner logic and architecture of a composition, thematic

groupings, key-schemes, the evolution and relationships of the thematic material. These aspects will lead the performer to obtain an insight into the composer's aims (Taylor K. , 1981). In support of this view, Kochevitsky (1967) said that since the acoustic picture is complex, one has to become familiar with a composition's form, harmonic and polyphonic structure, metrical rhythmic relationships, melodic design, phrasing, articulation, quality of desired sonority and dynamic shading. The pianist has to know what he is going to do and anticipate all problems before his hands touch the keyboard. He has to consider technical elements such as positions and movements of his playing apparatus, kinds of touch and appropriate fingering (see Chapter 6: questions 10 and 59 from 100 questions for Russian graduates; question 12 from 30 questions for teachers; and Chapter 7-Mental Practice).

Sargeant (1974) noted Lhevinne's (Joseph's wife) teaching approach which is typically Russian: "in the tradition of Anton Rubinstein, she always started out by getting the students to imagine the sound mentally, then students need to produce and consciously control the varying nuances of a composition, the flow of phrases and climaxes."

4.2.2 MEMORY

The advantages of playing from memory

Before the nineteenth century, musicians performed in public reading from the score or improvising. During the time of Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, it was not common for musicians to perform from memory. Very few musicians at that time thought it necessary. However the Romantic period witnessed the introduction of solo performance from memory. This can be traced to Clara Wieck Schumann and Franz Liszt who began to play in concerts without the score. Just as at the present time, the custom of playing from memory is indispensable, there can be no doubt about the practical benefits of performing from memory. First, there is a musical advantage playing from memory because it allows the pianist to develop freely their own feeling and emotional involvement, thus the expressive quality and technical control can be enhanced. Second, communicative advantages improve stage presence allowing the pianist to communicate their musical ideas more effectively to audiences. Third, the

atmosphere of the concert room cannot be disturbed by the action of turning pages in front of thousands of people (Aiello and Williamon, 2002; Lhevinne, 1972). This has some features in common with a study by Hallam (1997) who indicated that the clear perceived benefits of performing from memory are being able to concentrate on musical aspects of performance; the feeling of knowing the work is enhanced and promotes communication with the audience. The study by Williamon (1999) revealed that audiences preferred a memorized performance to a non-memorized performance, especially musically trained audiences rated memorized performances higher than non-musicians. This study also showed that the extra time spent practicing for the memorized performance was beneficial (see Chapter 6: question 53 from 100 questions; question 55 from 60 questions; question 21 from 30 questions; and Chapter 7-Playing from Memory).

Memory strategies

According to Aiello and Williamon (2002), the ability to memorize seems to be enhanced by visual, kinesthetic, and auditory information, as well as studying music theory and analyzing the score. These finding were supported in the study by Hallam (1997) which showed that automated programmers set up during practice of a work and based on aural, visual, and kinesthetic codes and analysis, were sufficient to enable successful recall for performance. Visual memory involves mental photographs, images of the written page and remembering positions of hands and fingers. Kinesthetic memory involves finger, muscular, sense of key resistance and tactile memory which is facilitated by extended training. Aural memory enables the musician to imagine the sounds of the whole piece and know what it should sound like. Analyzing the score with knowledge of musical structure allows one to have a firm grasp of the elements of harmony, counterpoint and form. The sequences of chords in harmony are like musical words. Getting the composer's idea and his thought pictures are useful (Lhevinne, 1972). Analysis of the structure of a work provides a framework into which the automated passages could be fitted. The musicians with the greatest confidence in performing from memory were reported as adopting multiple coding, both automated and analytic (Hallam, 1997).

The importance of mental rehearsal in memorizing a piece was stressed by Gieseking and Leimer (Aiello and Williamon, 2002). Their method to memorize pieces was silent reading to prepare for technical execution before beginning to play them.

4.3 LISTENING

Above all, music is sound and all playing always involves the ear. Neuhaus[8] (1974) stated in his book that "a pianist cannot have a beautiful singing tone if his ear does not detect the whole available range of tone continuity which the piano provides". Therefore it is important for students to develop a repertoire of mental blueprints through listening to various models, whether they be a peer or teacher or model they hear on a recording (McPherson and Gabrielsson, 2002). A study by Standifer (1970) found that

> "Only listening offers each student an equal opportunity to investigate new worlds of sound. Through listening, the student is exposed to expressive musical content at all levels of musical sophistication" (p. 97)

Listening can certainly provide a useful resource for students. Hallam's (1998, p. 158) study showed that hearing high-quality examples may prove beneficial in guiding student practicing. And recordings or teacher demonstrations as a model to provide students with aural examples can be very beneficial for students (see Chapter 6: questions 43, 77, 79, 80 from 100 questions; question 30 from 60 questions; question 30 from 30 questions and Chapter 7 - Listening). Dickey (1991) compared two methods of instruction: a verbal approach and a modelling (teacher demonstration) approach. His study found that instrumental music students taught with modelling strategies achieved significantly higher scores and would develop better melodic ear-to-hand skills, kinaesthetic response skills, and general music discrimination skills than would students taught just through verbal strategies.

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[8] Heinrich Neuhaus is a talented Russian performer and a great teacher who brought up a brilliant generation of musicians. The names of his students speak for themselves: Richter, Gilels, Zack, Malinin, Kastelsky, Petrushansky, Lubimov, among others.

In supporting the view that music listening formed an important part of students' lives, a recent study by Lamont *et al.*. (2003) found that many students of all ages felt that listening to music allowed them to explore or even change their own emotional responses. Additional studies (Dickey, 1991; Kendall M. J., 1990; Linklater, 2002; Zurcher, 1975) support the use of aural models as an aid to musical development. Zurcher's (1975) experiment provided beginning instrumentalists with cassette tapes that contained instructions and model play-along performances of the music and it was found that such model-supported practice was significantly more effective than traditional practice and time spent in practice. However, Hallam (1998a, p. 158) warned that "at a later stage the provision of a single example may force students into stereotypical performance practices and deter them from developing their own interpretations."

4.4 TEACHING STYLES

Studies in which investigators have examined the teaching styles have been numerous. In a study involving 20 music teachers, Moore (1976) reported that experienced teachers spent more time giving instructions and were generally more positive in the type of feedback used. Results of his study supported those reported by Price and Yarbrough (1991) in which results indicated an overall preference for teaching patterns that consisted of academic information and approving reinforcement. Patterns containing approvals were preferred significantly more than patterns that contained no feedback and disapprovals. These results correspond with earlier research by Price (1989). These findings were also supported by Jellison and Wolfe (1987) in which the results of research indicated that students prefer a teaching style that incorporates a complete " pattern" consisting of task presentation, students response, and teacher feedback. Teaching styles that used teacher approval was also supported by Madsen and Duke (1985). They reported that teacher approval was viewed as being effective and beneficial by trained observers. Later, in a similar study, Duke (1986) investigated reactions of 53 education majors as they responded to videotape examples of appropriate and inappropriate student behaviours. He found that subjects recommended negative teacher feedback following inappropriate student behaviour (27%)

significantly more than positive teacher feedback following appropriate student behaviour (5%).

Other studies of effectiveness of teaching styles investigated direct-indirect (Flanders, 1970), supportive-nonsupportive (Erbes, 1978), comprehensive musicianship versus traditional (Dodson, 1980; Garofalo and Whaley, 1979; Whitener, 1983) and the formal-informal dichotomy (Bennett, 1976). Bennett's (1976) study explored the effects of teaching style on pupils' performance at primary school level in which he reported that "progressive" teaching methods were used in the English primary school which allowed children to express themselves freely and do what they wanted instead of being taught to read, write, and add up, and as a result, he claimed that they were learning nothing. This conclusion consequently led to a speech made by British Prime minister, James Callaghan at Ruskin College, Oxford in 1976, in which he criticized the educational situation developing in England at that time. However, the data did not include observations of teaching relying instead merely on self-reporting by the teacher. Galton et al., (1980), in a more detailed study involving actual observations of teaching in classrooms, came to a different conclusion with far more compelling data and analysis (Walker, 2007).

Two studies of patterns of teaching styles that relate to teacher modelling and teacher verbal instruction were carried out by Siebenaler (1997). His investigation was to identify and describe the characteristics of effective teaching in the piano studio and analyse teacher – student interactions in piano lessons. Thirteen piano teachers were videotaped with their students. Computerized observation procedures, designed specifically to record and analyse teacher behaviour, student behaviour, and lesson progress. Ten representative excerpts were evaluated by five expert piano pedagogues, who rated the teaching effectiveness observed in each. Active teachers who provided more modelling and gave more feedback were ranked higher than inactive teachers (see Chapter 6: questions 7 and 20 from 60 questions for students). And students of the more active teachers tended to perform more successfully. The duration and pace of behaviour episodes were important variables in discriminating among levels of instructional quality, with faster pace associated with more effective teaching. The second study was comparison of the effectiveness of verbal instruction and nonverbal teacher-student modelling in instrumental ensemble music classrooms by Dickey (1991). The primary hypothesis maintains that modelling is more effective than verbal

instruction. Four middle school band classes (n = 128), two taught for 10 weeks with verbal instruction and two with modelling instruction, were pre-tested and post tested for ear-to-hand skills, kinaesthetic response skills, and music discrimination skills. Students in the two classes receiving modelling instruction achieved significantly higher scores on tests of ear-to-hand skills and kinaesthetic skills than did those in the two classes receiving verbal instruction, although those in the modelling classes did not achieve significantly different scores in a test of general music discrimination skills. These findings suggest that the use of modelling strategies and devices such as melodic echoes and rhythmic movement to music can lead to increased ear-to-hand skills and kinaesthetic response skills.

Another study of teaching styles, which focused on expression and emotion, was that by Laukka (2004) in which instrumental music teachers' views on expressivity were examined. Fifty one instrumental music teachers from music conservatoires in England and Sweden were asked to fill out a questionnaire that focused on the following issue: How can expressive skills be taught to music students? The results suggest that a majority of the teachers defined expressivity primarily in terms of communicating emotion. Modelling and verbal-based instruction focusing on the students' felt emotions were the preferred methods for teaching expressive skills. These teachers preferred to spend more time on teaching expressive skills suggesting that developing expressive skills deserves more attention in higher instrumental music education.

As mentioned earlier in this literature review, most of the research and comment deals with the amount of practice, the nature of the practice – i.e., Ericsson *et al.*.'s (1993) "focus" on serious practice – and the length of time in years, and the daily routine – e.g., Sloboda and Home (1991). Even in the seminal paper discussing whether or not innate talents exist, or whether expert achievement in music is due to practice (Howe, Davidson, and Sloboda, 1998) or not, no one mentions the role of the teacher and the interaction between teacher and student in the development of talent in music. Few studies exist of teaching styles in the music conservatory studio situation.

This thesis deals in some detail with the actual teaching styles, and many different aspects of them, as well as the reactions of students to these different styles of teaching in a conservatory setting. The main focus is comparing the teaching and learning process in Russia, Vietnam and England as it has affected the style and approach of

piano teachers who studied in these countries. It is also about cultural differences for Vietnamese students learning to perform Western piano music. However, the research focus concerns mostly the teaching styles which students experienced. The questionnaires using student rating scales, teacher rating scales, interviews and observation are explained in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Subjects for the study (Total n = 124) were full time conservatory teachers, professors, international concert pianists trained in the conservatories of music in Russia, England, and Vietnam and their undergraduate piano students enrolled in the Bachelor of Music Performance degree program. These three countries have been selected for this research because they might exhibit potentially different environmental factors, and thus different teaching approaches. The purpose is to investigate the teaching styles of three different types of teachers compare their approaches, and the reactions of students to the three different sources of training of piano teachers in Russia, Vietnam and England.

The methodological approach was descriptive and interpretative, imitating the form of a case study in its basic approach but not in its actual modus operandi. This close study of practice would offer valuable insights to the whole field of piano teaching which, it could be argued, has been something of a “secret garden”. We called for volunteers from among the teachers to take part in the project. The fact that most of them did so indicates the existence of a degree of trust and openness. Three data-gathering methods were employed: questionnaire, observation and semi-structured interview.

Complex questionnaires were devised to investigate many aspects of the problem. This study also uses a research method of systematic observation and interviews to analyse teachers and students’ attitudes, feelings, and responses from the perspectives of pedagogy and cultural difference. The two strengths of systematic observation and interview are, first, that the categories of teacher and student behaviour are clearly defined and tested for validity. Second, the results are reported in numerical terms which make statistical analyses possible.

A questionnaire is the most widely used technique for obtaining research specific information from targeted subjects. A questionnaire is relatively economical, has relevant questions, can ensure anonymity, and questions can be written for specific investigative purposes. Questionnaires can use statements or questions, but in all cases the subject is responding to something written (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993).

Ethics approval was obtained at UNSW: Approval Number 05 2 126, dated 26 October, 2005.

5.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Three questionnaires were designed: one for teachers who graduated from Russia, another for all teachers in this study, and the other for their students. A total of 190 questions were designed by the researcher and consisted of 39 main factors which covered a broad range of topics, as determined by a literature review before the study commenced. To develop the content of questionnaires used in this study, in addition to my ideas which come from my own experience, the questions were based on previous studies by Jorgensen (2000) and Mills and Smith (2003).

Although some of the introductory questions on the student and teacher questionnaires differed, the substance and purpose of them was similar. The aim is to determine the importance they placed generally on the various areas of study and different strategies, and also to ascertain the extent to which they thought each was employed in their own lessons.

All of the questions required participants to respond using 0 -10 rating scales on which 0 represented the low end of the scale and 10 represented a corresponding high point. The only exceptions to this were those questions associated with respondents' level of involvement in musical activities which involved estimations and categorical responses (e.g.,, " Describe how you have improved technically?") and frequency responses (e.g.,, "How many hours did you practice daily before your time in Russia in hour and/or minutes?"). All items were pilot tested to ensure that the questions were comprehensible and unambiguous.

The questionnaires investigate three main topics: teacher personality, teaching approach and teaching content. Both structured and semi-structured questionnaires were used in three different questionnaires: 100 questions for teachers who graduated from Russia; 60 questions for their students; and 30 questions for all teachers in the study.

Unstructured questions allow the interviewer great latitude in asking broad questions in whatever order seems appropriate. In qualitative educational studies most interviews use a combination of structured and semi-structured questions. This provides a high degree of objectivity and uniformity, yet al.lows for probing and clarification (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993). The questions in the interviews in this present study were the open-ended questions in the three questionnaires. Subjects were interviewed with the discussion based on these questions. Subjects volunteered to be interviewed. In all over 60% of the subjects volunteered.

5.3 PROCEDURE

Teachers and their students completed initial questionnaires that surveyed their backgrounds and perceptions of the areas of study and teaching strategies and styles employed within their lessons. These were followed up with interviews and observations of lessons.

The questionnaires were translated into Vietnamese by an experienced professional translator with a university degree in translation. To ensure accuracy, reliability, and conformity, this translated version of the questionnaires was then back-translated (from Vietnamese to English) by another independent translator as a means of verifying accuracy of meaning. In this way, it was intended that both language forms of the questionnaire were identical.

The teachers and students were encouraged to write at length when responding and to provide very rich, considered information for data analysis. Each phrase of the teachers' and students' responses to questions was coded to make sure that the codes consistently were applied and the range of codes was extended as questionnaires yielded more ideas. Codes were prompted either by specific wording, or by the overall meaning conveyed by the writing. My aim was to capture as much as possible of the quality and detail of

what teachers and students had written. The participants who completed the questionnaires responded generously, typically by answering the questions fully and at length, providing the researcher with plenty of rich material for analysis. The questionnaire required approximately one hour to complete. Subjects completed the questionnaires during the period 2005-2006.

All the participants were interviewed face-to-face by the researcher. Teachers, who often felt isolated due to the pattern of their work, welcomed the opportunity to be involved in reflection and dialogue about their own teaching. Participants were informed that they would remain anonymous throughout, and that their responses would be completely confidential. Before asking specific questions, the purpose of the interview was briefly explained to the participants and they were asked whether they had any questions or concerns. The questions were then addressed to the participant in the exact words indicated on the questionnaires.

5.4 100 QUESTIONS FOR VIETNAMESE GRADUATES TRAINED IN RUSSIA (RUSSIAN GRADUATES)

Purpose

To find out what was the most important changes in behaviour by Vietnamese students, who later became Russian trained teachers, both before their time in Russia and after, in terms of their attitudes to practice strategies, length and regularity of practice and other matters such as how they found the attitude of their teachers in Russia and how easily they become performers and fitted into Russian ways of working and performing.

Identification of Samples

The subjects are current Vietnamese piano teachers who were offered a scholarship through generous Russian support to study in Russia up to the year 2000 and were considered to be the outstanding students in their time. They were selected to study in Russia for a period of around 10 years from the early age of 14 to 17.

Structures of the Questionnaire

The questionnaires for Vietnamese trained in Russia (Russian graduates) are categorized into the 15 main factors:

(The complete Questionnaires are to be found in Appendix 1)

Factor 1 Personal Details and Problems (7 questions: questions 1-7)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 1: Conservatory or institute of study

Question 2: Age in Russia

Question 3: Length of study

Question 4: Opinion about Russian method

Question 5: Pianistic problems

Question 6: Problems sorted out

Question 7: Time to solve problems

Factor 2 Attitude change towards Practice Strategies (1 question: question 8)

Question 8: Attitude change towards practice strategies

Factor 3 Practice Strategies:

Brief Summary of each question:

Factor 3a Before Russian time (13 questions: questions 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42 and 45)

Question 9: Silent study or analysis

Question 12: Slow practice

Question 15: Test out different possible solutions

Question 18: Divide the piece into "working areas"

Question21: Play each hand or pedal separately

Question24: Change rhythmic structure

Question 27: Develop exercises based on parts of the piece

Question 30: Metronome

Question33: Music marking

Question 36: Auditive and visual pictures

Question 39: Minimize patterns of movements to chords

Question 42: Listen to model to sort out technical problems

Question 45: Start a piece in the middle

Factor 3b During Russian time: (13 questions: questions 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37, 40, 43, 46)

Question 10: Silent study or analysis

Question 13: Slow practice

Question 16: Test out different possible solutions

Question 19: Divide the piece into "working areas"

Question 22: Play each hand or pedal separately

Question 25: Change rhythmic structure

Question 28: Develop exercises based on parts of the piece

Question 31: Metronome

Question34: Music marking

Question 37: Auditive and visual pictures

Question 40: Minimize patterns of movements to chords

Question 43: Listen to model to sort out technical problems

Question 46: Start a piece in the middle

Factor 3c After Russian Time: (13 questions: questions 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35, 38, 41, 44, 47)

Question 11: Silent study or analysis

Question 14: Slow practice

Question 17: Test out different possible solutions

Question 20: Divide the piece into "working areas"

Question 23: Play each hand or pedal separately

Question 26: Change rhythmic structure

Question 29: Develop exercises based on parts of the piece

Question 32: Metronome

Question 35: Music marking

Question 38: Auditive and visual pictures

Question 41: Minimize patterns of movements to chords

Question 44: Listen to model to sort out technical problems

Question 47: Start a piece in the middle

Factor 4 Attitude Change towards Practice Time (1 question: question 48)

Question 48: Attitude Change towards Practice Time

Factor 5 Length of Practice (3 questions):

Brief Summary of each question:

Factor5 a Before Russian time (question 49)

Factor5 b During Russian time (question 50)

Factor5 c After Russian time (question 51)

Factor 6 Details of Lesson Study and Piano Technique (11 questions):

Brief Summary of each question:

Factor 6 a Before Russian time: (questions 52, 54, 59, 61)

Question 52: Play from memory

Question 54: Power in making "an elemental force" and big sound

Question 59: Relaxation

Question 61: Make the piano "sing"

Factor 6 b During Russian time: (questions 53, 55, 60, 62)

Question 53: Play from memory

Question 55: Power in making "an elemental force" and big sound

Question 60: Relaxation

Question 62: Make the piano "sing"

Factor 6c Legato "singing" in Russian piano class (question 57)

Question 57: Importance of legato singing touch

Factor 6 d How Russian teachers taught (questions 56, 58)

Question 56: Powerful sound

Question 58: Legato, voicing

Factor 7 Improvement (8 questions)

Brief Summary of each question:

Factor 7a: Before Russian time (questions 67, 69)

Question 67: Description of technique

Question 69: Practice a new piece

Factor 7b: During and after Russian time (questions 68, 70)

Question 68: Description of technique

Question 70: Practice a new piece

Factor 7c: Process of improvement (questions 65, and 66)

Question 65: Musical and technical improvement

Question 66: Teaching musical and technical skills

Factor 7d: Advantages of Russian teaching (questions 64, 71)

Question 64: The most important change

Question 71: Achievement

Factor 8 Repertoire, Style and Teaching Content (8 questions: questions 63, 72- 76, 93-94)

Question 63: Technical attention

Question 72: Technical works

Question 73: Scales

Question 74: Experience of a variety of composers

Question 75: Russian compositions during Russian time

Question 76: Russian compositions after Russian time

Question 93: variety and breadth of styles

Question 94: Musical opportunities: CD, tapes, concerts...

Factor 9 Concert attendance and Listening (4 questions)

Brief Summary of each question:

Factor 9 a: Attitude towards listening (questions 77, 80)

Question 77: Change of listening habits

Question 80: Importance of going to concerts

Factor 9b: Before Russian time (question 78)

Question 78: Going to concerts

Factor 9c During Russian time (question 79)

Question 79: Going to concerts

Factor 10 Teacher Personality (5 questions: questions 81- 85)

Question 81: Student-teacher relations

Question 82: Comparison of Russian and Vietnamese teachers' attitude

Question 83: Teacher enthusiasm

Question 84: Teacher patience

Question 85: Response to student's request

Factor 11 Teacher Attitude (3 questions: questions 86 - 88)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 86: Positive attitude

Question 87: Inspiration of music

Question 88: High expectation

Factor 12 Teaching Approach and Style (5 questions: questions 89- 92, 98)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 89: Analysing technical problems

Question 90: Providing background information

Question 91: Teacher demonstration

Question 92: Humour in lesson

Question 98: Observation of student's practice

Factor 13 Teacher Control (1 question: question 95)

Brief Summary:

Question 95: Collaboration or order

Factor 14 Student Control (2 questions: questions 96-97)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 96: Active in the lesson

Question 97: Freedom in interpretation

Factor 15 Mentoring Influences (2 questions: questions 99-100)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 99: Biggest Influence

Question 100: Favourite pianists, teachers and professors

5.5 60 QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Purpose

To find out the students' viewpoints and how students rated their teachers in terms of the teacher's attitudes, their interactions in individual piano lessons, such as strict, friendly, understanding the students' difficulties or not bothering, demands on students

both physical and psychological, and estimation of the teacher's pedagogical approach and style.

These questions also aim to find out details of student practicing, musical interpretation, content of the practice, how they spend their time in practice, attitudes to technical development, repertoire.

Participants

The sample consisted of full time undergraduate piano students in two conservatories of music: Hanoi National Conservatory of Music in Hanoi, Vietnam and the Royal College of Music in London, UK. Subjects were divided into three groups: 1) 32 students studying with Russian trained teachers at the Hanoi Conservatory of Music, 2) 33 students studying with Vietnamese trained teachers at the Hanoi Conservatory of Music, 3) 5 students of Vietnamese British trained teachers in Vietnam in addition to 7 students of British trained teachers (British teachers) from the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music in London. Thus, the total sample consisted of 77 subjects. The ages of students ranged from 16 to around 21, and their years of piano experience ranged from 10 years to 15 years. All students had studied with their current teacher for a minimum of 2 years prior to this study.

Structures of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaires for all students are categorized into the 14 main factors (The complete Questionnaires are to be found in Appendix 1):

Factor 1 Teacher Personality (12 questions: questions 1-11 and 33)

<u>Brief Summary of each question</u>:

Question 1: Teacher enjoyment

Question 2: Teacher enthusiasm

Question 3: Teacher patience

Question 4: Teacher attitude

Question 5:Teacher commitment

Question 6: Response to student's request

Question 7: Positive attitude

Question 8: Inspiring teacher

Question 9: Criticism

Question 10: Motivate student

Question 11: Sense of humour

Question 33: Sympathy

Factor 2 Teaching Content (9 question: questions 23-29, 43 and 56)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 23: Encouraging unfamiliar repertoire

Question 24: Wide repertoire

Question 25: Student selecting favourite music

Question 26: Appropriate repertoire

Question 27: Performance opportunities

Question 28: Exposure to CD, recordings, concerts

Question 29: Listening guidance

Question 43: Russian compositions

Question 56: Technical focus

Factor 3 Student Control (6 questions: questions 35-39 and 44)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 35: Student active participation

Question 36: Encourage independence and responsibility

Question 37: Study aims and study progress

Question 38: Freedom in how to play a piece

Question 39: Encourage independent musical interpretation

Question 44: Student's freedom in learning

Factor 4 Piano Technique (5 question: questions 48-51and 54)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 48: Powerful sound

Question 49: Legato, voicing

Question 50: Relaxation

Question 51: Make the piano "sing"

Question 54: Musical and technical improvement

Factor 5 Listening (1 question: question 30)

Brief Summary:

Question 30: Concert listening

Factor 6 Teacher Control (1 question: question 34)

Brief Summary:

Question 34: Collaboration, discussion or giving orders

Factor 7 Other influence (1 question: question 45)

Brief Summary:

Question 45: Other influences

Factor 8 Teacher Criticism (1 question: question 47)

Brief Summary:

Question 47: Power insufficiency

Factor 9 Lesson Attendance (2 questions: questions 41-42)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 41: Regular lessons

Question 42: Attendance compulsion

Factor 10 Practice Time (2 questions: questions 57- 58)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 57: Length of practice

Question 58: Time to practice technique versus musical interpretation

Factor 11 Practical Advice (2 questions: questions 53 and 59)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 53: Practice strategies

Question 59: Mental practice

Factor 12 Student Emotion (1 question: question 60)

Brief Summary:

Question 60: Worry about mistakes

Factor 13 Teacher Verbal and Playing Demonstration (6 question: questions 12-13, 19-20, 32 and 40)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 12: Analysing technical problem

Question 13: Teacher demonstration

Question 19: Providing background information

Question 20: Communication and demonstration

Question 32: Clear conveyance

Question 40: Description of whole picture before playing

Factor 14 Teaching Approach and Style (11 questions: questions 14-18, 21- 22, 31, 46, 52 and 55)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 14: stimulation by singing, tapping along

Question 15: Technical guidance

Question 16: Teaching consistency

Question 17: Pays attention to detail

Question 18: Encourages individual voice and initiative

Question 21: Flexible approach

Question 22: Humour in lesson

Question 31: Focus on tone and intonation

Question 46: Observation of student's practice

Question 52: Technical versus musical attention

Question 55: Play from memory

Procedure

The three groups were given the same questions with free space where they could make any other comments which they think might be relevant. After analysing and comparing these answers, they were followed up by structured interviews with selected students who were willing to participate. A total 46 students took part in these interviews. A few interesting answers were selected to seek for further explanation.

5.6 30 QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS WHO STUDIED IN RUSSIA, VIETNAM AND ENGLAND

Purpose

The purpose here is to find out the differences the Russian, Vietnamese and British trained teachers display in their approaches to piano pedagogy. Since Russian trained teachers constitute the major source of the Piano Faculty of the Hanoi Conservatoire,

this study will attempt to investigate these issues: first, to draw a portrait of a "typical" Russian trained piano teacher, and second to clarify patterns of behaviour exhibited by three groups of teachers to define particular teaching styles.

Identification of Sample

A total of 31 teachers were identified as participants in this study who have a music qualification from a conservatoire and engage in advanced student teaching, 16 of them were trained in Russia, 8 in Vietnam and 5 trained a short time in England for a period up to two years plus 2 British nationals who were piano professors. The ages of teachers and professors ranged from 30 to around 60, and their years of teaching experience ranged from 3 years to 30 years

Subjects were divided into three groups. 1) Russian trained teachers, 2) Vietnamese trained teachers, 3) British trained teachers (Vietnamese British trained teachers plus British teachers).

Structure of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaires for all teachers are categorized into the 10 main factors (The complete Questionnaires are to be found in Appendix 1):

Factor 1 Country Influence (6 questions including questions 1 – 6)

<u>Brief Summary of each question:</u>

Question 1: Influence of the teacher

Question 2: Other influences

Question 3: Effect of country

Question 4: Current influences

Question 5: Positive effects

Question 6: Negative effects

Factor 2 Teacher Control (3 questions: 7 – 9)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 7: Teacher control

Question 8: Student participation

Question 9: Motivate students

Factor 3 Student's Control (1 question: question 11)

Brief Summary:

Question 11: Encourages independence

Factor 4 Practical and Technical Advice (3 questions: questions 10, 12 and 15)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 10: Analyse the music

Question 12: Mental practice

Question 15: Specific practice instructions

Factor 5 Piano Technique (4 questions: questions 17 – 20)

Brief Summary of each question:

Question 17: Legato singing touch

Question 18: Make the piano "sing"

Question 19: Importance of relaxation

Question 20: scales practice

Factor 6 Repertoire (4 questions: 22 - 25)

Brief Summary of each question

Question 22: Teacher assigning music

Question23: Student selecting favourite music

Question 24: Encouraging unfamiliar repertoire

Question 25: Variety of styles

Factor 7 Technical Skill (2 questions: questions 26 and 27)

Brief Summary of each question

Question 26: Technical versus musical attention

Question 27: Technical focus

Factor 8: Nationalism (2 questions: questions 28 and 29)

Brief Summary of each question

Question 28: Assigning Russian compositions

Question 29: Improvement through Russian music

Factor 9 Listening (1 question)

Brief Summary:

Question 30: Teacher's encouragement regarding listening

Factor 10 Teaching Style and Approach (4 questions: questions 13, 14, 16, and 21):

Brief Summary of each question

Question 13: Teacher solving problems

Question 14: Humour in the lesson

Question16: Description of the whole picture

Question 21: Playing from memory

5.7 OBSERVATION

The techniques of gathering data involve observation which relies on a researcher's seeing and hearing things and recording these observations, rather than relying on subjects' self-report responses to questions or statements (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993). Donald (2003) states that observation of expert teaching is certainly an excellent way to determine models of instruction. The information from observing teaching demonstrations is not "limited to the insights into a particular piece the student has performed. The elements of the lesson we could observe is the overall flow and structure of the learning situation."

Bennett's (1976) study drew conclusions relying only on a questionnaire without classroom observation being undertaken. This caused a major methodological problem. His questionnaires were sent out to a small group of teachers in one location in northern England. Bennett and his research team did not go into actual classrooms to observe the first hand experience of what truly happened in the school. He relied only on the questionnaire for teachers and did not use pupils' views. As a result his interpretation of data he received was completely wrong, and in fact the opposite to what was really going on. His approach neglects many aspects of teaching that needed to be observed in the actual context of a classroom, and therefore does not capture sufficient information about teaching styles. A later study (Galton *et al.*., 1980) which did observe teaching in the classroom found the opposite to Bennett. This "major study based on in-situ

observations in real classroom found that most teachers were in fact very traditional in their actual teaching techniques" (Walker, 2007, pp. 21-22).

On the other hand, the methodology in this current study did both. It has not only teachers' responses, but also students' responses, observations of actual piano lessons were undertaken, and the questionnaires are very detailed as compared to Bennett's. So this research attempts to make a comprehensive contribution to knowledge of the role and importance of teachers in the music studio in conservatoires.

The observations of piano tutorials were carried out by the researcher with three colleagues at the Royal College of Music, at Prince Consort Road, in London, UK, and at the Hanoi Conservatory of Music in Hanoi, Vietnam. In the Royal College of Music, the researcher observed students' and teachers' behaviours and demonstrations such as the teacher's ability to communicate and demonstrate. The observers recorded the specific behaviours and context that led to the inference implied in the judgment. The observation techniques were based on the ideas suggested by Dr. Janet Milles, research Fellow at the Royal College of Music, and by Siebenaler (1997) parts of whose methodology were adapted for use in this study.

Procedure

Individual piano lessons were observed directly in the usual setting of conservatory music rooms. Participants were asked to observe each example and simultaneously write as much as they could about what they heard and saw and then commented on. The following techniques were utilised:

Teacher behaviours

The teacher's verbal and performance behaviours were coded in the following categories:

- Clap/Sing (C/S): The teacher sings, clap, conducts, and/or counts for demonstration purposes or in conjunction with the student.
- Play (P): The teacher demonstrates on the piano or plays along with the student.

- Play/Talk (P/T): The teacher plays and talks simultaneously, including any type of teacher verbalization while performing on the piano.
- Specific Directive (S): The teacher instruction includes specific details regarding the task to be performed, expressive or technical. This category may include correcting notes, fingering, dynamics, and hand position.
- Question (Q): Any teacher verbalization phrased as a question and pertinent to the content of the lesson was included in this category.
- Specific Approval (A): Teacher feedback is positive and describes a specific aspect of the preceding behaviour.
- Specific Disapproval (D): Teacher feedback is negative and describes a specific aspect of the preceding student behaviour.

Student behaviours:

Verbal and performance behaviours were coded in the following categories:

- Play/Talk (P/T): The student plays and talks simultaneously (includes questioning, singing, counting).
- Play (P): The student performs on the piano.
- Verbal response (R): The student responds to the teacher's questions (correctly [+] or incorrectly [-]).
- Question (Q): The student questions the teacher about anything that pertains to the content or proceedings of the lesson.

RELIABILITY

To assess the reliability of the behavioural definitions and observation procedures, three independent trained observers were invited to ensure reliability. These observers were professors, concert pianists and piano teachers with more than 10 years' experience in

piano teaching, and had been recognized by colleagues for their teaching expertise. All categories were assessed by three reliable observers. In addition to the three independent reliable observers, the primary observer also analysed Teacher and Student Behaviours in all categories. Reliability was established through statistical analysis and resulted in 95% agreement.

The use of self-reported ratings leads to the identification of teachers' perceptions of their own teaching style. As regards to reliability, although they know to a greater extent than do their students how they approach teaching and which teaching behaviours they rely on and they do possess insight into the music teaching process that students do not possess, they lack an objective view of their own behaviour. Acquiescence and rating errors – underrating, overrating, or central tendency error – are potential problems with teacher ratings, but the responses from their students and observation of their lessons confirm that the method can be valid and reliable.

The researcher was also aware of the potential effects from the presence of the observers that might inhibit or distort the performance of the teacher or student. In taking account of this possibility, the post-lesson interview with each participant included questions on this. In the preliminary questions of the post-lesson interview, we asked teachers and students to rate each of the categories of content and strategies that might be used in their lessons, from "not important" through to "very important" using 0-10 rating scales. After the lessons, each student and teacher was interviewed separately. They were asked for their perceptions of the areas of study covered and teaching strategies and styles employed in that particular lesson, to compare the lesson with their personal ideals and to comment on the extent to which the lesson had been typical. This last point gave participants the opportunity to identify any atypical aspects that might be due to, for instance, the proximity of examinations or personal circumstances as well as any effects from the presence of the observers. In addition, the teachers were asked to identify any differences in their approach with each individual student. Any discrepancies between teacher and student perceptions regarding what were actually happening in their lessons might prove illuminating.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

The aim of this study was to describe and compare teacher and student behaviours in music conservatory settings in Russia, England and Vietnam, and also to look for the reactions of students to the different sources of training of those piano teachers in order to portray various teaching and learning styles. Thus the investigation concerned an assessment of how outside cultural influences might affect behaviours in piano pedagogy. Results of the three Questionnaires together with subsequent interview data and observations of the piano lessons are reported and discussed below.

100 Questions for Vietnamese graduates trained in Russia (Russian graduates), investigated the Russian teachers' personality, their teaching style and behaviours of Vietnamese graduates' trained in Russia (Russian graduates) were analysed under 15 main factors: Factor 1 Personal Details and Problems; Factor 2 Attitude change towards Practice Strategies; Factor 3 Practice Strategies; Factor 4 Attitude change towards Practice Time; Factor 5 Length of Practice; Factor 6 Details Of Lesson Study And Piano Technique; Factor 7 Improvement; Factor 8 Repertoire, Style and Teaching Content; Factor 9 Concert attendance and Listening; Factor 10 Teacher Personality; Factor 11 Teacher Attitude; Factor 12 Teaching Approach and Style; Factor 13 Teacher Control; Factor 14 Student Control; Factor 15 Mentoring Influences.

60 Questions for students of each type of teacher: Russian trained, UK trained, and Vietnamese trained. Here, students' perceptions towards their teachers' personality, teaching styles and content were investigated under 14 main factors: Factor 1 Teacher Personality; Factor 2 Teaching Content; Factor 3 Student Control; Factor 4 Piano; Factor 5 Listening; Factor 6 Teacher Control; Factor 7 Other influences; Factor 8 Teacher Criticism; Factor 9 Lesson attendance; Factor 10 Practice Time; Factor 11 Practical Advice; Factor 12 Student Emotion; Factor 13 Teacher Verbal and Playing Demonstration; Factor 14 Teaching Approach and Style.

30 Questions for all three types of teachers. Answers to the questions were analysed to try to get to the heart of what are differences in the beliefs held by teachers trained in

the three countries, and their teaching approach at the conservatory level. Questions were categorized into 10 main factors: Factor 1 Country Influence; Factor 2 Teacher Control; Factor 3 Student's Control; Factor 4 Practical and Technical Advice; Factor 5 Piano Technique; Factor 6 Repertoire; Factor 7 Technical Skill; Factor 8 Nationalism; Factor 9 Listening; Factor 10 Teaching Style and Approach.

6.1 100 QUESTIONS FOR VIETNAMESE GRADUATES TRAINED IN RUSSIA (RUSSIAN GRADUATES) – ANALYSIS OF FACTORS BY QUESTIONS

FACTOR 1: PERSONAL DETAILS AND PROBLEMS (7 QUESTIONS)

Question 1: At which institution did you study in Russia?

Question 2: How old were you when you came to Russia to study?

Question 3: For how many years did you study in Russia?

Question 4: How did you relate to the Russian method? Easily or with difficulty?

Question 5: When you arrived in Russia did you have pianistic problems such as tension, stiffness, playing legato, voicing, and sound quantity?

Question 6: Have they now been sorted out partly or completely? Explain

Question 7: When were these problems resolved?

The rating scale used ranged from 0 (not at all) to 10 (high levels). Included in the following explanations are mean scores, where appropriate, together with comments from the subsequent interviews with volunteer students.

The majority of Russian graduates interviewed in this study studied at the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory, the Gnesin Academy of music (*Институт имени Гнесиных*), the Kiev and Leningrad Conservatories in Russia. These graduates came to Russia from Vietnam when they were at the ages of 14 to 17 and studied there for between 8 years to 10 years.

When asked about the Russian method, they said positively that the requirement of technique in playing the piano according to Russian standards that must be obtained in the artistically qualified way is very high, so they think that it is quite challenging. When they arrived in Russia all of them had problems either in tension, stiffness,

rhythmic deficiency or sound quality, or not enough technical efficiency. Depending on each individual difference, these problems had been gradually sorted out. Some claimed that it took them 4 to 5 years to solve them partly, and 7 to 8 years completely. Others claimed to have solved these problems earlier. But in the case of the Vietnamese pianist *Dang Thai Son*, he solved all those problems after just one year of studying at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory, and in the second year of conservatory, he was propelled to the forefront of the musical world in October 1980, when he was awarded the First Prize and Gold Medal at the Tenth International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw. It was also the first time that a top international competition was won by an Asian pianist. He becomes an emerging figure amongst the leading international musicians of our time (Son, 2007).

FACTOR 2: ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARDS PRACTICE STRATEGIES (1 QUESTION)

Question 8: Did you notice a change in you after Russia in terms of your attitude towards practicing strategies

The interview data reveal significant changes in all Russian graduates' strategies over the intervening years, as evident in the rating mean of 7.6 and a very low standard deviation of 0.8. One clear change was in the practicing environment. The practice place had changed from the private house to the practice room in a row of around 100 practicing rooms. Russian graduates were found to have extensive metacognitive abilities. They are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and have a wide range of strategies which could be adopted in response to their needs after their Russian time.

Their practice behaviour before their Russian time has been found to be far less strategic as compared to that after coming to Russia. They recalled their practice behaviour and typical approaches in their practicing before their Russian time was to simply play the piece through without employing any effective strategies, except for correcting their errors on the way and other simple strategies. No specific strategies were used beyond the very small percentage of time spent counting, thinking, singing, or fingering. Their goal of practice appeared simply learning the scores and playing fluently with little

special conception of performance as interpretation or communication. They thought that their approach at that time was far from fostering an integration of technical, aural, visual, and expressive aspects of learning, as one of them revealed:

> "My "mindless" approach was extremely limited in its acquisition of knowledge that can transfer to related skill areas. After coming to Russia I realized that I wasted a lot of time on a "mindless" approach. Now I know there are certain shortcuts that would have saved thousands of hours. I was not very creative before my Russian time. In Russia I made up for lost time"

The Russian graduates also said that their Russian teachers influenced them to recognize the general utility and importance of adopting a strategic approach as a prerequisite for being a successful learner. They came to know a larger number of strategies after their time studying in Russia.

FACTOR 3: PRACTICE STRATEGIES (13 QUESTIONS)

Factor 3a: Before Russian time (Questions: 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, 45)

Factor 3b: During Russian time (Questions: 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37, 40, 43, 46)

Factor 3c: After Russian time (Questions: 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35, 38, 41, 44, 47)

The methodological approach of the present study allows its results to convey a larger abundance of learning strategies. It confirms some of the presumed learning strategies that earlier research has suggested. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2 Practice Strategies), Ericsson, et al. (1993) found that positive practice is the most effective activity for skill acquisition, because it is highly structured and aims to improve performance.

> A study of practice strategies, individual differences in cognitive style found that students who followed a detailed practice procedure (structured practice) made more improvement in the accuracy and musicality of their musical performances than did those students who practiced without benefit of a specific structure.
>
> Barry (1992)

A later study (Sullivan and Cantwell, 1999) analysed the relationship among high levels of planning, strategy use, and deep and surface approaches to learning. They found that a deep approach was consistently linked with high-level cognitive strategies and a high level of planning. The deep approach was found to be consistently more effective.

Barry and Hallam described appropriate learning strategies that:

> "…make practice more effective, especially when musicians employ mental practice in combination with physical practice; approach practice in an organized, goal-oriented manner; study and analyse score; plan relatively short and regular practice sessions; and listen to appropriate musical examples including professional recordings and teacher demonstrations."
>
> Barry and Hallam (2002, p. 151)

Paired t-test

Hypothesis Difference = 0

	Mean difference	**DF**	**t-Value**	**P-Value**
Factor 3a vs. 3b	-54.188	15	-24.815	p<0.001
Factor 3a vs. 3c	-33.625	15	-23.072	p<0.001
Factor 3b vs. 3c	20.563	15	15.153	p<0.001

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	**SD**	**Count**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Factor 3a vs. 3b	28.250	4.583	16	16.000	34.000
Factor 3a vs. 3c	82.438	6.480	16	71.000	91.000
Factor 3b vs. 3c	61.875	4.544	16	54.000	69.000

Factor 3a: Before time in Russia

The 13 questions of factor 3a for Russian trained teachers referring to their attitude toward practice strategies before their time in Russia show a maximum score of 34 and a minimum of 16 which is quite low considering the theoretical maximum is 130 for this factor (i.e., 13 x 10). Therefore we can assume that before their time in Russia, the importance of practice strategies were rated quite low with a mean of 28.2, which is negative, and a standard deviation of 4.5 indicating general agreement in attitudes.

Factor 3b: During time in Russia

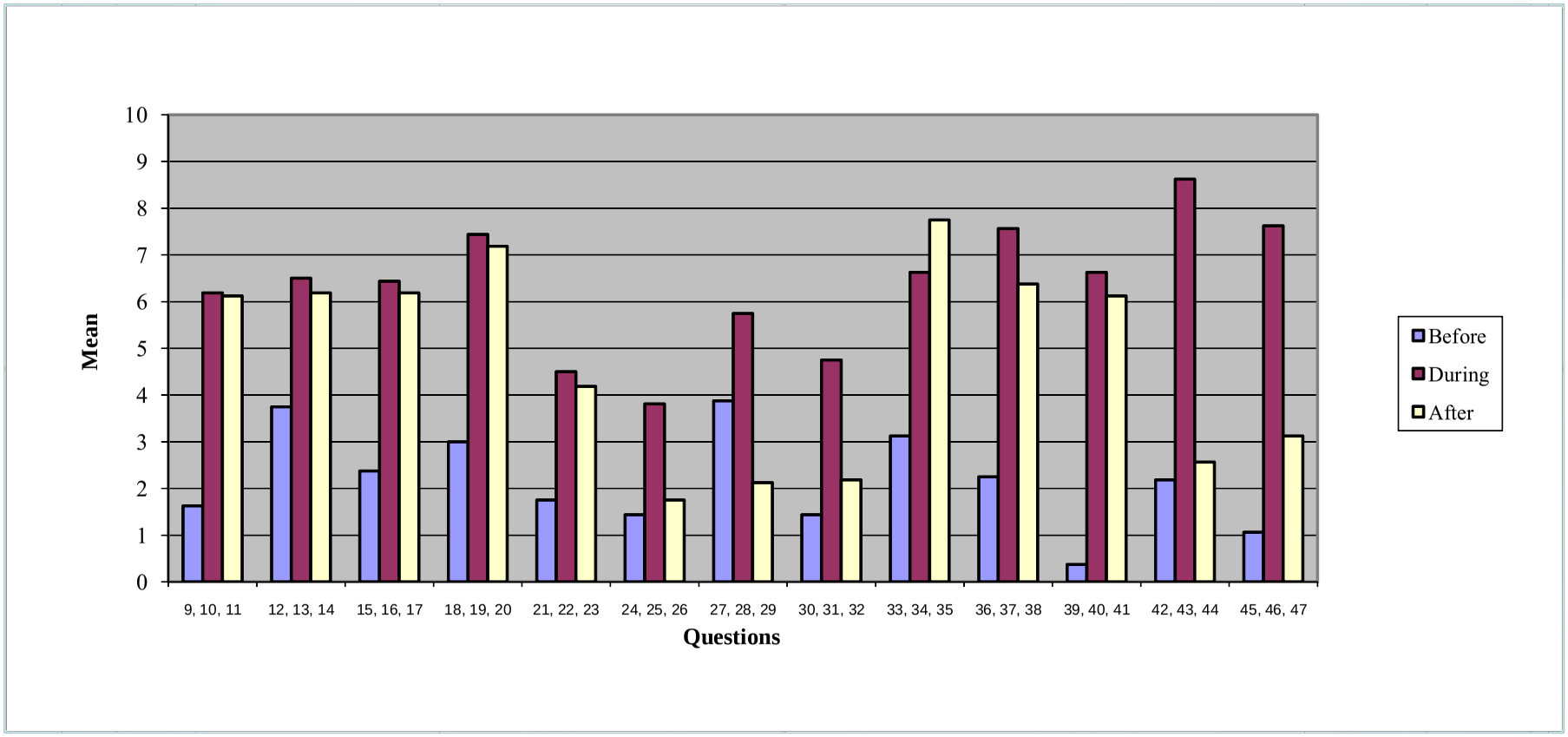
The most considerable change occurred during their study in Russia, as reflected in Factor 3b where the mean score is 82.4, which is very positive. The actual maximum score is 91.0 and the minimum score is 71.0. This suggests that their time in Russia witnessed the most critical change in their attitude towards practice strategies. They were likely to practice more efficiently, taking on a more technical, problem-solving orientation, and displayed a higher self- efficacy about their own capacity to learn. This played an important role in the development of their music career and helped them to gain higher levels of achievement.

The large differences in practice strategies between before and after their Russian time led to an investigation of possible explanations. An analysis of questionnaires and interviews revealed the consistent changes between the use of practice strategies employed by Russian graduates before and during their studies in Russia, as depicted graphically in Figure 6.1.

Factor 3c: After Russian time

The 13 questions of factor 3c for Russian trained teachers referring to their attitude toward practice strategies after their time in Russia show a maximum score of 69 and a minimum of 54 which is lower than during their time in Russia, but much higher than before their time in Russia, considering the theoretical maximum is 130 for this factor (i.e., 13 x 10).

Figure 6.1 *Factor 3 - Russian Graduates - Pratice Strategies*



Questions

9, 10, 11: Silent study or analysis
12, 13, 14: Slow practice
15, 16, 17: Test out different possible solutions
18, 19, 20: Divide the piece into "working areas"
21, 22, 23: Play each hand or pedal separately
24, 25, 26: Change rhythmic structure
27, 28, 29: Develop exercises based on parts of the piece
30, 31, 32: Metronome
33, 34, 35: Music marking
36, 37, 38: Auditive and visual pictures
39, 40, 41: Patterns of movements to chords
42, 43, 44: Listen to model to sort out problems
45, 46, 47: Start a piece in the middle

Questions 9, 10, 11: How often did you use strategies such as silent study or analysis prior to playing before, during and after your time in Russia?

Paired t-test

Hypothesized Difference = 0

	Mean difference	DF	t-Value	p-Value
Question 9 vs. Question 10	-4.563	15	-11.476	p<0.0001

Paired t-test

Hypothesized Difference = 0

	Mean difference	DF	t-Value	p-Value
Question 10 vs. Question11	0.063	15	0.148	p<0.8845

Paired t-test

Hypothesized Difference = 0

	Mean difference	DF	t-Value	p-Value
Question 9 vs. Question 11	-4.500	15	-8.454	p<0.0001

The results reveal that most Russian graduates did not spend much, or spent too little time on silent study before coming to Russia, but they usually attempted to use strategies like mental work in their practice in Russia. In the interview, these graduates claimed that in Russia, they sometimes fingered a piece through, and would silently inspect the notation or try to sing it through in their mind before playing it. Others claimed that they mentally examined the counterpoint, voicing, form, harmonic and polyphonic structure, metrical rhythmic relationships, melodic design, phrasing, articulation, quality of desired sonority and dynamic shading before actually playing it. A majority of them reported that mental practice was their common approach, as stated by three Russian graduates:

> "Very often I practice away from the piano, sometimes I do before I actually learn the score. I read the piece away from the piano just to get the ideas that I would like to have, then I go to the piano. This was very useful sometimes."

> "About 30 percent of my practice time was spent with the music away from the piano. I often practice mentally when I did not play

> the piano in a practice room. It was very important to be able to play the music in my head, to have a very clear mental image of what you were doing."
>
> "I know there are musicians who only hear what they play or listen to. But I needed to use mental practice by trying to sit back and close my eyes. I could see the printed pages and hear the music"

The above responses are in accord with what was mentioned earlier in Chapter 4 (Cognitive Strategies). Josef Hofmann stated that:

> "Playing is simply the manual expression of something a pianist knows. Since the purpose of pianistic movement is the realization of the acoustic picture, the pianist must perceive this picture in its whole complexity…to know exactly what he is going to do, to anticipate the actual playing before his hands touch the keyboard."
>
> Kochevitsky (1967, p. 50)

These practice behaviours were generally reported by Russian graduates who did not do such things before their time in Russia. Indeed, the means for question 9 and 10, which refer to mental practice, increased from 1.6 to 6.1 respectively before and during their time in Russia. This indicates that there was a significant influence on Vietnamese students in Russia in their strategies toward mental practice. The only response from one of the Russian graduates who reported the use of mental practice before her Russian time was as follows:

> "Silent reading the score was not new to me when I was in Vietnam, because at that time my teacher who also just graduated from Russia introduced it to me."

The above explanation reveals that although there were some cases in which mental practice was introduced before their arrival in Russia, this also originated from the influence of Russian graduates.

Questions 12, 13, 14: How often did you play slowly to sort out technical problem during your time in Russia?

The Russian graduates were asked to rate to what extent they thought they use strategies such as slow practice before, during and after their time in Russia. The results reveal that most of the Russian graduates spent less time on slow practice before coming to Russia as compared to after that time. They usually attempted to practice slowly in their practice in Russia. The practice strategies after their time in Russia were reported as having changed significantly. The means relating to slow practice during and after their Russian time were almost double that prior to coming to Russia. Indeed, the means for question 12, 13 and 14, which refer to before, during and after their time in Russia increased from 3.7 to 6.5 and slightly decreased to 6.1 respectively. In the interview with them, these graduates claimed that before being students in Russia, they tended to practice trouble spots at the same tempo they used when playing through the entire piece. For example, they said they usually attempted to play an etude at fast tempos during practice sessions. However, in Russia they tended to practice the sections where they had trouble spots very slowly. First they practiced slowly and gradually increased the tempo. A majority of them reported that slow practice was their common practice strategy. The response from one of these Russian graduates reveals the strategy:

> "I believe that practicing slowly is very helpful and useful. When I practiced slowly, I had more much more control of what I was playing, although sometimes I had to play in tempo to really get the feeling of the piece. When I practiced a piece slowly and in tempo I was prepared for most things."

The above response is in accord with Prokofiev's approach (see Chapter 4 - Practice Strategies) and Jorge Bolet's belief about slow practice, the receiver of the first Josef Hofmann Award and the head of the Piano Department at the Curtis Institute. He said:

> "I am never concerned about getting anything up to tempo until I really know the piece well. And when I am trying to get it up to tempo, I put the metronome at a very slow tempo and play that whole passage through, although it might be two or three pages".

> He said practicing slowly is a general principle that is very important and he called it "powers of retention"
>
> Bolet (1987, pp. 16-17)

The Russian graduates' descriptions of their Russian teachers is also revealing:

> "My teacher insisted on slow practice when learning a new piece. She said that slow practice is the fast way to improve the performance."
>
> "My teacher advocated slow practice and often told me exactly how slowly I should practice."

The above responses express Russian teachers' views on slow practice that are very similar on most points to the Russian graduates' views. This indicates that the Russian teachers have been influential in transmitting their views on the subject to their Vietnamese students. The similarities may reflect the fact that there is great consensus about matters of slow practice among Russian teachers and Russian graduates.

Questions 15, 16, 17: How often did you test out different possible solutions to a problem before, during and after your time in Russia?

Most Russian graduates rarely used this strategy prior to going to Russia. However this behaviour changed significantly when they studied in Russia. They often experimented with different possible solutions in any places where errors occurred (Q. 15, m=2.3 prior to Russia; Q. 16, m=6.4, in Russia and Q.17, m = 6.1, after Russia). A majority reported that testing out different solutions was their common approach, as stated by one of the Russian graduates:

> "Like anybody else, I have problems. I solved them by trying different ways and analysing what I could be doing wrong to overcome the obstacle. I tested a number of approaches for a difficult passage in order to get it right."

Vietnamese students in Russia become more systematic in their approaches to sorting out the learning material. They used learning strategies to select, organize and to

integrate it with their existing knowledge. Before coming to Russia, they seemed to be convergent thinkers who tend to be able to generate or focus on only one solution to a problem while in Russia they became a divergent thinker who could generate many possible solutions and then chose among them.

Questions 18, 19, 20: How often did you divide the piece into "working areas" before, during and after Russian time?

Subjects were asked to rate how often they divided the piece into "working areas" before, during and after their time in Russia. The results reveal that most of the Russian graduates rarely used this strategy prior to going to Russia. However they changed this practice behaviour significantly when they studied in Russia. They become more sophisticated in their practice and have more deliberate practicing plans in any places where problems occurred. They broke tasks down into component processes when practicing (Q 18, m = 3.0 before Russia; Q 19, m = 7.4 in Russia, and Q 20, m = 7.1 after Russia). A majority of them reported that dividing the piece into "working areas" was their common practice strategy, as stated by one of Russian graduates:

> "If a composition is too complicated to be perceived at once, I took some of its elements separately and worked out thoroughly before uniting them again."

Two other Russian graduates claimed:

> "I examined the layers of a piece. I broke a piece up into its smallest components. When I understood the composer's intention why a composer wrote a certain note in that measure that fits into a larger pictures, then I could see a piece and its basic harmonic units"

> "When practiced I did not make an attempt to play over the whole piece, or sections of it which are too long to be thoroughly thought out and prepared, and controlled exactly in their realization. I divided them into smaller sections and perfected them"

This is supported by Horowitz whose approach was reported by Gerig:

> Horowitz works at sections, passages, details "one movement today, another tomorrow". Although Horowitz said: "in my work I play a new large-form composition all the way through to obtain an overall viewpoint of its meaning and structure. Then I do not play it all through again until it is ready for public performance…I practice section by section."
>
> Gerig (1974, p. 306)

Questions 21, 22, 23: How often did you play each hand or pedal separately or both hands or one hand and the pedal separately during your time in Russian?

The Russian graduates were asked to rate to what extent they thought they use strategies such as playing each hand separately, and each hand and the pedal separately, before, during, and after their time in Russia. The results reveal that most Russian graduates did not value very much the importance of playing each hand separately in practice prior coming to Russia, but they usually attempted to use this activity in their practice in Russia. A majority of them reported that practicing each hand separately was their common strategy after studying in Russia. In the interview, these graduates claimed that in Russia they often practiced each hand separately as one of them reported:

> "I worked hands separately, a lot. I even worked the accompanying left hand. I would know it by heart by itself."

Others claimed that:

> "If a passage was difficult to perceive, I took this pattern out of the whole and work it out in the following way: I played the rhythmic pattern of each hand separately, and then play the left hand with the pedal until the rhythm is fully sensed."
>
> "If rhythmic coordination of the two hands happens to be difficult, I always play each hand separately until I know them very well."

These practice behaviours were generally reported by Russian graduates who did not do such things before their time in Russia. Indeed, the means for questions 21, 22 and 23, which refer to practice for each hand separately before, during and after their time in Russia increased from 1.7 to 4.5 and slightly decreased to 4.1, respectively, before, during and after their time in Russia. This indicates that there was a change, after coming to Russia, in practice strategies which become more thoughtful as one Russian graduate commented reporting the use of separate hand practice during her time in Russian:

> "To assure clarity of utterance in the chords and obviate any danger of thickness, I practiced the left hand separately. I also I practiced the right hand alone, trying to give Chopin's text all of its expressive meaning."

The interview with Russian graduates also reveals that there was a direct influence on Vietnamese students in Russia from their Russian teachers in practice strategies toward separate hand practice:

> "My teacher wanted me to practice hands separately very often. She demonstrated on the piano by playing the left hand accompaniment and sang the right hand melody. Much attention was also devoted to achieving the subtle pedalling required in piano music. For example, she wanted me to practice the left hand separately with the pedal for blending."

The above responses are also in accord with Jorge Bolet's views:

> "I am a very firm believer in practicing hands separately, and slowly. There are many sections of any piece which you can read at sight very well. There are others which you have to learn by practicing left hand separately, right hand separately and then putting the two together".
>
> Kochevitsky (1967, pp. 16-17)

He also commented that the general principle of practicing hands separately can apply to everyone.

Questions 24, 25, 26: How often did you alter the rhythmic structure before, during and after Russian time?

Most of Russian graduates never or rarely used this strategy prior to going to Russia. However some of them tried this practice strategy when they studied in Russia. A majority of them reported that this was not their common approach after coming back to Vietnam (Q 24, m = 1.4 prior to Russia, Q 25, m = 3.8, In Russia, and Q 26, m = 1.7, after Russia). Some recalled their time in Russia as follows:

> "Sometimes my teacher had me do rhythmic exercises based on passages in my pieces but I had to be careful not to exaggerate it and avoid an approach that was too mechanical sounding."
>
> "Sometimes with difficult passages, she made me practice in dotted rhythms."
>
> "I do not have something like distorting the rhythm or anything like that, but I sometimes I did vary some slurs."

Considering the Russian graduates' expressions, changing rhythms may not be considered as important a strategy during their practice either in Russia or in Vietnam.

Questions 27, 28, 29: How often did you develop exercises based on parts of the piece before, during and after Russian time?

Most of Russian graduates seldom or only sometimes used this strategy prior to going to Russia. However some of them increased the use of this practice strategy when they studied in Russia. Their practicing became more goal-directed. However a majority of them reported that that was not their common approach after coming back to Vietnam (Q27, m = 3.8 prior to Russia; Q 28, m = 5.7 in Russia, and Q 29, m = 2.1 after Russia). Their comments included the following:

> "Before playing the polyphonic piece which has a number of voices, I usually played Bach. When I played the fugue and polyphony, I really got right on my fingers. I found this extremely

> useful for me. Then after that I went on and played whatever I need to do."
>
> "Sometimes I had the feeling that my fingers were in very poor shape in a big piece, so I devised my own exercises. I picked out exercises I considered helpful in loosening the fingers and keeping the fingers under control before I actually practiced Chopin or Liszt etudes."
>
> "In order to individualize clearly the melody with the weaker fingers of the right hand, and to reduce the sound producing role of the stronger fingers, I very often used a supplementary exercises formula."
>
> "Sometimes I got tired because my practicing did not improve, so I changed to another piece. After that I came back to the previous one and it felt easier to play."

The above responses show that Vietnamese students in Russia were more methodical in their approach to practicing. They planned their practice actively and invented increasingly advanced strategies to improve their performance. Their approaches were diverse and individual which might contribute to our understanding of how they learned. This may lead to effective problem solving and improved teaching in their teaching career later in Vietnam.

Questions 30, 31, 32: How often did you use a metronome before, during and after your time in Russia?

The Russian graduates were asked to rate to what extent they thought they used a metronome before, during, and after their time in Russia. The results reveal that most of the Russian graduates rarely used a metronome before coming to Russia, but they usually attempted to use a metronome a little bit more during their practice in Russia. In the interview, these graduates claimed that in Russia, they used the metronome systematically in their practice sessions as a tool to assist in steady playing or checking the tempo. For example they used it in works by Bach, Mozart or Beethoven where they

had a tendency to play forward and did not notice that they were hurrying or slowing down because of their concern for musical expression or some mechanical problems. One of them explained as follows:

> "I actually never owned one before coming to Russia. I used the metronome as a back up and as a control for playing in time when I was at the age of 14 and 15. There are some pieces that require one to play the entire piece at the same tempo so the metronome helped me to make sure that everything I was playing was exactly at the same tempo. My teacher was annoyed to hear performance where students tried to be very expressive by fluctuating the tempo. She said that was a distortion of the music and she told me that rhythmic propulsion is one of the basic elements in music"

Others claimed that they used the metronome sometimes because they wanted to hear what the tempo was in the composer's mind and to have the feeling that they have the piece under control. A majority of them reported that they used the metronome like a guide and a check balance as stated by three Russian graduates in the following:

> "I only checked a few bars with the metronome and often did not check the whole movement with it. But I did not use it very often because I also like to have more freedom of expression"

> "I use the metronome because it kept me in control and I think my sense of rhythm was imperfect, so the metronome was valuable in my practicing. I used it to avoid getting too distorted. It is not unmusical to use the metronome if you use it for a musical purpose."

> "I used the metronome to check myself and develop speed. For example, I started practicing a difficult section with a very slow tempo with a metronome, and then I went and increased the speed."

These practice behaviours were generally reported by Russian graduates who did little of such things before their time in Russia. Indeed, the mean ratings for question 30 and 31, which refer to using the metronome, increased from 1.4 to 4.7, respectively, before

and during their time in Russia. This indicates that these Vietnamese students used more practice strategies geared toward using metronome in Russia than in Vietnam. However, the mean for question 31 and 32, relating to their use of the metronome, reduced from 4.7 to 2.1 respectively during and after their time in Russia suggesting that these Russian graduates rarely use this simple practice strategy in Vietnam, as expressed by three Russian graduates above:

> "I used it rarely because I did not think that I should play like a metronome. I think one has to have his own intuition. The metronome is superficial. It has value only for checking."

> "I only used it when we played in ensemble. I turned it on when we had different ideas as to how the tempo should be."

> "I would say absolutely not because I would be able to sing at metronome speed. I think speed is not necessarily developed metronomically"

The above responses revealed different interesting and contrasting comments regarding metronome among the Russian graduates. The possible reason for the decrease in using the metronome after coming back to their country might be explained that because their levels of musical skill achieved during their study in Russia are quite high, they feel they do not need to employ the metronome to assist their performance.

Questions 33, 34, 35: How often did you mark music before, during and after your time in Russia?

The results reveal that most of Russian graduates used very little music markings on their music scores in Vietnam prior to going to Russia. For example, if they did, they usually marked their music simply with only finger numbers, key signature, meter signature, or accidentals, but did not mark errors and where they had trouble spots. However this behaviour changed significantly when they studied in Russia. They become more diligent in marking the music more, especially such as marking counterpoint, voicing, harmonic and polyphonic, melodic contour, phrasing, articulation, and dynamic shading, terms and definitions, and any places where errors

occurred. Indeed, the mean for question 33 and 34, relating to marking music, increased from 3.1 (before Russia) to 6.6 (during their time in Russia). This change again indicates a strong influence from Russian teachers in behaviour toward music markings on Vietnamese students in Russia. The following comments of Russian graduates' description of his Russian teachers is revealing:

> "My scores were full of her musical markings-at least as many musical markings as technical markings. She had a great respect for the text and style and a fascination with fingering. Her red and blue pencil marks on scores resembled intricate road maps which directed me specifically how to use the arms, wrist, and fingers to obtain variety of colour and freedom in playing. Her marking was very detailed which enhances the control and interpretation of countless passages."

> "She notated carefully in my scores and was very respectful of the text. She marked fingerings. My scores are filled with her signs for musical breathing, weight, and hand releases."

After this time in Russia, they came back to Vietnam and many of them pursued their musical career as piano teachers at the conservatoires in Vietnam. The marking behaviours were generally reported to be used even more in Vietnam after they graduated from Russia. They said they increased their use of music marking in their teaching and in fact there are always markings on the score. These markings very often indicated not only the speed, the most advantageous finger suggestions, but also the whole character of the piece. Indeed, the mean ratings for question 34 and 35, which refer to music marking, increased from 6.6 to 7.7, respectively during and after their time in Russia.

The above evidence from the interviews in this study reveals that there has been similar behaviour in relation to music marking which originated from the influence of Russian teachers on Vietnamese students generally who later becomes Russian trained teachers in Vietnam.

Questions 36, 37, 38: How often did you use strategies to relate auditory and visual pictures beyond the scores to the performing of the piece during your time in Russia?

The Russian graduates were asked to rate to what extent they thought they use strategies such as auditory and visual pictures beyond the scores to the performing of the piece before, during and after their time in Russia. The results reveal that most of the Russian graduates did not exploit much, or exploited very little, that strategy prior to coming to Russia, but they usually attempted to use it in their practice in Russia. A majority of them reported that auditory and visual imaginings were very useful and important. In the interview, these graduates claimed that in Russia they often use their imagination beyond the scores. For example two Russian graduates said:

> "When I was playing impressionistic music, I had to use my imagination and I had to learn and experiment with all the different hand positions to get al.l these different colours."

> "For different voices in the pieces, I often create myself an imagination of flutes here, cellos there, brass here."

This Russian graduate used association made between an auditory representation of other instruments and the piano. Others claimed that Russian teachers have been influential in transmitting their views on the subject to them, as stated by four Russian graduates:

> "My teacher was visionary and poetic in her teaching. She could transform a piece with a story, including images, changes of scenery. Sometimes it helped me to become exploratory in interpretation."

> "He talked a lot about painting, literature, architecture, and the theatre…"

> "Her approach has been very literary. She encourages students to use a lot of imagination. Sometimes she liked literary explanations of music to help students have stories going on in their minds."

> "He used many magical words to incite the mood and obtain proper interpretation of the music."

The similarities may reflect the fact that there is great influence from Russian teachers about matters of auditory and visual imagery and musical imagination beyond the scores to the performing of the piece on Vietnamese students in Russia. This influence was generally reported by most of the Russian graduates who did not use such strategies before their time in Russia. Indeed, the mean ratings relating auditory and visual images for Questions 36, 37 and 38, which refer to before, during and after their time in Russia, increased from 2.2 to 7.5 and slightly decreased to 6.3, respectively, before, during and after their time in Russia.

Questions 39, 40, 41: How often did you minimize patterns of movements to chords before, during and after Russian time?

Most of Russian graduates did not employ this strategy prior to going to Russia. However their practice behaviour changed significantly when they studied in Russia (Q. 39, m = 0.3 before Russia; Q. 40, m = 6.6 in Russia). Two of them recalled practice done in relation to minimizing patterns of movements prior to Russia:

> "There were very isolated cases where I can recall that I did it."

> "I remember that no one introduced it to me in Vietnam."

However this practice strategy was evident in their practice in Russia and even after coming back to their country (Q. 41, m = 6.1 after Russia), as one of them explained:

> "I sometimes formed and played the passage in chords so that I can feel the harmony and the effect of church-organ music."

Questions 42, 43, 44: How often did you listen to models to sort out problems before, during and after Russian time?

Results reveal that most of Russian graduates rarely made use of this strategy prior going to Russia. However their practice strategy relating to listening habits changed strikingly when they studied in Russia (Q. 42, m = 2.1 before Russia; Q. 43, m = 8.6 in

Russia). A majority of them reported that listening to others' performance and recordings to sort out technical problems was their prominent feature in their learning progress. They reported doing this quite often and regularly. The following is a typical response of Russian graduates about listening to others:

> "I admit that I was listening to people that I admire play the piece and compare it with what I was doing. To sort out my problems, sometimes I stole their best ideas. Hearing other playing might open whole new avenues of thought in my piece. Sometimes the experimentation worked sometimes not but it was certainly worthy."

The result of this present study confirms some of presumed learning strategies that earlier research has suggested. For example, the most important outcome of a study by Rosenthal *et al.*. (1988) is that listening to a model alone (without opportunity for practice) "seems to be about as effective as practicing with the instrument in hand". They provided some practical implications for students and teachers that

> "Providing a model of music to be learned seems to be effective in helping students mastering musical compositions and thus seems to be a technique that music teachers can use to good advantage during a rehearsal or lesson. The finding of positive outcomes in this study after only a 3-minute practice treatment lends support to modelling efficiency." (pp. 254, 256)

However this listening habit has been reduced considerably after they come back to Vietnam as shown by the very low mean of only 2.5 for question 44 which relates to after their time in Russia. When asked about listening activities in Vietnam, one of them provided the following information:

> "We do not listen as much as our time in Russia. One of the reasons is we do not have many interesting and varied concerts as in Russia. Although in the past 11 years there have been some outstanding performers visiting Vietnam like the great Russian born cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, American soprano Barbara Bonney, Julian Rachlin (Pianist- American) and Lambert Orkis

> (Violist- Austrian), charismatic prodigy pianist Lang Lang, the Grammy- winning violist Hilary Hahn, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Mr. Maxim Mogilevsky and Svetlana Smolina and Ms. Jennifer Larmore the most recorded mezzo-sopranos of all time. However these special occasions happen only every few months, even every half year or longer."

This explanation clearly provides a clear picture of music performing activity in Vietnam that enlightens us as to the decrease in listening activity of Russian graduates after coming back to Vietnam.

Questions 45, 46, 47: How often did you start a piece somewhere in the middle to strengthen memory?

Results reveal that most of Russian graduates did not use, or used little of this strategy before coming to Russia, but as the Russian school requires compulsorily that the students play from memory, they usually attempted to play a piece somewhere in the middle to strengthen their memory in Russia (Q 45, m = 1.0 before Russia, Q 46, m = 7.6 in Russia; Q 47, m = 3.1 after Russia). In the interview, most of them reported that playing a piece somewhere in the middle to strengthen their memory was their common approach. Russian graduates' description of their Russian teachers is revealing:

> "It happened in almost every my lesson. Since we were supposed to play from memory, my teacher often asked me to start a piece somewhere in the middle. For example she said: 'Now let's play from second theme'."

> "My teacher always suggested that I should not always start the piece from the beginning, especially Bach's music which needs tremendous clarity of all the voices and textures, but I should start from where the theme or voice begins. So I always did this when practicing."

> "My teacher often tested my memory by playing part of the piece in her second grand piano and stopping in the middle of a phrase, and asking me to continue playing from where she left off."

This approach is certainly very important and useful not only for memory reinforcement but also to assist in understanding of the counterpoint, voicing, form, harmonic, polyphonic structure, metrical rhythmic relationships, melodic design, phrasing and dynamic shading. Since only very good understanding of these elements would make one able to start in the middle of section of the piece, this was useful. This is consistent with Hallam's (1997) view in which she identifies that student's ability to develop technical skills, music interpretation, and cope with performance stress caused by playing from memory cannot be achieved through repetition alone.

FACTOR 4: ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARDS PRACTICE TIME (1 QUESTION)

Question 48: My attitude towards length and regularity of practice after coming to Russia changed profoundly. Do you agree with this statement? If you agreed very strongly that your time in Russia completely changed your attitude towards practicing, please explain how this occurred, and what was the nature of the change which you noticed in yourself?

The high mean for this question (7.8) and the low standard deviations (0.8) indicate that there was certain unanimity across the responses. Russian graduates strongly agree that their time in Russia changed their attitude towards practicing in terms of length and regularity. Most Russian graduates claimed that they practiced much more in Russia (between 6 to 10 hours/ a day), even all day. Some of them explained that the learning environment in Russia where other students around them also practiced all day, the regular rehearsals, exams, and the teacher's high requirements, demanded an enormous amount of practice time. Three of them commented:

> "Russian technical regimen required long hours of practice daily which at age fourteen seemed severe to me. Now, I feel very

> thankful to have had it. Since the more you practice, the better. That's really true."
>
> "Well I practiced all day. People around me did the same. The sound of music from practicing rooms starts from 6 am and stops only at 12am at night."
>
> "I practiced very intensively for one hour, then I would take a short break. This method worked well so I can continue for six or eight hours. I wanted to keep my mind and my ears fresh while practicing to be productive. I did not apply this way of practicing before studying in Russia."

FACTOR 5: LENGTH OF PRACTICE (3 QUESTIONS)

Questions 49, 50, 51: How many hours did you practice daily before, during and after your time in Russia: …hours… minutes

Pianists commonly acknowledge that they have to practice in order to learn, improve, and maintain their performance skills. They have the same opinion that practice is time-consuming. This is in accord with Renwick's (2000) view that "expert performers have a history of thousands of hours of effortful practice characterized by strategic problem-solving activities and highly automatised information-processing" (p. 22).

The aim of this part is to investigate the typical use of time by Russian graduates going about their daily practice and seek for a better understanding of this behaviour. Large differences were found in daily practice time between the time before, during and after their time in Russia. The results revealed that their practicing behaviours differed significantly with an average of around 3 hours and 30 minutes per day before the time in Russia, 7 hours in Russian and 1 hour and half after Russia. Their responses through the remainder of the questionnaire provide some insights into the provenance of this difference. Three of them reveal:

> "I practiced much longer hours in Russia; say between 5 to 9 hours per a day which I did not do before coming to Russia. The reason? well… the learning environment in Russia demanded an enormous time of practice. If I did not have to do other subjects required of me at the conservatoire, I could practice all day. Now I practise less in Vietnam because now I know how to improve the pieces more effectively without endless hours of practicing and I have gained the necessary and fundamental pianistic skills for my piano career. Also teaching takes most of my time…."

> "During my period of study in Russia, I would say that I did practice between five and six hours, if needed. In Vietnam I do not practice as much, like in Moscow, unless I have to prepare for a recital or rehearsal. You know that we have to take care of family, and spend a lot of time for teaching and so on…"

> "I do not practice every day now. As you know adults also have many different roles; time can become a big issue, especially when you teach a lot."

The more practiced you are, the more it feels comfortable. The Russian teachers assumed that Vietnamese students in Russia were serious and that nothing would stand in the way of their studies. They assigned an enormous amount of material and they expected it to be learned to the high standard they set. They assigned works and expected the students to return for the next lesson with a nearly polished performance.

FACTOR 6: DETAILS OF LESSON STUDY AND PIANO TECHNIQUE (11 QUESTIONS)

Questions 52 and 53: How often did you play from memory to your teacher before and in Russia?

Questions 54 and 55: Before and in Russia, did your Russian teacher tell you that you did not have sufficient power in making "an elemental force", big sound?

Question 56: How did your Russian teacher teach you to have a powerful sound on a grand piano?

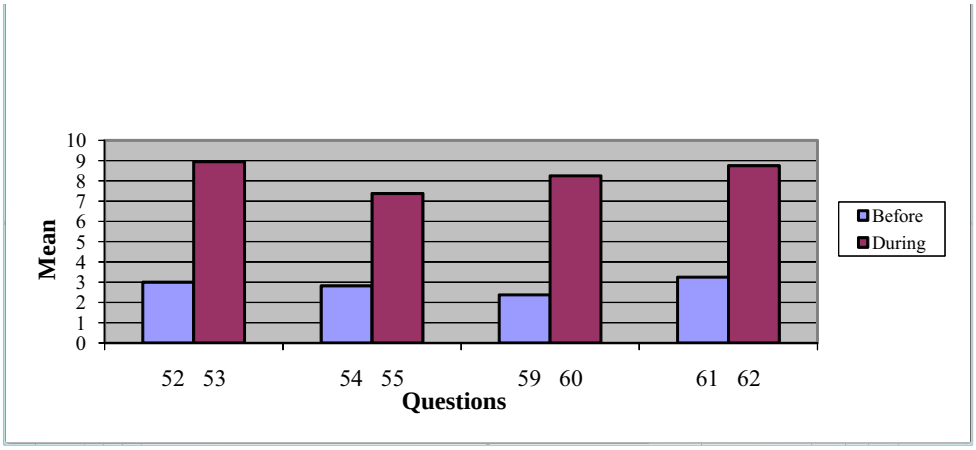
Question 57: Was legato singing touch an important factor in your classes in Russia?

Question 58: How did your teacher teach you to play legato, voicing?

Questions 59 and 60: How important did your teacher regard relaxation before and in Russia?

Questions 61 and 62: Did your teacher asked you to make the piano "sing" before and in Russia?

Figure 6.2 *Factor 6 - Details of Lesson Study and Piano Technique*



Comparison between Before Russia (questions 52, 59, 61) and During Russia (questions 53, 60, 62). Paired T Test yielded at value of 19.486 (DF = 15), p<0.0001.

Questions 52 and 53: How often did you play from memory to your teacher before and in Russia?

The difference in the mean scores before and after coming to Russia is striking. Before coming to Russia, they reported that they played from memory in their piano lessons with Vietnamese teachers only before their examinations or a concert performance. That is why their ratings are quite low (m = 3.0). However they rated their time in Russia

very highly with the mean of 8.9, suggesting that there was a significant change in their behaviour and that they usually played from memory in their piano lessons in Russia.

> "All the pieces I played in the lessons had to be memorized. I had to learn things quickly. For example, she would give me only one week to learn a Chopin etude, a Bach prelude and fugue, and a sonata. You could imagine the tension I was under."

> "While I was a student in Moscow, I remember being expected to play from memory in all lessons. A lot of repertoire had to be learned quickly"

There was little difference in the Russian teachers' requirement regarding playing from memory, whether applied to Russian or Vietnamese students in Russia. For example, for young students who came to Russia from the early age of between 14 and 17, they were all required to play from memory in all lessons as a matter of course. If they could not play from memory, they did not feel comfortable and sometimes they did not dare to come to the piano lesson, as one Russian graduate revealed:

> "I always had to play from memory without being asked. If I could not, then I was nervous about coming to the piano lessons. Sometimes I had to say I was sick so I did not have to attend the lesson without the ability to play from memory."

However a few other Vietnamese teachers, who went to Russia for a one year fieldwork trip when they were aged around 40, were not required to play from memory at the beginning of this trip. The reason for this was that some were not familiar with this approach to learning since they did not have to do it in Vietnam. Another reason was the sympathy of the Russian teacher in respect to their age. However, in some other cases where the Vietnamese teacher came to Russia later in life, she was required to play from memory. She said that if she could not do it, her teacher would look at her like she came from another planet.

In general, playing from memory, a particular feature of the Russian piano school, is essential in piano lessons in Russia although the demands made varied according to their age and the personality of their individual teachers.

Questions 54 and 55: Before and in Russia, did your teacher tell you that you did not have sufficient power in making "an elemental force", big sound?

There was a big difference in the scores of Russian graduates regarding producing a "powerful sound" in relation to their experiences before and after coming to Russia. Indeed, the mean score for before their Russian time was just 2.8. This low score means that their teachers in Vietnam rarely told them that they did not have sufficient power in making "an elemental force", big sound, suggesting that their Vietnamese teachers did not demand this special requirement of producing a "big sonority" on piano. However when they studied in Russia (m = 7.3), many of them reported that their Russian teachers thought that they did not have a sufficiently big sound, as one of them recalled:

> "My teacher told me that my sound was small and I needed to get a bigger sound. I was playing very much like the little boy because I did not know how to produce a big sound. I did not know how to play fast and loud octaves like my teacher and other Russian students especially Russian male students. It is much easier for them to play loudly. Even the male student with small hands could play much louder than I did."

Question 56: How did your Russian teacher teach you to have a powerful sound on a grand piano?

When Bella Davidovich, a foremost Russian pianist who won the Chopin Competition, was asked "How can a woman, who is of slight figure and not very powerful looking, get the extra strength? Where does it come from?" She answered: "I do have some muscles that help, but there is a lot of inner strength that goes into producing that large sound. It is both mental and physical" (Davidovich, 1987, p.41). Russian graduates' description of their Russian teachers is also revealing:

> "I believe my teacher was always thinking about things like weight and tone production and natural sonority. She taught us to be in the habit of thinking of the piano as an orchestra. That helps you think

> about texture. For example the left hand plays firmly the harmonic of "cello support". This also requires the independence of fingers."
>
> "Watching, listening and imitating my teacher's playing helped me to develop somehow the muscles, so that now I really can play much better. My teacher had a beautiful sound that would sound like a bell."
>
> "My teacher's approach was very intellectual. He was preoccupied with physical aspects about playing, especially how muscles should be used in piano playing. How the arm and wrist should move. Some suggestions were using the thumb on single, deep bass notes using a free floating gesture that helps provide better control of resonance."
>
> "My teacher told me to employ the weight of my body, the shoulders, the whole arms and even my back. My teacher explained that I need to have a sense of weight, so that the fingers feel strong without pushing the key too hard. I practice slowly, and gradually I got the full, round and even tone by depressing each key to the bottom with a very supple arm, and firm finger action"

Question 57: Was legato singing touch an important factor in your classes in Russia?

The Russian graduates were asked to rate how important legato singing touch was in their piano lessons in Russia. All of them admitted that one of the prominent features in their piano lessons in Russia was to get a singing, vibrant sound (m = 8.1, S.D = 0.8 indicating very high levels of agreement between each subject). They recalled that their Russian teachers put such a strong emphasis on a singing tone. One reported as follows:

> "She talked about legato and singing sound a lot, things that were very much of Russian teachers concern."

> "Russian technique was a technique of singing tone and perfect legato with a long breath. I think it is unique to the Russian school."

> "Cantabile style was one of the Russian hallmarks. My teacher's best teaching was the romantic repertoire, and her approach was basically colouristic. She talked a lot about legato and voicing and the need to find the right finger for the right sound. Also texture is always her concern of how to play a chord and control each note of it to get a special quality."

Question 58: How did your teacher teach you to play legato, voicing?

Many interesting points of Russian methodology about how to achieve effective legato, voicing and singing tone were revealed. The following responses are typical:

> "To have an effective legato, my teacher told us to avoid moving around and swaying around at the piano. She said that it offended visually and it bothered the sound production. I was required to sit up and keep my body very still so that all the weight just pours into my hands. I realized that a certain motion of the hand wasted energy that caused me to miss the next chord. So my hand started to shape the next passage rather than skipping to the right note."

> "She taught me the need for playing broad, singing melodies not only with a relaxed hand and wrist but also with flat, cushioned fingers. I learned from her the idea of playing melodic notes with outstretched fingers, to avoid percussiveness. And melody playing was hand playing.Melodic passages came from varying pressure of the hand brought to the fingers, with fingers usually poised quite close to the keys."

> "My teacher asked me not to practise octaves with the pedal because that was not legato. She asked me to find a place where one finger tenses and goes into the next finger in a real legato. She

> said interpretive fingerings enhance interpretation and singing quality".
>
> "She suggested that I use more pad than the tip of finger coaxing the deepest, richest sound possible out of the piano."
>
> "I was taught to use the flat finger when I was trying to get a singing tone. That was another thing I learn from my Russian teacher. Her flatter fingers produced beautiful legato singing."

The above explanations of Russian graduates provide a rich variety of strategies used by Russian teachers and professors in relation to legato and singing techniques in piano playing. The idea of using the flatted fingers is also supported by Janina Fialkowska, a top prize winner in the First International Arthur Rubinstein Master Piano Competition who has Arthur Rubinstein as a mentor and advisor. She claimed that it was not only Rubinstein, her teacher, Gorodnitzki "has this one sound, this rich, Russian sound, which is basically to play on the fat of your fingers, the pad and let the whole weight come from the whole arm". In fact she said she used the flat finger when she was trying to get a singing tone (Fialkowska, 1987, pp. 66-67).

Questions 59 and 60: How important did your teacher regard relaxation before and in Russia?

The correct piano technique must mean, before all, freedom to indulge our fantasy in expression, through freeing the hands from unnecessary tension. Free and natural movement is something you can cultivate. The Russian graduates revealed that relaxation or energy and weight managing was given great attention in their lessons in Russia. The results show a high mean score of 8.2 for question 60, which refers to their time in Russia, and a very low mean score of 2.3 for question 59, which refers to their time before Russia. This low mean suggests that there was little attention paid regarding relaxation in their lessons before studying in Russia. Two Russian graduates recalled their Russian teachers as follows:

> "His major concern was constant physical relaxation at the piano. What my teacher tried to convey to me is that the sound is

> transmitted from relaxed muscles in the shoulder, arm, and wrist to firm fingers."
>
> "My teacher's technique was a technique of relaxation. She advised me to use a simple physical approach which was more natural, by sitting and moving simply, letting the music flow freely through the body."
>
> "When I played a big piece like Liszt's Mephisto Waltz, she taught me how to avoid getting tired, where to rest, and how to play with energy without getting stiff or tired."
>
> "She taught me a bouncing wrist for lightness. The idea was to avoid short, stiff movements. She also wanted her exercises played always with great suppleness."

Questions 61 and 62: Did your teacher ask you to make the piano "sing" before and in Russia?

The Russian graduates were asked to rate to what extent they thought their teachers asked them to make piano " sing" before and during their time in Russia. The results reveal that most of Russian graduates were not asked or were rarely asked to make the piano sing while they studied in Vietnam with Vietnamese teachers. However they were taught by the Russian teachers and professors to make the piano sing in Russia. These graduates claimed that in Russia they were greatly stressed on this aspect. A majority of them reported that the Russians have traditionally been concerned with singing quality and intonation. Their teachers certainly exemplified this in their playing and teaching. In Russia it is one of the prime concerns (Q. 61, m = 3.2; Q. 62, m=8.7). This indicates that there was a significant influence on Vietnamese students in Russia from the Russian school in piano learning toward singing quality on the piano.

FACTOR 7: IMPROVEMENT (8 QUESTIONS)

Factor 7a: Before Russian time (questions 67, 69) and Factor 7b: During and after Russian time (questions 68, 70)

Questions 67 and 68: Describe your technique before and after studying in Russia?

Questions 69 and 70: Describe the way you usually practice a new piece of music before and after you started studying in Russia?

Factor 7c: Process of improvement (questions 65 and 66)

Question 65: Describe how you have improved technically?

Question 66: What did your teacher do to help you improve both musically and technically?

Factor 7d: Advantages of Russian teaching (questions 64, 71)

Question 64: What was the most important change which you observed in yourself?

Question 71: Overall, what did you gain from studying in Russia?

Questions 67 and 68: Describe your technique before and after studying in Russia?

All of the Russian graduates admitted that there was a significant growth in technique in their piano playing over the years. The following responses from two Russian graduates are typical comments:

> "My Russian teacher completely remade my technique. Six years in Russia produced a great deal of change... Working on technical refinement was essential with her. "

> "I think that even within the three years in Russia, I solved technical problems that were almost impossible for me ten years before that. Going back to twenty years ago, I could not play

> Beethoven to my satisfaction; ten years ago Chopin's etudes were not playable".

Questions 69 and 70: Describe the way you usually practice a new piece of music before and after you started studying in Russia?

There was a significant change in the way Russian graduates practice a new piece of music before and after they studied in Russia. For example, in Vietnam, there was a tendency to get al.l the notes down so that they could plough their way through it and then go back and start over again in rote fashion and then work on the musical expression. However they changed their approach to learning a new piece in Russia. Some of them listened to the recordings first to get some ideas of what goes on, others analysed the piece in order to get a general sense of the whole body of the piece. They analysed the harmonic structure, trying to see how the piece was going to be put together. Then they started planning how to play and getting it into the hands and the body in an organized way. Still others got a mental image of what motion they should make. Then they played slowly and carefully. The thought that first came into their head was the ability to think and make decisions. The next was the ability to hear and to judge at the same time the sound they were producing.

Question 65: Describe how you have improved technically?

Some of them reveal that in order to help them to progress their technique systematically, the Russian teachers made them work on etudes and Bach to provide young students a good and strong base which is very important in their training process. They had to work to strengthen their fourth and fifth fingers as well as exercises for the wrist, finger independence, and passage of the thumb and so on. They said that in that way they could see their progress thoroughly. After intensive practicing of those exercises, they got some music to work on like Mozart, Beethoven concerto, sonatas. Step by step, they realized that those pieces were really fundamental and important to their progress. Their tonal control had grown immensely, and their handling of sound became more refined. Some of them reveal:

> "My own technique was established by Moszkowski, Zerny, Liszt when I was 14 years old and Chopin, Rachmaninoff and Liszt at the age of 15. I owe a lot to my teacher. For articulation which had to be played very clean, clear and graceful, she had me do a lot the Mozart, Bach."

> "Etudes of Chopin, Moszkowski, Rachmaninoff, Liszt as vehicles for expressing the technical approach to the piano. I was asked to be extremely involved in motion and ease at the keyboard. Finally I got some very good results. I gained speed in playing. I feel I can play a quick passage much better."

> "I was taught to have a natural, beautiful, and deep tone and how to play the piano in a natural way. I become conscious of posture, hand position, and total control over each finger"

> " My practicing involved chord exercises like in Liszt's Mephisto Waltz that required pressure as well as involving jumps (with and without stopping before landing), or held- note exercises using patterns in whole tones like Bach Prelude and Fugue, or exercises for rebounding."

Question 66: What did your teacher do to help you improve both musically and technically?

Many Russian graduates revealed that the teaching they was given in Russia was not devoted entirely to only technical concerns. Russian teachers paid attention to all aspects of musicality and technique, phrasing, dynamics, touch, the use of pedal, and especially a high artistic quality. The six Russian graduates describe the Russian teaching that they recall receiving as students:

> "She advises me to listen more to operas and different instruments"

> "She had a strong influence on me. She had a powerful, inspiring effect as a teacher. My recollection of her teaching is that she was not always very much interested in technique per se. Her interest

was in interpretation. She was a true poet, and her playing always came from the heart. Even in the running passages, the sense of music was always her first concern. She was a really inspiration."

"Her colourful and poetic images went to the style and character of a piece. As regard to a theme which returns a number of times, I learned the idea of thinking of a different colour, a different sound, a different character in stead of doing the same thing for the same theme."

"My teacher formed my taste and enthusiasm for all things beautiful. His teaching was a mixture of pianism, aesthetics and history. He opened new ways of thinking about music, ways that went far beyond the usual considerations of fingers and rhythm."

"The style my teacher passed on to me involved much more arm, and more legato, a really more harmonious approach in every way. She always taught me to play artistically, not just play the piano. She helped me to do a lot of work within the context of the music, when problem arose."

"She had an interesting way of developing finger reflexes and touches by having me play each note of a difficult passage: one is lightly staccato with crisp fingertip".

Question 64: What was the most important change which you observed in yourself?

and

Question 71: Overall, what did you gain from studying in Russia?

Advantages of Russian teaching

The Russian graduates expressed in the interview that they thought their Russian training was terrific and it really got significant results. Their piano playing after studying in Russia is being interpreted by them as an activity of the evidently creative

character that cannot be obtained in any mechanical way. They achieved the technique of piano playing to Russian standards, and that it was attained in an artistically valid way. The approach includes much more than the action of fingers and hands only. Furthermore, they said, the "artistically proper piano technique" they gained – according to the Russian methodical rules – was developed not as something of a one-track character. It included the artistic image, creative hearing, and the ideas of the music. These elements were always present in their performance as well as in their practicing. The following recollections of Russian graduates illustrate some of these points:

> "Everything was thought out and completely understood with musicianship of the highest level through her inspiring playing of which I could learn remarkably from her intellectual and emotional demonstration."

> "I consider myself very lucky to have been able to work with Russian teachers. My teacher opened up new horizons. They really formed me as far as piano technique and musical interpretation is concerned. They taught me the importance of colours, of using many different types of tone at the piano."

FACTOR 8: REPERTOIRE, STYLE AND TEACHING CONTENT (8 QUESTIONS)

Question 63: At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, was more attention given to technical skills?

Question 72: At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, did your teacher give you more technical works (such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured pieces such as sonatas, concertos, rhapsodies, scherzos...)

Question 73: At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, what technical exercises (scales, etudes) did your teacher assign to you?

Question 74: What experience did you get from your teacher when playing the following: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt:

Question 75: During your studying in Russia, did you play the music of Russian composers more than others?

Question 76: At the present time, would you prefer to include Russian compositions in your performance? Explain why whether your answer is Yes or No?

Question 93: Did your teacher suggest variety and breadth of styles?

Question 94: Did your teacher provide large variety of musical opportunities such as recordings, tapes, concerts...

Question 63: At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, was more attention given to technical skills?

Some Russian graduates who were around fourteen to sixteen year olds when they started studying in Moscow claimed that they did a great deal of technique. Their teachers got them to practice hard on many etudes and exercises.

However they not only practised purely technical aspects of the work, they practiced everything. They did not only practiced difficult passages in slow or fast, but also the dynamics, the melodic line, the pedalling, experimenting with touch control such as mezzo forte, mezzo piano, forte and piano and so on, all of which were taken in account. However the teaching was given a little bit differently according to individual teacher. For example two Russian graduates express two different teaching situations:

> "At my very first few lessons he summarized his technical advice strongly. He suggested that I work the difficult parts in different rhythms and make up exercises in which I find the same type of difficulty. He also advices me to listen carefully to myself when working and repeating passages until I have them in my fingers."
>
> "She herself had an extraordinary technique, so she prefers to concentrate on music. I would say that eighty percent of her teaching was musical."

Question 72: At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, did your teacher give you more technical works (such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured pieces such as sonatas, concertos, rhapsodies, scherzos...)

and

Question 73: At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, what technical exercises (scales, etudes) did your teacher assign to you?

The interviews reveal the typical content of the Russian graduates' practice at the very beginning of their studying in Russia, when their practice was not dominated by scales but almost exclusively by playing technical exercises such as different kinds of etudes. For example, Czerny, Mendelssohn in the first few weeks, then Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Liszt and Chopin. In the meantime, they were given other materials like sonatas, concertos, rhapsodies, scherzos and so on. They explained that their desire to practice technical work was motivated by the curriculum and the requirement and task being chosen by their teachers, as one of them stated:

> I got much of a daily technical regime. My teacher gave me a lot of exercises and he was not against my getting technique from difficult pieces. He provided multiple exercises for coordinating the fingers, wrist, and arms for overcoming technical difficulties in fast section.

Question 74: What experience did you get from your teacher when playing the following: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt?

Many interesting experiences regarding how to interpret different composers were revealed by Russian graduates. For example one of them commented about playing Baroque music:

> I think the best way of learning Bach is that taking a four- voiced fugue and playing every voice by heart on the piano. I could play not only every voice by heart, but I could play three and sing the other voice. I could do all those combinations. Following of all the lines so carefully helped me a lot in playing Bach's music.

Question 75: During your studying in Russia, did you play the music of Russian composers more than others?

The following quotation typifies the attitude of most Russian teachers.

> "Sergey Rachmaninoff, Alexandr Skriabin, Dmitri Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and other great Russian composers marked the beginning of the triumph of the Russian piano school all over the world. Penetration in the inner world of music, beauty of the sounding, extraordinary melodiousness and extension of a piano sound, a wide range of emotional and dynamic contrasts - all these features constitute the distinction of Russian piano school." (Pugach)

The majority of Russian graduates admitted that there was a strong preference and emphasis on the above Russian composers. They all learned and played many Russian compositions throughout their long period of studying in Russia**.**

Question 76: At the present time, would you prefer to include Russian compositions in your performance? Explain why whether your answer is Yes or No?

Many Russian graduates claimed that they still want to perform Russian compositions because Russian music had become close to their heart. Both Vietnamese and Russian music have something in common, that is their romantic nature and a rich lyrical feeling for music. Gerig (1974) stated that:

> "The elements of the Russian musical character were all present: warm emotional projection, drive, abandon, and sincerity" (p. 291)

The following quotation as an example of how Prokofiev's piano music typifies the attitude of most Russian trained teachers towards Russian piano music:

> "Prokofiev became one of the greatest Russian virtuosos, and in his best works he enriched piano literature by altogether new means of expression. His piano works, among the greatest and most significant of the twentieth century with

> their driving sarcastic rhythms, and both percussive and intensively and lyrical qualities, helped to formulate decisively the complete piano technique" (Gerig, 1974, p. 308)

Question 93: Did your teacher suggest variety and breadth of styles?

Some stated that the Russian teachers were always teaching them to play lots of different pieces, to explore a wide variety of composers. Coming from Vietnam that really helped them understand the differences between musical cultures but also how there is a universal meaning attached to music. Others acknowledged that their teachers encouraged them to cover a wide and rich repertoire with variety of styles, but at that time Western contemporary music such as that by American composers was not very popular in Russia. This explains why they did not rate highly in responses to this question (m = 5.8)

Question 94: Did your teacher provide a large variety of musical opportunities such as recordings, tapes, concerts...

The majority of them agree that together with the availability of recordings from library, they were provided with many recordings, taped by their teachers. They were also given regular opportunities to play in different concerts including their own teacher's concert class performance. Their mean was high at 8.9.

FACTOR 9: CONCERT ATTENDANCE AND LISTENING (4 QUESTIONS)

Question 77: Do you agree with the following statement? My attitude towards my listening habits after my time in Russia changed profoundly?

Questions 78 and 79: Before and during your time in Russia, how often did you go to a concert? How many times per week or per month?

Question 80: How important was going to concerts and listening to music in relation to overall music studying?

Question 77: Do you agree with the following statement? My attitude towards my listening habits after my time in Russia changed profoundly

The results show that there was high level of agreement among Russian graduates that their attitude toward listening habits after their time in Russia changed profoundly, as shown by the high mean of 8.3 and low Std. Dev of 0.7. For example two of them said:

> "I listened to recordings a lot more when I studied in Russia. Hearing a high standard model helps me to have some ideas of what other people think about the piece. It makes me think more about the piece."

> "I think it is very useful to attend the concert to see how outstanding pianists in Russia illustrate on the piano. If you watch them closely it explains a lot."

Questions 78 and 79: Before and during your time in Russia, how often did you go to a concert? How many times per week or per month?

Paired t-test, Hypothesized Difference = 0

	Mean difference	**DF**	**t-Value**	**p-Value**
Questions 78 vs. Question 79	-7.750	15	-33.299	p<0.0001

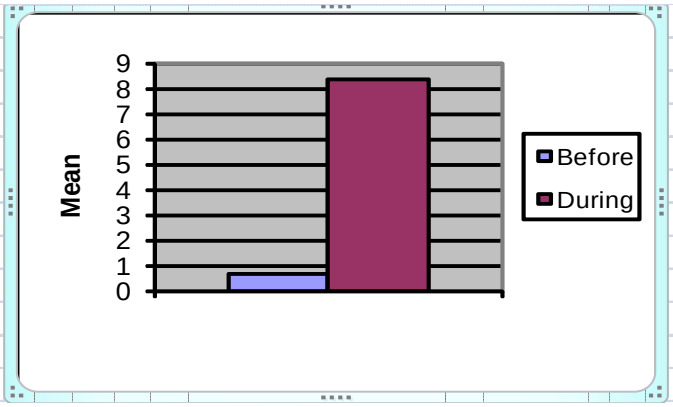
Paired t-test, Hypothesized Difference = 0

	Mean difference	**DF**	**t-Value**	**p-Value**
Question 78 vs. Factor 9a	-14.813	15	-50.760	p<0.0001

Paired t-test, Hypothesized Difference = 0

	Mean difference	**DF**	**t-Value**	**p-Value**
Question 79 vs. Factor 9a	7.063	15	30.419	p<0.0001

Figure 6.3 *Questions 78 and 79*



The extent of the differences in the listening behaviour before and during time in Russia of Russian graduates is striking. Before going to Russia to study, they claimed that they rarely went to concerts or listened to the music. Indeed, while the mean for their listening activities was only 0.6 for their time in Vietnam before going to Russia, the mean for their time in Russia changed significantly, reaching 8.4. Their responses in the interview explain this considerable change:

> "Listening and going to concerts or ballet or opera were very common activities for us in Moscow. It became indispensable to our life in Moscow. In Vietnam, we did not have such a good musical environment or such a variety of artistic events as in Russia, especially in Moscow where we studied."

The most common response was as follows:

> "Most of us who studied in Russia were quite familiar with the whole concert milieu because we were constantly going to concerts and hearing many different artists. We very often met and saw each other in the concerts, sometimes every two weeks, sometimes every few days, depending on how good the concerts and how famous the artists were. Beside many concerts being advertised at the conservatories and concert halls, we also informed each other about many other concerts which took place in other places."

Question 80: How important was going to concerts and listening to music in relation to overall music studying?

This question examines piano Russian graduates' perceptions as regards to listening to music as compared to their overall music studying. The result reveals that their listening to recordings or live concerts played a very important role in the progress of their career, as indicated by the mean of 7.1

FACTOR 10: TEACHER PERSONALITY (5 QUESTIONS)

Question 81: How did you get on with your Russian teacher?

Question 82: How did you find the attitude of your teachers in Russia, as compared with what you experienced previously in Vietnam?

Question 83: Was he/she enthusiastic?

Question 84: Was your teacher patient?

Question 85: Did your teacher respond to your requests for advice about musical or personal matters and sympathetic to your problems and difficulties.

Question 81: How did you get on with your Russian teacher?

and

Question 82: How did you find the attitude of your teachers in Russia, as compared with what you experienced previously in Vietnam?

The Russian teachers were rated highly at 7.1 for question 81 and 7.9 for question 82. Many Russian graduates reported that they had a great rapport with both Russian teachers and Vietnamese teachers. Their rating means for question 81 was 7.1 and 7.9 for question 82. Some of them had an affectionate teacher-student relationship. They were very impressed by their kind treatment towards them. Among the Vietnamese who graduated from Russia, *Dang Thai Son* is known for being the first Asian pianist to win the First Prize and Gold Medal at the Tenth International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1980 and has a distinguished career as an international concert pianist. He

remains one of the world's foremost Chopin interpreters. When he was a first year conservatory student and prepared for the international competition, his renowned pedagogue Vladimir Natanson took him to his home, taught him and fed him so that he did not have to go to the factory to make some money.

Two Russian graduates expressed their warm recollection about their Russian teachers:

> "My teacher was very kind, she taught me in her house before the exam when the proper and intensive preparation required. When I came to her house, she fed me as her child like giving me something to eat to make sure that I have enough energy for a long lesson".

> "I had a wonderful relationship with my teacher from the beginning. She was like my mother for me, someone very special, kind and really likable. She was very supportive of me and very interested in me. We all love her."

Question 83: Was he/she enthusiastic?

The results show a high score of 8.9 for Russian teachers. The Russian graduates comment that their Russian teachers' energy, endless enthusiasm and devotion were incredible. They could not feel being bored for a moment of their piano lessons, because their lengthy lessons were filled with enthusiasm, and their teacher's energy was boundless. They also reported that the Russian teachers were also willing to teach them in their private house without tuition fee at that time.

Two of Russian graduates describe about their teachers:

> "She has a passionate interest in helping students and her enthusiasm was such that she often gave the impression of hearing a work for the first time."

> "If you were in my teacher's hands, with her enthusiasm she would be able to bring out of you the best that you have."

Question 84: Was your teacher patient?

Without being enthusiastic, passionate and patient, your ability to teach students would be mechanical. When asked about their thoughts regarding their Russian teacher's patience, some of the Russian graduates said that they were great. They rated their teachers highly (m = 8.0). One of the Russian graduates describes her Russian teacher as follows:

> "He was a very kind man, very detailed and patient. Sometimes his great patience made me tired when he asked for a change but I could not do at once. However at the end of the day, his method seemed to work with me well although it took a lot of effort from me."

Question 85: Did your teacher respond to your requests for advice about musical or personal matters and sympathetic to your problems and difficulties.

The Russian teachers were rated highly (m = 7.8) and it was reported by the Russian graduates that they allowed themselves to be drawn into a relationship with the student's difficulties. They responded well to their students with an understanding of student's problems, and the Russian graduates found more and more depth in them as people. However, it was not the case when the teachers and students become disappointed with each other as their idealized images of the other slipped away. They did begin even more meaningful work as they learned to relate to one another as individuals, as two of them commented:

> "My teacher was very considerate to me. He asked me if I had any difficulty when was away from home. He and his wife very often invited me to their house for dinner. In such occasion we had a chance to understand each other more and expressed sympathy for my problems."

> "She was always very kind and warm-hearted towards me, and also interested in all aspects of my life, not just my piano playing. She was very much loved by us."

FACTOR 11: TEACHER ATTITUDE (3 QUESTIONS)

Question 86: Did your teacher teach you with a positive attitude such as praising and provide positive support?

Question 87: Did your teacher show his/her inspiration and love of music to you?

Question 88: Did your teacher show her confidence in you which in turn made you feel confidence in yourself?

Question 86: Did your teacher teach you with a positive attitude such as praising and provide positive support?

The Russian teachers' mean score was 4.9 suggesting that they did not value praise highly. However, praise is one of the most valuable motivational tools in nurturing a student's musical ability. It is important for the student to have some positive feedback about the appropriate behaviour or musical performance. This may come in the form of praise like verbal feedback.

Three examples of how Russian graduates responded to this question are given below. These responses were chosen because they provided different perspectives.

> "My teacher was adored by me and her students, though she could give you extremely harsh words if you did not please her when playing. But if you played well and did please her, then she could be very happy in her praise."

> "My teacher's compliments were usually understated. For example, when he said "not bad", he meant "very good"."

> "My teacher is very responsible for my progress. She was very sad if my performance was not improving. In this case, she did not want to say anything".

Question 87: Did your teacher show his/her inspiration and love of music to you?

Russian teachers earned a very high mean of 8.6 for this question, suggesting that they did pass on great passion for music to their students. This passion is so precious because it transmits a sense of artistic taste or a sense of the connection between teacher and student. This provides the energy that will help students through difficult times in their work.

Question 88: Did your teacher show her confidence in you which in turn made you feel confidence in yourself?

The results show a mean of 5.6 for Russian teachers. The majority of Russian graduates revealed that their Russian teachers tended to show their confidence based on a student's present condition. However some other Russian graduates remembered that their teachers encouraged them to reach their goal by showing their belief in student's effectiveness. They cultivated a positive vision that explored the best of a student's potential. These Russian teachers formed a good image or impression that contained the best of the student's potential, encouraging the student to feel that they would have more chance to progress and grow into that image.

FACTOR 12: TEACHING APPROACH AND STYLE (5 QUESTIONS)

Question 89: Did your teacher analyse his/her own playing to explain to you how the teacher solves a technical problem?

Question 90: Did your teacher give you good information about the background to the style and character of a piece?

Question 91: If you knew things were wrong but did not know how to improve them, did your teacher communicate well how to change them for the better in addition to his/her demonstration?

Question 92: Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way?

Question 98: Did your teacher ever observe you practice?

Question 89: Did your teacher analyse his/her own playing to explain to you how the teacher solves a technical problem?

Very few Russian teachers were reported to use the method of analysing his/her own playing to explain to students how they solved a technical problem which might help their students learn a better way of solving a problem for themselves. The Russian graduates said that they could not remember their teachers using this method. So their mean for this question was very low of 2.5. On the contrary, they said their Russian teachers tended to show their high professional piano skills for students to duplicate.

Question 90: Did your teacher give you good information about the background to the style and character of a piece?

The mean for Russian teachers for this question was 6.6. Some Russian graduates revealed that they were not regularly provided with background to the style and character of a piece because at the conservatoire level, they were supposed to have such knowledge. However many other Russian graduates recalled that the style and character of the music were among their teachers' great concerns and the architectural aspects of a piece were always discussed.

Question 91: If you knew things were wrong but did not know how to improve them, did your teacher communicate well how to change them for the better in addition to his/her demonstration?

Most of the Russian graduates agreed that their teacher always played and explained the best way to help them feel and understand about the music. This helped them to find the

best way to express themselves musically and play effectively, as two of them commented:

> "I think the positive aspect of my teacher's teaching is he has very good skills necessary to enable him to act as a model."

> "My teacher prefers illustrating at the piano to the student. She showed me how to play from the back which frees the arms. I would observe and copy her movements. And the result was very positive which was a natural and progressive change in my approach to playing."

Some also reported that their Russian teachers were quite open and willing to talk to them, to find out what they thought about what they were doing, or whether they had some difficulty. The Russian teachers seemed to be aware that talking to students was one way to begin the lengthy, rewarding and necessary process of learning to know the students. If they did not, some students may be working under some false assumption that is creating a problem. Their mean was 6.6.

Question 92: Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way?

Teaching in a humorous way helps students have more fun and learn in an enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere. However Russian teachers were rated at only 4.3 in this regard, suggesting they tended to be serious while teaching.

Question 98: Did your teacher ever observe you practice?

The results revealed a low mean score of 2.8 for the Russian teachers, suggesting most of them spent too little time observing their students' practice. Supervising their students' practice would provide instruction on how to practice effectively, and then they would be able to discuss and develop students' independence in practicing. However, a few cases were reported in the Russian graduates' interviews. For example one of them recalled:

> "After our lessons, my teacher allowed me to stay in the class to practice on a good grand piano. She sometimes listened to me practicing, and then gave some instructions and directions which helped my practice become more effective and efficient than it once was."

FACTOR 13: TEACHER CONTROL (1 QUESTION)

Question 95: Did your teachers lead you through collaboration and discussion rather than just telling them to do things and follow their order?

Some people might argue that good teaching is not manipulative. Manipulation means making students do something through pressure or direct orders. Good teaching is helping them to be creative rather than trying to control or manipulate their ideas. The Russian teachers did not have a very positive mean (4.0), suggesting that the students were supposed to follow their orders and do what the teachers wanted. Some teachers also imposed ideas that he/she thought would be useful for students. For example, even when student felt exhausted and unwilling to play the whole program, the teacher still asked her to do it as a necessity for training in difficult situations. The teacher explained that being able to play in any circumstances would be crucial on the stage for pianists. A recollection of a Russian graduate illustrated this point:

> "My teacher was very strict. He asked me to play even when I felt very tired. He said that I had to be able to play in any circumstance. On that day, I "hated" him for that demand, but later I wanted to thank him for that. After that I knew how to handle my energy and ability to play in any difficult circumstances like even when tired or something like that. The older I get the more I realize the value of his suggestions."

Another recollection was:

> "My teacher was shouting directions while the student was playing and showed what she wanted. She did not accept any other way from the student."

FACTOR 14: STUDENT CONTROL (2 QUESTIONS)

Question 96: Give your estimation of the degree to which you felt that you were normally taking an active part in the lessons

and

Question 97: Give your estimation of the degree of freedom which you are given in making decisions on how to play a piece

For questions 96 and 97, the Russian graduates revealed that there were opportunities for them to be on their own or be more creative as they become more advanced. They became independent and able to take more responsibility for their learning. However that was not the case when they were in high school or conservatoire, where they had to follow their teacher's instruction and were somehow passive in their lessons.

FACTOR 15: MENTORING INFLUENCES (2 QUESTIONS)

Question 99: Who has influenced you most in your piano career?

Question 100: Who are your favourite pianists? Who are your favourite foreign teachers and professors? Why were you impressed by those favourite teachers, professors and pianists?

Question 99: Who has influenced you most in your piano career?

Many Russian graduates claimed that the Russian teachers at the conservatoires at that time were there just to put their stamp on them though they did not deny that there are other people who have influenced them in their career.

Question 100: Who are your favourite pianists? Who are your favourite foreign teachers and professors? Why were you impressed by those favourite teachers, professors and pianists?

The brilliant spirit of pianism of many great international pianists and professors inspired the Vietnamese. Most of them are Russian. They recall the favourite names of the outstanding musicians and pianists. Among them are legendary Vladimir Horowitz, Heinrich Neuhaus, Emil Gilels, Svyatoslav Richter, Merzhanov, Ashkenazi, Pletnev; *Dang Thai Son* (Vietnam) or the brightest modern pianist Kissin (Russia) and Langlang (Chinese). They said they were impressed by their spontaneous virtuosity, soft and delicate hands which produced force, richness of sound, lightness and magical colour and nervous energy of their performance which still remains unique and unsurpassed.

Some of them found the Russian pedagogic principles of Prof. Neuhaus could be very beneficial to them for competent solutions to problems on the way to mastery in teaching and playing the piano.

6.2 60 QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF ALL THREE TYPES OF TEACHERS – ANALYSIS OF FACTORS BY QUESTIONS

FACTOR 1: TEACHER PERSONALITY (12 QUESTIONS)

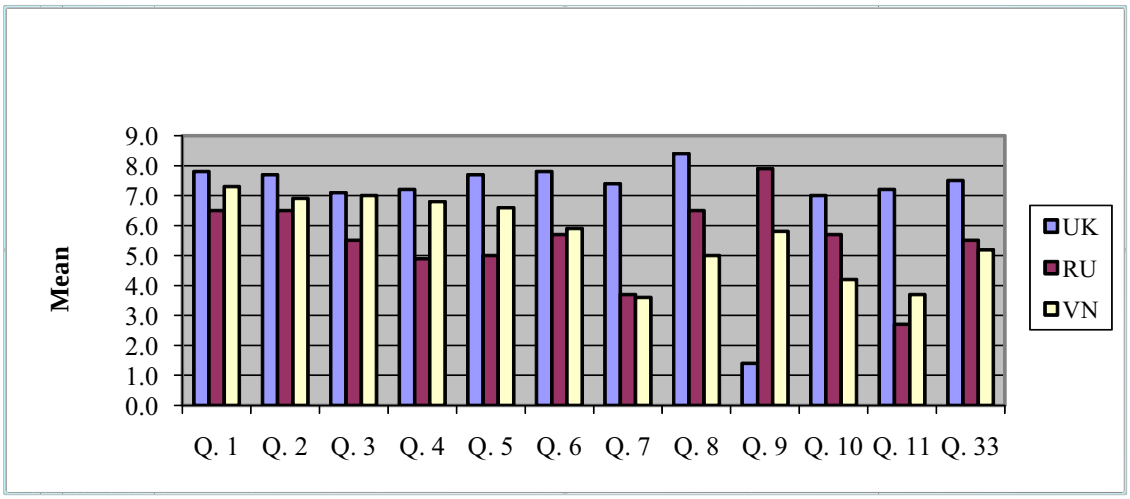
Characteristics of music teachers in relation to the progress of students' musical ability have been the subject of much interest among researchers (Herzog and Rovine, 1985; Howe and Sloboda, 1991; Howe, Davidson, and Sloboda, 1998; McDonald, 1988; Rutter, 1987; Sosniak, 1985). In piano lessons, teachers most often work with a single student. This one-on-one instruction situation suggests that the teacher characteristics and the personal relationships between teacher and student may be particularly important in music instrument learning. The purpose of this part of the investigation was to identify, describe and compare the characteristics of UK trained, Russian trained, and Vietnamese trained piano teachers in the piano studio. There were differences in the responses of students as regard to their teachers' attitude and behaviour. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between British and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between British and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), but no difference was found in the responses of students to the personality of teachers trained in Russia and Vietnam ($p=0.4573$).

The responses from students of British teachers reveal that British trained teachers were generally more enthusiastic, humorous, patient, sympathetic and sociable, indicating that they thought they were generally more supportive than did students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers. The maximum theoretical score for all 12 questions in Factor 1, Teacher Personality, is 120 (12 x, 10) the minimum is 0 and the mid-point is 60. UK teachers were reported with the highest score ($m = 77.1$), followed by Vietnamese ($m = 62.6$) and Russian ($m=60.2$) respectively. The results indicate that teachers trained in Russia and Vietnam behave quite similarly to their students. The fact that all the ratings were above the mid-point suggests that teachers across all groups were rated to be quite positive. The detailed results for this factor are given below:

Table 6.1 *Factor 1*

Questions	Mean	S.D.	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 1: Did your teacher enjoy working with you?	UK=7.8 RU=6.5 VN=7.3	UK=0.6 RU= 1.4 VN=0.9	UK v RU p<0.003 UK v VN n. s RU v VN p<0.003
Question 2: Was he/she enthusiastic?	UK=7.7 RU=6.5 VN=6.9	UK=0.4 RU=1.04 VN=0.8	UK v RU p<0.002 UK v VN p<0.003 RU v VN n. s
Question 3: Was your teacher patient?	UK=7.1 RU=5.5 VN=7.0	UK=0.3 RU= 1.3 VN=0.8	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN n. s RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 4: What is your teacher's attitude towards you?	UK=7.2 RU=4.9 VN=6.8	UK=0.4 RU=2.3 VN=6.8	UK v RU p<0.0005 UK v VN n. s RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 5: Did you feel that your teacher was committed to making a success?	UK=7.7 RU=5.0 VN=6.6	UK=0.7 RU=1.6 VN=0.7	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.015 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 6: Did your teacher respond to your requests for advice about musical or personal matters?	UK=7.8 RU=5.7 VN=5.9	UK=0.6 RU=1.0 VN=0.9	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN n. s
Question 7: Did your teacher teach you with a positive attitude such as praising and provide positive support?	UK=7.4 RU=3.7 VN=3.6	UK=0.9 RU=0.8 VN=1.3	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN n. s
Question 8: Did your teacher show his/her inspiration and love of music to you?	UK=8.4 RU=6.5 VN=5.0	UK=0.5 RU=1.1 VN=1.2	UK v RU p<0.0011 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 9: Did your teacher criticize you when you did something wrong?	UK=1.4 RU=7.9 VN=5.8	UK=1.3 RU=0.7 VN=1.2	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 10: Did your teacher show her confidence in you which in turn made you feel confident in yourself?	UK=7.0 RU=5.7 VN=4.2	UK=1.0 RU=1.5 VN=2.4	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0046 RU v VN p<0.0094
Question 11: Did your teacher have a sense of humour?	UK=7.2 RU=2.7 VN=3.7	UK=.48 RU=1.4 VN=1.1	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0061
Question 33: Were your teachers sympathetic to your problems and difficulties?	UK=7.5 RU=5.5 VN=5.2	UK=0.5 RU=2.7 VN=1.5	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.04 RU v VN n. s

Figure 6.4 *Factor 1*



Questions 1: Did your teacher enjoy working with you?

and

Question 2: Was he/she enthusiastic?

Many aspects of the teacher- student relationship are perceived as being especially crucial for the student's individual achievement. Reports by Howe and Sloboda (1991) indicate that the teachers' characteristics were regarded by young music learners as significant influences on their musical skill acquisition, with many young musicians attributing their increasing success to having established a good personal relationship with the teacher. Much educational research has focused on teacher's instructional techniques in relation to student learning outcome. However few studies have examined specific behaviours of teachers and students in the piano studio. The aim of this part of the analysis was to compare student's perceptions of the characteristics of their UK teachers, Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers in the piano lesson settings.

A rating scale of 0 – 10 is used for each question which has a maximum 10 and a midpoint 5.0. The Scheffe tests show $p = 0.03$ for both Russian versus Vietnam and UK versus Vietnam, suggesting there were differences in the responses to the teachers' enthusiasm and enjoyment for these countries. Although there is a difference statistically, the mean scores were quite high and well above the midpoint (5.0).

Indeed, the students rated all teachers quite highly. However the scores were rated slightly higher for UK trained teachers for their enjoyment (m =7.8) and enthusiasm

(m=7.7), followed by Vietnamese trained teachers with m = 7.3 and m=6.9 respectively. The Russian trained teachers were rated somewhat lower at m = 6.5 and m = 6.5 respectively. The most common responses of students who have UK teachers are:

> "He is never tired of doing music. He spoke from the heart and openly shared his enthusiasm and love of teaching music to students. In his lessons, he seems to be full of inner energy".
>
> "She communicates warmth and friendliness at lessons, unlike some teachers of 1970s who I heard mostly commanded fear and respect."

The spirit and enthusiasm of the teacher are his/ her greatest attributes when motivating students to learn music. By conveying their enthusiasm for music, the teacher can extend the love of music to students and create the correct atmosphere for lessons which makes the students want to play. Although the personalities of piano teachers in this study may vary, there is a common characteristic of these teachers: they are highly devoted and share an underlying zeal for their students.

Question 3: Was your teacher patient?

Although the students acknowledge the patience of their teachers, Table 5.1 shows that there were differences in the responses between the students of UK and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0086$) and between Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), but no difference between UK and Vietnam. The UK and Vietnam means were well above the mid-point (m = 7.1 and 7.0 respectively), while the Russian trained teachers were rated lower in this measure. Their mean was just above halfway (m = 5.5), as expressed by a student during an interview:

> "He was an extremely critical and impatient teacher, although his piano skill is very good".

The student of Vietnamese trained teacher revealed:

> "Whenever you play a wrong note she would take a red pen and circle the note and say: fix that and show me again next week. I think I could not go far with advice like that."

However the student of UK trained teachers commented:

> "She was very detailed in her explanations."

Question 4: Teacher's attitude towards the student

The result show significant differences in the responses of students as regard to the attitude of the teacher towards the student, whether the student is treated as an equal or looked down upon. UK and Vietnamese trained teachers again were rated quite highly at m = 7.2 and 6.8 respectively. On the other hand, Russian trained teachers were reported to be below the mid point at m = 4.0 suggesting that Russian trained teachers sometimes underrate some of their students' ability.

Question 5: Did you feel that your teacher was committed to making a success?

UK and Vietnamese trained teachers were well above the mid way (m =7.7 and 6.6 respectively), but Russian trained teachers was just at the mid way point (m = 5.09) indicating that UK trained teachers have a special commitment to their students. They are expecting the best, demanding more and pushing students further. As one student of a UK trained teacher said:

> "She takes a great interest in each student's progress and is a truly dedicated teacher"

Question 6: Teachers' response to students' need

Question 6 asked the students about their teachers' response to their requests for advice about musical or personal matters. There was no difference in the responses of students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers (p= 0.7), but UK students were very

positive with the mean of 7.8 while Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers were just at the midpoint (m=5.7 and 5.9).

The most popular responses of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers' students are:

> "If I do not mention then my teacher does not ask."
>
> "If I have personal problems, my teacher gives me a good advice and tries to help me in her own way."
>
> "My teacher is quite sympathetic to my situation"

The following responses from students of Vietnamese and Russian trained teacher are exceptional:

> "My teacher was so good to me. She gave me ginseng during the period of examination so I could have more energy."
>
> "My teacher was very concerned with students' health condition, particularly with those who have special unlucky family situations. Some time she gave lunch to those students."

The student of a UK trained teacher talked about his teacher:

> "She was always very kind and warm-hearted toward her students, and also interested in all aspects of students' lives, not just their piano playing. She was very much loved by all her students."

Question 7: Did your teacher teach you with a positive attitude such as praising and provide positive support?

Much educational research has focused on the teachers' use of approval and disapproval and its effect on student learning outcomes in music ensembles (Froehlich, 1995), teacher's verbal praise in choral classes (Taylor, 1997), or teacher's positive feedback in secondary music- performance classes. However few studies have examined teacher's reinforcements and student interpretations of teacher's negative and positive comments

in the piano studio at a high level. The purpose of this part was to investigate the effect of teacher's feedback and the piano students' interpretations of the teacher's verbal comments.

The findings of the previous research (Madsen and Alley, 1979; Madsen and Geringer, 1989; Yabrough and Price, 1989) have demonstrated that the teacher's high approval and reinforcement techniques positively influence student learning. A student will accept criticism as long as constructive and some honest praise is given beforehand. When the teacher gives praise for their student's efforts, no matter how small, it encourages further effort.

> "Praise instils confidence; confidence builds a desire to try; the desire to try develops ability to learn; the ability to learn leads to accomplishment; and accomplishment earns praise. This is a self-perpetuating cycle which can be initiated effectively by a teacher"
>
> Bigler and Lloyd-Watts (1979, p. 35).

Murray's (1973) research has revealed that student attitudes in choral rehearsals are more positive toward the teacher and the class when the teacher is more approving than disapproving. Various studies concerned with reinforcements seem to conclude that frequency and appropriateness of teacher reinforcement positively affect student achievement (Dennis, 1975; Dorow, 1977; Madsen and Madsen, 1981; Murray, K. 1975; Porter, 1977). These finding were supported in other studies (Forsythe, 1975; Madsen and Alley, 1979) that reinforcement ratios of 80% approvals have also been shown to be most effective for maintaining student attentiveness.

The results of this study show that a major difference between UK teachers and Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers in data for this question (reinforcement in piano music instruction), and relates to the feedback from the teachers. Here the results of reinforcement analysis data reveal that UK teachers were highly approving, more frequently reinforced students' academic behaviours, and gave specific feedback (m=7.4), while Russian (m=3.7) and Vietnamese (m=3.3) trained teachers included few reinforcements in their instruction. When feedback did occur in the lessons of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers, it was more disapproving. The idea that students need

positive verbal feedback is not a basic truth or way of operating for most Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers, as one student of Vietnamese trained teacher revealed:

> “She rarely praises me. She thought that if she praises me, I will become subjective and stop me putting effort on learning”.

Similarly, the students of Russian trained teachers responded to Question 7 as follows:

> “She sometimes does it but in general she does not want to encourage me by praising or something like this. It is not her habit. Sometimes I was wondering if my playing is good enough or not. It makes me feel doubt about my progress.”

In contrast, two students of UK trained teachers responded to Question 7 as follows:

> “My teacher encouraged me when I was playing by saying “Um, that was much better”, “Good…okay”, or “well observed” and so on. This sort of comment makes me feel confident in myself.”

> “My teacher’s positive, encouraging attitude benefited me very much when I began studying with her at age thirteen”.

A positive attitude is most typically found in relationships characterized by encouragement and positive support between students and UK teachers. Students of UK trained teachers noticed that their teachers provide many different forms of verbal approval and various types of rewards such as " Good job", " Well done", " That sounds much better than it did last week." ," That was beautiful", " You are doing much better on that piece than other students I have had", " You have quite a talent for that", " That is the way it should be performed". The purpose of UK teachers when praising the students is to show interest in the students and to encourage them, to describe and evaluate their performance, to support and reinforce students' behaviours. As shown in the following comment by the student of a UK teacher from an interview:

> “My teacher praises and encourages me by saying “ bravo”, “ very good”, “ well done”, “ very nice”... This sort of thing makes me feel more confident in myself and I try to do my best for my performance.”

This finding supports the previous research by Wolfe and Jellison (1990) and Schimidt (1995). In their studies, they report that providing positive feedback was perceived as the most effective style of teaching and was selected most often by students as the most desirable teacher behaviour. The present study provides additional evidence that approval feedback that focuses on student improvement appears to be valued most by students.

Question 8: Did your teacher show his/her inspiration and love of music to you?

Question 8 asked about teachers' expression and love of music to students. The UK trained teachers were rated as the most positive with a mean of 8.4, Russian trained teachers were above the mid-way point, which is quite positive (m=6.5) and Vietnamese trained teachers were just at the mid point (m=5.0). The results have shown that UK and Russian trained teachers illustrated their ability to inspire their students. In turn, they earn the admiration and respect of their students. The following students' responses reflect this:

> "My lessons with him always inspiring and I would leave them happy and look forward to the next one"
>
> "I remember something quite moving about my teacher. At lessons she is always so moved by the music that she taught mainly by demonstrating. She is such a wonderful, natural and emotional pianist"
>
> "He is very warm and free spirit. For many of us, his teaching was really a breath of fresh air".

In contrast, a student of Vietnamese trained teacher commented:

> "My teacher rarely sings or plays. She only uses verbal communication to show that she likes that piece."

Question 9: Did your teacher criticize you when you did something wrong?

The negative comments of teachers can cause feelings of embarrassment and affect the attitudes, behaviours, and actions of their students, and sometimes can make students feel inferior. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). Post Hoc tests (Scheffé) showed significant differences between each country ($p <0.0001$) suggesting that there were striking differences between the students' opinions regarding their teacher criticism. For instance, they differed in how much their teachers criticise them in technical training and development in relation to their ability. UK trained teachers are considered to be the least critical ($m=1.4$). In contrast, Russian trained teachers are regarded as the most critical ($m=7.9$), followed by Vietnamese trained teachers ($m=5.8$). The following negative comments were noted in a piano lesson observed in this study and provide a typical illustration of how a Russian trained teacher criticised her student:

> "That was not good. You did not get the right rhythm."
>
> "You did not practice enough. It is not difficult at all, why cannot you memorize it? It is so stupid."

Students of Russian trained teachers responded to Question 9 as follows:

> "My teacher comments ironically: you do not know how to use the pedal although you are "bachelor" student".
>
> "If I cannot imitate what my teacher demonstrates, I will be considered to have a weak ability. My teacher is very frank with me."

As indicated in this example, the Russian trained teacher did not tolerate sloppiness or laziness. This negative feedback from the Russian trained teacher can be devastating to a student. Although evaluating a student's action and performance is necessary in piano teaching, especially if a student has not worked diligently enough, it is important to adjust the verbal responses so that the negative feedback can be appropriate. Generic condemnation (" That was not good", or "I cannot imagine why you could produce such a terrible sound"), besides suffering from the lack of specificity, also discourages the student and is not going to build up the students' confidence and their trust in the

teacher. These claims are problematic if someone has seen how well positive evaluation can work. The following is a good example taken from an observation in this study of a piano lesson by a UK trained teacher:

> "You did not get quite the right spirit of the piece, but you played the right notes and the right rhythm."

The above evaluation combines the negative comment with the positive ending, which seems more encouraging and gives the feeling of progress. This combination can reduce the sense of discouragement that a student lacking in confidence might feel when receiving a negative comment. One student of UK trained teachers provided a positive response to Question 9 as follows:

> "My teacher always gives me constructive criticisms. She shows me my weakness but at the same time provides positive support like "you can do it" or that sort of things."

Question 10: Did your teacher show her confidence in you which in turn made you feel confident in yourself?

Some previous investigations have focused on the role of teachers in the development of skills with emphasis being placed on the effect of teachers' expectation on learner achievement, with low achievement and low teacher expectation being highly correlated (Blatchford *et al.*., 1989; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968).

Question 10 asked the students if their teachers show confidence in them which in turn made them feel confident in themselves. Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) showed significant differences between each country, UK vs. Vietnam ($p < 0.0046$), Russia vs. Vietnam ($p < 0.0094$). The results indicate that while UK trained teachers tend to show their belief in the students' capacity ($m=7.0$), Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers do not seem to exploit this strategy of encouragement. They did not show high expectation for improvement for their students. Russia trained teachers were rated just above the mid point ($m=5.7$), but Vietnamese trained teachers were lower than the mid point ($m= 4.2$). The students of Russian trained teachers responded to this question with comments as follows:

> “I like the way my teacher encouraged me. One day she said to me before my concert “I know that it is easy for you to play those pieces in front of audience. You are a quite experienced performer, are you not?”. This way worked very well with me. I felt confident and played well on that day.”

However, the number of these types of responses is small. Another scenario was described in the lessons of students of Vietnamese trained teachers where Vietnamese trained teachers have a tendency to show their belief in the students’ capacity to be a good and talented student, not a less capable one.

Some students of UK trained teachers responded to Question 10 with positive comments as follows:

> “She always makes me think that if I use a good practice strategy, I can play very beautifully and achieve whatever I want.”

The following exhortation and statement of belief was noted in a piano lesson observed in this study.

> **Teacher**: “I know you can do it."

This example typifies how a positive evaluation by a UK teacher can serve to encourage the student by giving them hope that they are up to the task at hand. Another example of an encouraging comment that was the following exhortation from a piano lesson of a UK teacher observed in this study which illustrates this point:

> **Teacher**: “Keep it up. You are really on the right track".

The purpose of encouraging comments of the UK teacher is to give students hope and inner strength. When this teacher encourages the student, he probably wants his student to think that he is capable of meeting challenges faced and although some difficulties are apparent, this student is making some progress. By directing this student's attention to the positive aspects of the performance, the teacher made this student to see some achievement even though there are still other factors which are less positive. By steering away from the negative and focusing on the positive, the UK teachers would probably succeed in encouraging their students. This positive and motivational quality possessed

by this teacher obviously stimulates the student to do their best in learning and playing. The UK trained teachers also seem to show high expectations for improvement and musical ability for their students as illustrated in the following comment of the student from an interview:

> "She behaves like there is nothing we cannot do."

Question 11: Did your teacher have a sense of humour?

Zhukov (2004) states that the relationship between music teachers and their students is critical in student's learning process. This can be evaluated by the presence or lack of humour in their relationship (joking, smiling, funny communication and laughing between them). The analysis of students' responses has revealed a considerable difference between UK teachers and Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers regarding the use of humour in the piano lesson. UK trained teachers had the highest rating means (7.2) for the use of jokes, indicating that the UK trained teachers are more humorous in attempting to make students feel friendly and at ease. In contrast, it does not seem that the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers favour the use of humour in the relationship with their students. Their rating means were very negative. Although the Vietnamese trained teachers had the higher rating mean (3.7) for a joke than Russian trained teachers (m=2.7), the rating means of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers were far below the midpoint of 5.0. This can be explained as a cultural difference in attitudes of students towards their teachers, as one student of a Vietnamese trained teacher revealed:

> My teacher assumes us to be serious in teacher- student relationship and have a deep respect for teachers, sometimes I feel a bit distant with my teachers. But that is maybe part of our culture.

In contrast, a student of a UK trained teacher commented:

> His advice or criticisms were very directly expressed, but often with humour. Sometimes he could say quite insulting things at lessons, but with that twinkle in his eye, so that you are not offended at all and could only laugh with him.

Question 33: Were your teachers sympathetic to your problems and difficulties?

Teacher sympathy can help to build a good relationship between a teacher and a student. McDonald (1988) has shown that students tend to engage more readily in intimate, confiding relationships if their teachers provide caring and emotional supports. The teacher is not only able to offer the student intellectual stimulation but also has the capacity to deal with students' personal problems at various stages of their development. In question 33, UK teachers had the highest rating mean (m=7.5) suggesting that the students of UK teachers received more sympathy from their teachers than did the students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers. The responses of teacher sympathy were similar between the latter two teacher groups (the mean for Russian trained teachers was 5.5 and the mean for Vietnamese trained teachers was 5.2). This finding indicates that the teachers in the current study are generally quite understanding, sensitive and warm, and who can offer gentleness and respond positively to their students as expressed in their students' interview comments:

> “My teacher could sense intuitively when I have something emotional and special. She could respond to my feeling and encourage me to overcome the bad feeling".

The above comment by the student of a Russian teacher reveals how the teacher in this study could sympathise with the student's emotional problems, which may affect his/or her motivation to learn. By responding to the student's needs and moods, the teacher can help his or her student to speak out and get rid of personal problems and be able to concentrate on their lesson. In other words, the teacher can listen to something not related to the lesson for the purpose of clearing student's mind in order to gain the student's attention.

FACTOR 2: TEACHING CONTENT IN TERMS OF REPERTOIRE (9 QUESTIONS)

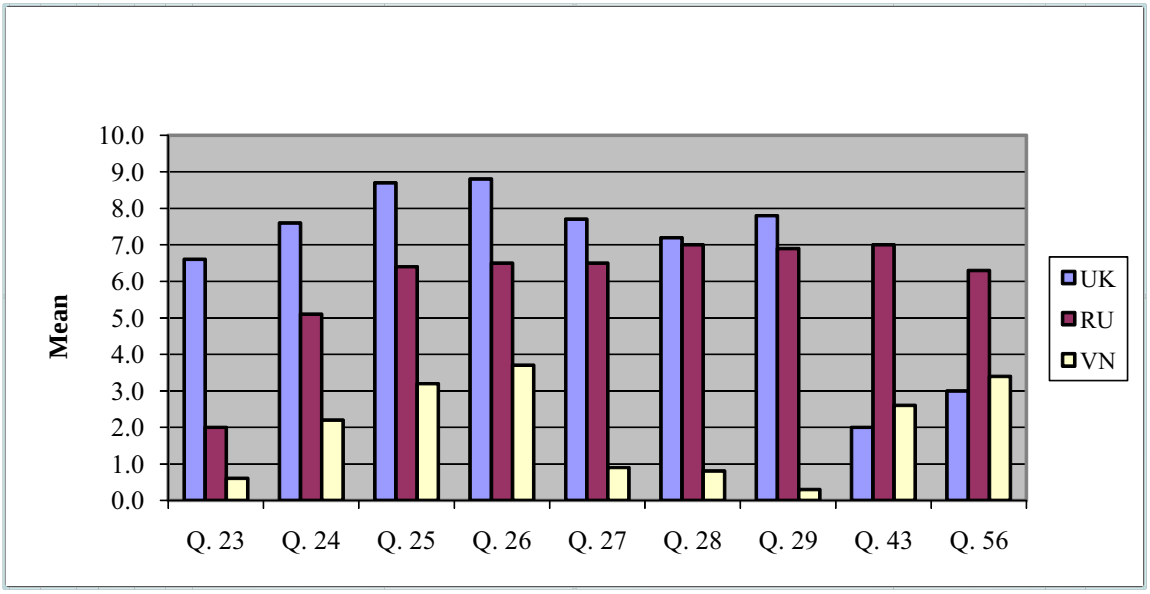
Teaching effectiveness has been the subject of much research in recent years. While various aspects of good teaching have been investigated, one important measure of success has been determined to be teaching content. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$) in terms of content. Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) showed significant differences between each country: UK vs. Russia ($p<0.0086$), UK vs. Vietnam ($p<0.0001$), Russia vs. Vietnam ($p<0.0001$). Aggregating the mean scores for each question produces the following results: UK aggregated means = 59.4, Russian = 54.0 and Vietnam = 18.0. We can conclude that the Vietnamese trained teachers provided less support in terms of content than either those trained in the UK and Russia. The following table provides complete statistics for each question. This is followed by detailed commentary on the responses.

Table 6.2 *Factor 2*

Questions	Mean	S.D.	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 23: Did your teacher encourage you to learn repertoire that the teacher did not know, so you both could discover it together through decision about how to interpret it)?	UK=6.571 RU=2.000 VN=0.606	UK=1.272 RU =2.140 VN= 0.704	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0026
Question 24: Did your teacher provide wide repertoire and suggest variety and breadth of styles?	UK=7.571 RU=5.063 VN=2.212	UK= 0.787 RU=1.243 VN=1.709	UK v RU p<0.0005 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 25: Does your teacher teach the music you like?	UK=8.7 RU=6.4 VN=3.2	UK=0.488 RU =0.840 VN= 1.1	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 26: Did your teacher provide appropriate repertoire?	UK=8.8 RU=6.5 VN=3.7	UK=0.378 RU =1.2 VN= 1.6	UK v RU p<0.0007 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 27: Did your teacher provide access to performance opportunities?	UK=7.7 RU=6.5 VN=.93	UK=0.488 RU =0.756 VN=0.78	UK v RU p<0.0029 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 28: Did your teacher provide large variety of musical opportunities such as CD, tapes, concerts...	UK=7.2 RU=7.0 VN=0.8	UK= 0.75 RU =1.0 VN=0.82	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 29: Did your teacher guide you about who are the best performers and what is the best CD	UK=7.8 RU=6.9 VN=0.3	UK=0.690 RU =0.928 VN=0.609	UK v RU p<0.0170 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001

to listen to?			
Question 43: Did your teacher suggest you more Russian compositions as compared to others?	UK= 2.0 RU=7.0 VN=2.6	UK=1.291 RU =1.231 VN= 1.429	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN n. s RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 56: Did your teacher give you more technical works (such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured form performance such as sonatas, concerto, rhapsody, scherzo...) Please explain.	UK=3.0 RU=6.3 VN=3.4	UK=1.2 RU =0.9 VN= 0.7	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN n. s RU v VN p<0.0001

Figure 6.5 *Factor 2*



Question 23: Did your teacher encourage you to learn repertoire that the teacher did not know, so you both could discover it together through joint decisions about how to interpret it?

This question examines the extent to which piano teachers encouraged their students to learn unfamiliar repertoire. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries (p<0.0001). The striking result obtained in response to this question was the significant difference observed between UK and Vietnamese trained teachers (p<0.0001), and between UK and Russian trained teachers (p<0.0001), indicating that

UK trained teachers differed considerably from Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers in the way they encourage their students to learn repertoire that is not familiar to them.

It appears that learning repertoire that teachers find unfamiliar is not favoured by Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers as indicated by the low means of 2.0 and 0.6 respectively. Scores for UK trained teachers (m=6.5) were significantly higher than the scores for Vietnamese trained teachers and Russian trained teachers, suggesting that while UK trained teachers might be open-minded, Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers did not tend to like their students selecting a repertoire that they did not know well. As one of the students of UK trained teachers stated:

> "My teacher is a promoter of new music."

Similarly, another student of UK trained teacher described about her professor's view as follows:

> "He is different from other teachers, I suppose, because he often teaches best the repertoire that he is not closest to. It is very interesting to work with him through playing contemporary music. We have never been tired of exploring a new piece with its interpretation."

A different scenario was described by the students of Vietnamese trained teachers and Russian trained teachers:

> "My teacher does not like me to play the music she is not close to."

> "To experiment on the new, unfamiliar music was not his way."

These examples typify how repertoire unfamiliar to the teacher plays a very minor role in the lessons of Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers. A closer analysis of students' responses revealed that the majority of piano teachers in the Hanoi Conservatorium continue to choose most of common repertoire played by students, and to base their lessons around a teacher-directed model where the prime focus of attention

is learning the notes in the first few months of a semester. They do not like their students selecting repertoire that they do not know.

Question 24: Did your teacher provide a wide repertoire and suggest variety and breadth of styles?

Experienced teachers are supposed to have an ability to provide broad repertoire and variety of styles to their students in order to improve and motivate them to learn. Interesting repertoire can be a motivating factor for the students. If they like it, they generally try harder to be able to play it.

The results have shown that there was a significant difference overall between the countries regarding teachers' repertoire assignment to their students ($p<0.0001$). They differed in how varied and extensive was the repertoire they provide their students. It appears that giving them a variety of styles is highly valued by UK trained teachers, as recorded by highest mean of 7.5 as compared to the other two groups. The Russian trained teachers are more likely than Vietnamese trained teachers to assign wider and varied repertoire, as shown by the respective means of 5.0 and 2.2. The following explanation from a student of a Vietnamese trained teacher illustrates this point:

> I have a limited repertoire. I know a few pieces very well and can sometimes play them to perfection but do not know the repertoire inside out.

One student's description of his Russian trained teacher is also revealing:

> I played a great deal of music by Liszt, some Mozart, and a lot of Clementi. He fed my capacity for covering a lot of repertoire, and for that I am very grateful. I learned a lot.

However another student of Russian trained revealed:

> I work on a well-rounded repertoire of Bach, Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Debussy and Ravel but very little contemporary music. She usually gives me the pieces she used to play herself.

In contrast, UK trained teachers' students commented as follows:

> "I must thank my teacher for encouraging me to learn the widest variety of repertoire- Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, and other music that was quite modern at the time. She taught me the importance of knowing thoroughly the style of each composer I played."
>
> "I did a wide variety of repertoire with her, including Messiaen, Ives, Poulenc, Stravinsky, Mozart, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff."
>
> "My teacher wants me to play everything. He has me learn Liszt, Chopin, Scrabin, Rachmaninov, Beethoven, Mozart, Schumann, Mendelssohn etc… My repertoire was large and comprehensive."
>
> "Important thing she demands of us is that we start developing a large repertoire as soon as possible. She rightly feels that learning the text early on is very important in building on a base."

As illustrated in the above responses from the students of UK trained teachers, there seemed to be a sense that these teachers value breadth of repertoire and want the students to cover a huge amount of repertoire. They taught the widest possible repertoire, from Bach through the whole nineteenth century, to Russian music and the most modern works. There were no barriers for them. They might think that once their students experience technical and musical challenges as wide as possible, and they keep on asking them to extend further, the students learn a great deal from this experience. And a few years later, when reviewing it, it seems more useful in many ways than confining the repertoire narrowly.

Question 25: Does your teacher teach the music you like?

Despite the common-sense desirability of providing students with a level of self-determination and with repertoire that they find they like, the majority of instrumental teachers in the English speaking world seemed to choose most of the repertoire for their students (Reid, 2001). However, Renwick and McPherson (2002) found in their case studies that students who were allowed "to practise repertoire that they select

themselves and find personally interesting can lead to a marked increase in the use of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies that typify experts' practice and thus more effective learning" (p. 185).

The subjects in this study were asked to rate to what extent they thought that they were taught the music they prefer. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). There were significant differences ($p<0.0001$) observed between UK and Vietnamese trained teachers, indicating that these two groups of teachers differed considerably in the way they assigned repertoires that are preferred by their students. Post Hoc comparison (Scheffé) also revealed considerable differences between Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$) and between UK and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$).

These results show that while the UK trained teachers spent slightly more time demonstrating and discussing the preferred repertoires than the Russian trained teachers, as indicated by means of 8.7 and 6.4 respectively, they are both aware of the importance of providing the pieces of music that their students are interested in playing. However, the Vietnamese trained teachers' means were quite low (3.2) suggesting that discussion of the student's favourite repertoire plays only a minor role in their lessons.

In research into motivation, Renwick and McPherson (2002) found that when students are interested in an activity and feel free to choose whether or not to do it, they are more likely to engage in higher-level cognitive functioning and find it easier to concentrate, persevere and enjoy their learning. Using a case study approach, Renwick and McPherson (2002) compared the student's practice behaviour in teacher-assigned repertoire with the student's work on a piece she chose to learn herself. Results show that when practicing self-selected repertoire, the subject was more likely to engage in strategies that are typical at more advanced stages of development. The subject also spent more time practicing the piece, and persevered when faced with difficulties. Similarly, Schiefele and Rheinberg (1997) report that student interest has been found to enhance the subjective quality of the learning experience and also to influence the "quality of learning" results, with high-interest subjects engaging in more intensive and meaning-oriented processing of text.

Recently, there have been some indications of the emergence of more autonomy-supportive teaching strategies aimed at nurturing students' individual interests. For example, graded music examinations which have traditionally provided a quite restrictive orientation for music students in countries like Canada, Australia and South Africa have started to offer students more options (Renwick and McPherson, 2002).

This question examines specifically the extent to which piano teachers allow their students to practice the repertoire the students prefer. It appears that the importance of providing students with repertoire that students find interesting is more highly valued by UK trained teachers as compared with Russian trained and Vietnamese trained teachers. It also suggests that Vietnamese trained teachers tend to be dictatorial in assigning repertoires to their students and do not seem to like their students selecting the repertoire themselves. The following comment illustrates this point:

> "She does not really care what music I like or do not like. She never asks about my preference for pieces of music. She just thinks the pieces she assigns me are very useful for my progress and appropriate for my current stage of learning and I should learn them".

In contrast, student's description of her UK trained teacher is revealing of that approach:

> "He always gives me the most beautiful pieces to learn. He often demonstrates a number of suitable pieces then discusses the feature of each piece and lets me choose the one I would like to play. "

When the student of a UK trained teacher was re-interviewed shortly after observation of her lesson, she explained that her desire to learn the piece was strongly motivated by her intrinsic interest in the piece that her teacher demonstrated in the lesson. Thus, rather than the piece being chosen by the teacher, as is the usual practice in most lessons, the piece was chosen by the student.

In a piano lesson by a UK teacher in this study the teacher discussed the program for her student as follows:

> **Teacher**: "I think the sonata is too long for your program. What do you think about this? You have been studying the ballade over the

> past few months and I felt that it would be an interesting piece to offer for performance and you could make use of a number of techniques you have been concentrating on."
>
> **Student**: "Well, you are probably right. I chose that piece because I really enjoy playing in this style and wanted to play and work on something I related to and liked".

This extract exemplifies the importance of making the decisions as regards to repertoire selection by mutual agreement between the UK teacher and her student. The teacher as the acknowledged expert of repertoire suggested suitable pieces for the student for discussion, rather than imposing them on the student. Discussion of repertoire is likely to make the student feel happy that her teacher did not impose the repertoire on her and she can feel free to learn the music she likes.

Such students preferred music which could arouse emotional responses in them. And emotion seems to play an important role in expression during a musical performance. Since fascination and inspiration are crucial elements in learning to play music, if a student is really fascinated sufficiently wants to play a piece, then that student could does his/ her best to overcome any technical difficulty. This is explained by Renwick and McPherson (2002) as follows:

> "...that with strong enough motivation, even quite young learners can engage in the types of self-regulatory behaviour that will enhance their musical achievement… and play pieces that they like for longer periods of time than pieces they find less interesting." (pp.184-185).

The following response from a student of Russian trained teacher in this study illustrates this point:

> "My teacher encouraged me to play even a piece which is maybe more difficult than my level as long as I really like it".

As indicated in this example, the teacher was not against assigning work which might be too difficult if a student loves it. She thought that if students have a keen desire to

play the piece, then they would put in their best effort to be successful in expressing the piece.

Question 26: Did your teacher provide appropriate repertoire?

Effective teachers are supposed to have an ability to match repertoire to their students' capacity and personality in order to improve and motivate them to learn. Suitable repertoire can be a motivating factor for the students. If they like a piece of music, they try hard to be able to play it.

Although there were significant differences overall between the three groups ($p<0.0001$) as shown by the respective means of 8.8, 6.5, and 3.7 for UK trained teachers, Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers, the interviews with students of all three groups of teachers seemed to reveal that they were given an appropriate repertoire. Providing suitable repertoire appears to be a critically important factor in maintaining continued interest in student learning and helps them to follow program easily, as mentioned by 2 students of UK trained teachers:

> "He gave me what he thought I needed at a particular time. His chief merit was his guidance in choosing the right progressive order of works that a student should study. He knows an appropriate difficulty level for student."

> "He knew which works his students need to be familiar with and which works require intensive study."

The student of Russian trained teacher also provided a positive comment:

> "My teacher never gives stressful exercises for the hand to students whose hands are small and not ready for them. He thinks that everything he teaches should be physically natural."

Similarly, the student of Vietnamese trained teacher explained:

> "Since I was small–framed, she often assigned me works that did not require too big a sound."

As indicated in the above comments of the students, it seems likely that most of the teachers in this study have extensive experience which allows them to know exactly the right pieces to assign a student at the right time.

Question 27: Did your teacher provide access to performance opportunities?

Performance is an important aspect of musical training. Blake (2004) states that, in order to gain a place at Royal College of Music in UK, students must already be familiar with many local and national festivals and competitions and have achieved the highest level of playing.

> "A conservatoire helps to continue that perspective so that a student can chart their progress and achievement, and gain motivation to aspire to the highest level… Examination recital is a public event just like any concert performance. Since performance is at the heart of a musician's study, many students will practise performing in a wide range of performance platforms whilst at the College, so that an examination recital is, hopefully, not so far removed from reality as it might be if a student was not used to performing to an audience." (p. 92).

While this is common in the UK, there are few such opportunities in Vietnam. This question examines the extent to which UK teachers, Russian trained and Vietnamese trained teachers provide performance opportunities to their students. ANOVA showed a significant difference overall between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p <0.0001$), and between Vietnamese trained teachers and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$) and between the UK and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0029$). The most striking results obtained in this part of the present study were the significant differences observed between UK trained teachers ($m=7.7$) and Vietnamese trained teachers ($m=0.9$). The mean of Russian trained teachers (6.5) also differed significantly from the mean of Vietnamese trained teachers (0.9). This indicates that while UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers value the importance of

performance opportunities for their students, Vietnamese trained teachers do not seem to stress the importance of this area at all.

Although the students had been involved in musical activities outside their piano lessons, among students of UK trained teachers 96% mentioned involvement in at least two activities from a list comprising competitions, festivals, and concerts organized by the school or the piano teachers. For a number of the students of UK trained teachers it was clear that actually performing had brought them valuable experiences.

Sloboda and Howe (1991) reported the value of experiences associated with performing in public. The students of UK teachers were involved in many kinds of performances from small concerts to major musical events. Most of the performances are suggested or arranged by teachers. The teachers could organize recitals in which the students might play a short program for a small audience first, and then gradually play a longer program before a much larger audience, and sometimes they are selected to play with a full orchestra. They also encourage their students to participate in events such as competitions or community organizations and the like. These performance opportunities are motivational for encouraging practicing day after day to work at challenging tasks. They give the students a chance to experiment and display their skills in front of an audience, and demonstrate what they had gained from endless hours practicing on their own and with their teachers (Sosniak, 1985).

The following is an example of discussion of performance opportunity during a UK trained teachers' piano lesson that was observed in this study:

> **Teacher**: "Do you want to perform in the master class tomorrow?"
>
> **Student**: "Well, I have not been preparing well enough"
>
> **Teacher**: "You should, whether you play well or not, you will learn a lot from the performance. You will get the feeling of how to play on stage".

This instance illustrates a typical situation faced by the teachers when their students are not ready yet for public performance. The teacher made suggestions as to particular occasions where they want their students to play and tried to explain the benefits the student could get from taking the chance to perform.

The following dialogue between a Russian trained teacher and a student typifies how the teacher developed their students' appreciation of performance opportunities.

> **Teacher**: "I have just heard that the conservatory is going to hold competitions for young pianists by the end of this year, the winner will earn the opportunity to give a performance with a full orchestra. And I think playing in an orchestra is most enjoyable. I played the Rachmaninoff Second Concerto in Moscow. I remember that sitting with a large orchestra and playing was almost the ideal situation in life. Would you like to enter a competition and play in it?"
>
> **Student**: "Oh I do not know. Playing in front of a select number of people who know a lot about music frightens me. I cannot play".
>
> **Teacher**: "I think this competition is an important experience. Whether you win or lose, you will find something worthwhile to take away from the experience".

As indicated in this example, the teacher tried to make the student understand that whether they win or lose in the competition, they will gain something important to them and their career from thinking about how to cope with performing stress and what they have to work on next time in order to do better next time. In this case, the winning or losing does not seem to have been as important as the doing.

A very low mean of 0.9 regarding performance opportunities found in Vietnamese trained teachers' lessons can be explained by the lower availability of opportunity to perform in concerts in Vietnam and the policy about performing criteria applied before selection by the school. In Vietnam there are two official performance opportunities organised by the piano school after examination and every semester ends. Every time this opportunity comes, only students who have the highest mark 10/10 or 9.8/10 can be selected to perform, leaving no chance for other students with below the mark 9.5/10 to participate in performing activities. The conservatory also organises the concerts a few times a year but only very few outstanding students have been selected to represent for their own schools.

The following responses from students of Vietnamese trained teachers are typical, and illustrate this point:

> "We have little chance to perform. You cannot always find the opportunity to try out your skills before an audience. Playing in the concerts is not a regular activity. The conservatoire organises the concerts for students to perform sometimes but it is not something that happens regularly every month and usually only very good students are chosen to play. So I always feel nervous when playing on the stage".

> "I have been a student of the conservatory for nearly ten years and I have never had a chance to play in any concerts organised by the conservatory. The only opportunity to play in front of others is in an examination."

This student's response also reveals the problems many Vietnamese students face at this moment in respect to opportunities for public performance. This suggests that the problems with Vietnamese student's performing stress can be partly attributed to a lack of performance opportunities since examination is seen to be their major occasion of musical performance. This lack of performance opportunities can cause performance anxiety in students. And this anxiety can have a detrimental effect on the quality of performance and actually increase the likelihood of mistakes. Stage fright also results in students receiving a grade that does not accurately reflect their actual level of ability. It has been shown that performance anxiety can affect musicians at any stage of their careers and in some cases have led to the premature termination of promising musical careers (Brotons, 1994). A useful strategy for future music education would involve giving not only good students but also medium and other students more opportunities to perform.

Question 28: Did your teacher provide large variety of musical opportunities such as CD, tapes, concerts?

This question examines the extent to which UK teachers, Russian trained and Vietnamese trained teachers provide their students musical opportunities such as

suggesting that they listen to the best compact disks and providing tickets to important concerts. It appears that UK teachers and Russian trained teachers offered good opportunities as regards to CD and tapes as indicated by means of 7.2 and 7.0 respectively. In contrast, there was virtually no evidence concerning providing recordings for students of Vietnamese trained teachers in view of the very low mean of 0.8. This may be because of the lower availability of opportunity and access to concerts, CDs, tapes and video recordings in Vietnam. The following response from a student of a Vietnamese trained teacher illustrates this point:

> "We have little choice for what is good to listen for. You cannot always find something you need or you play from the library, and my teacher has never given me any recordings. Going to concerts is not a regular activity. International pianists visit Vietnam sometimes. But it is not something that happens regularly every month."

This student's response reveals the problems many Vietnamese students face at this moment. This suggests that the problems in student's playing can be partly attributed to a lack of listening because of lack of opportunities to hear prestigious and renowned concert pianists.

However, better situations were evident in the responses of the students of Russian and UK trained teachers. For example one student of a Russian trained teacher said:

> "My teachers sometimes provide me with recordings to listen to. She has a number of recordings of the same piece to enable me to make comparisons. She also gives me tickets to go to concerts."

Question 29: Did your teacher guide you about who are the best performers and what is the best CD to listen to?

The use of tape recorders in lessons in practice has been supported by Greer (1980) in his Personalized System of Instruction, but has not become popular practice in music teaching in Vietnam. While listening to professional recordings of the piece students are learning has many positive effects on their playing in term of better understanding of

style, there is a tendency for students to imitate and copy directly what they hear on the recordings. Therefore, it is the teachers' role to guide students towards who the best performers are and what the best CD to listen to is.

This question examines the extent to which UK teachers, Russian trained and Vietnamese trained teachers advise their students about choosing the best compact disks and performers. It appears that UK teachers and Russian trained teachers provide good suggestions as regards to their listening selection, as indicated by means of 7.8 and 6.9 respectively. In contrast, no evidence concerning suggested recordings for students was found in Vietnamese trained teachers' lessons in view of the very low mean of 0.3.

The following is an extract from a lesson of a UK trained teacher in this study:

> "He is not a bad pianist, but his tone is not what I want you to imitate. Well, do you want me to remind you of some good names?"

Here is another example of discussion of recordings during Russian trained teachers' piano lesson that was observed in this study:

> **Teacher**: Who are your favourite pianists at the moment?
>
> **Student**: Horowitz. I want to play his way.
>
> **Teacher**: He is great and certainly an outstanding pianist but he is not much good for students like you. His style of playing is not what I want you to imitate at the moment.

This instance illustrates a typical situation faced by the teachers when their students listen to a model recording of the piece they are playing. The student wants to imitate the model he heard but he is still not professionally mature enough to understand whether or not it might be appropriate to his current stage and learning process, nor how his performance would develop if he tries to emulate a level that he is very far from achieving.

UK and Russian Teachers use professional compact disks or recordings of the studied repertoire frequently as ideal models for students to imitate. They make suggestions as

to which particular performer or CD they want their students to listen to depending on their stage of development. The following extract from observation of UK teacher's lesson in this study illustrates this point:

> **Teacher**: Do you know who great pianists of our century are?
>
> **Student**: I would not know.
>
> **Teacher**: Well you need to. Right, do you want me to remind you some names? Maurizio Polini is an ideal interpreter of works by Chopin. Go to the HMV shop, they may have got his very first recording of the intensely poetic Nocturnes. His recording discloses both the intimacy and drama of the Chopin emotional universe. Then Lang Lang is one of the best new talents in music. His recordings of the Tchaikovsky piano concerto for example are precious. It is very beautiful and interesting. His performance boasts plenty of dynamism, idiomatic nuance, and roaring, Horowitz-like octaves. Watch this pianist. Also you can listen to *Dang Thai Son* for his high sensitivity to the colours, moods and textures of Chopin works in which he specialized. His recordings include stylish accounts of Chopin's preludes and sonatas, nocturnes, ballads. I also love Richter, Neuhaus, and Gilels ….Are you feeling rich?
>
> **Student**: A little better than I was. Thank you.

Question 43: Did your teacher suggest you play more Russian compositions as compared to others?

This question examines the extent to which UK teachers, Russian trained and Vietnamese trained teachers assigned their students Russian compositions. The study uncovered large differences between Russian trained teachers and UK and Vietnamese trained teachers in relation to the Russian content of the repertoire they were assigned ($p<0.0001$). It appears that Russian trained teachers gave strong recommendations for Russian compositions as compared to UK trained teachers and Vietnamese trained

teachers, as indicated by contrasting means of 7.0 and 2.0, 2.6 respectively. The responses of students of Russian trained teachers mentioned most frequently are:

> "Although my teacher is interested in other composers, he always wants my repertoire to include Russian compositions by Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, and Prokofiev etc…"

Admiration of Russian compositions was also an influencing factor (see Questions 75 and 76 from 100 questions for Russian graduates; Question 28 from 30 questions for Teachers). More than one student of Russian trained teachers illustrates this point:

> "She is never tired of giving me Russian compositions. I think he is definitely influenced by the Russian school."

As indicated in the above examples, the Russian compositions were highlighted in the content of the repertoires the Russian trained teachers assigned to their students. The possible explanation for this liking may be because the Russian trained teachers' training had greater exposure to the Russian school, so they are great promoters of Russian compositions.

In contrast, some of the students of UK and Vietnamese trained teachers claimed that although their teachers might have great respect for Russian composers and they sometimes assigned them Russian compositions to learn, the Russian compositions are not something that are dominant in their repertoire, as one of them said:

> "My teacher does not always have great attraction to Russian contemporary music for example Prokofiev. However she sometimes gave me Rachmaninoff to play."

This difference may well be explained by differences in the teachers' educational backgrounds that might affect their decisions in assigning the music to their students. In other words, the different educational settings in which the training of the three types of teachers in this study was undertaken could possibly account for the difference in the findings on teacher suggestions regarding Russian compositions.

Question 56: Did your teacher give you more technical works (such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured form performance such as sonatas, concerto, rhapsody, scherzo...)

There were highly significant differences, statistically, between the teachers' approach regarding assigning students the repertoire ($p<.0001$). For instance, they differed in the way they gave the student technical works. The Russian trained teachers were reported as more likely than UK trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers to assign more etudes. Indeed, the analysis revealed highest mean scores for the Russian trained teachers ($m = 6.3$), while means for UK and Vietnamese trained teachers were only 3.0 and 3.4 respectively, suggesting that the Russian trained teachers appear to place more value on the importance of technical works for their students. One student's description of his Russian trained teacher is revealing:

> "The Chopin etudes were a real cornerstone for him"

Other responses were similar:

> "Technically, my teacher is interested in "method" and had me do a number of Czerny, Moszkowski etudes, plus exercises by Mendelssohn, Chopin. He watched carefully over the details of my technical development then gradually added larger structural forms like Chopin ballad and sonatas."

As indicated in the above examples, the Russian trained teachers were more convinced of the importance of technical works. They tended to focus more on technique in the early stages and then balanced the repertoire more as their students progressed, which suggests a systematic approach to teaching. More technical works were mentioned in the interviews involving Vietnamese trained in Russia (Russian graduates) who later become the Russian trained teachers, and they claimed that more technical works were assigned at the beginning of their time in Russia. This implied that there was a strong influence from the Russian school in their teaching as reflected in the focus on technical exercises such as etudes at the beginning of the learning process.

The interview with the students of UK trained teachers revealed that the UK trained teachers appear to use a more balanced approach with an emphasis more on expression and articulation, as indicated by one student of a UK trained teacher:

> "My teacher gave me the repertoire that requires me to spend a considerable portion of the time on expressive skills. However he also gave me some stretching exercises that were very good for me, because my hand was small. He also gave me octave exercises which required me to play from the wrist, with a motionless arm."

FACTOR 3: STUDENT CONTROL (6 QUESTIONS)

Development of a student's independence for their own learning is an important developmental task. Results of studies conducted in recent years have shown that the amount of student independent participation may be related to student achievement, attentiveness, and attitude (Forsythe, 1975; Forsythe, 1977; Madsen and Geringer, 1983; Wagner and Strul, 1979).

The questions in factor 3 (Q 35-39, 44) asked the students to assess the degrees of freedom allowed them in making decisions regarding study aims, progress, how to play a piece and the extent to which the students play an active part in the lessons. Analysis of results (ANOVA) for these questions showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p < 0.0001$). Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) showed significant differences between each country for factor 3 ($p = 0.0001$).

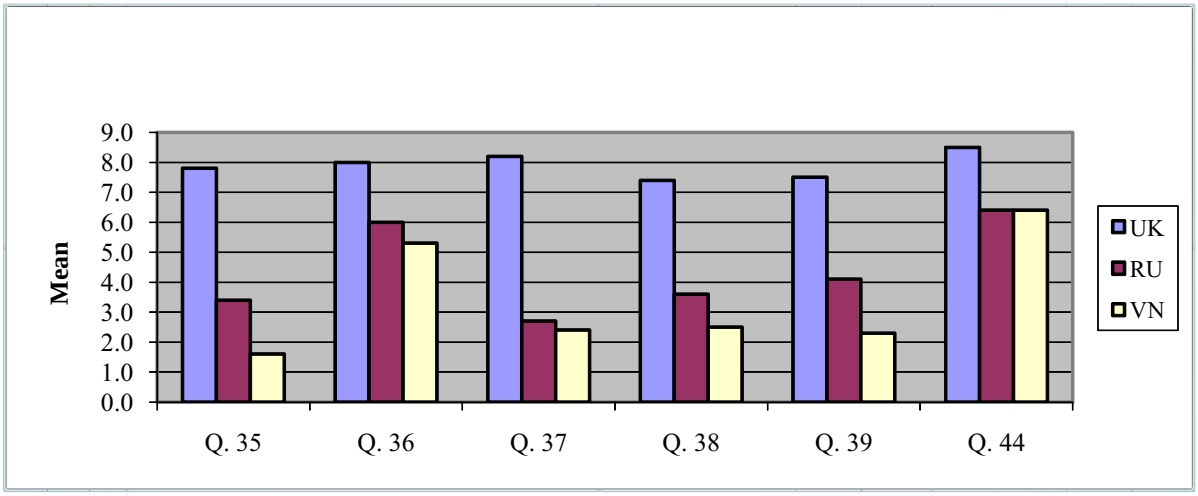
Results suggested that it should be concluded that the teachers trained in UK give much more freedom to the students in making their own decision as compared to those of teachers studied in Russia and Vietnam. Maximum for all six questions is 60, and the midpoint is 30. Aggregating the mean scores for each question produces the following results: UK aggregated means = 47.7, Russian = 26.5 and Vietnam = 20.7.

The UK had the highest scores (m= 47.7), followed by Russia with much lower scores (m= 26.5), and Vietnam with the lowest (m= 20.7). UK subjects were well above the midpoint. Russia was just below and Vietnam well below.

Table 6.3 *Factor 3*

Question	Vietnamese		Russian		UK	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Question 35: Give your estimation of the degree to which you felt that you were normally taking an active part in the lessons	1.6	0.69	3.4	1.9	7.8	.69
Question 36: Circle the number which you felt indicates how much your teacher granted you responsibility in developing a repertoire.	5.3	2.4	6.0	0.69	8.0	0.57
Question 37: Give your estimation of the degree of freedom you were given in making decisions regarding study aims, study progress.	2.4	0.86	2.7	1.4	8.2	0.48
Question 38: Give your estimation of the degree of freedom which you are given in making decisions on how to play a piece?	2.5	1.0	3.6	1.5	7.4	0.53
Question 39: Do your teachers allow you to develop an independent musical interpretation?	2.3	0.84	4.1	1.3	7.5	0.78
Question 44: Do you welcome personal responsibility and freedom in learning.	6.4	0.82	6.4	1.4	8.5	0.81

Figure 6.6 *Factor 3*



Question 35: Give your estimation of the degree to which you felt that you were normally taking an active part in the lessons

In very broad terms, one would seem to mirror the other, suggesting that there might be an inverse relationship between the teacher dominance and student contribution as an active part in the lessons: the more teacher dominance there was in the lessons, the less a student would contribute to lessons actively. Indeed, the students' Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers average contribution to discussions devoted to Technique was lower, by 3%, than their contribution to lesson dialogue overall. None of these students gave themselves more than 5% credit for the initiative. In contrast, the students of UK trained teachers estimated their own active participation in the lessons to be 25% with about 18% for the initiative. This indicates that Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers tend to be more dominating and exploiting students' initiative and responsibility very little.

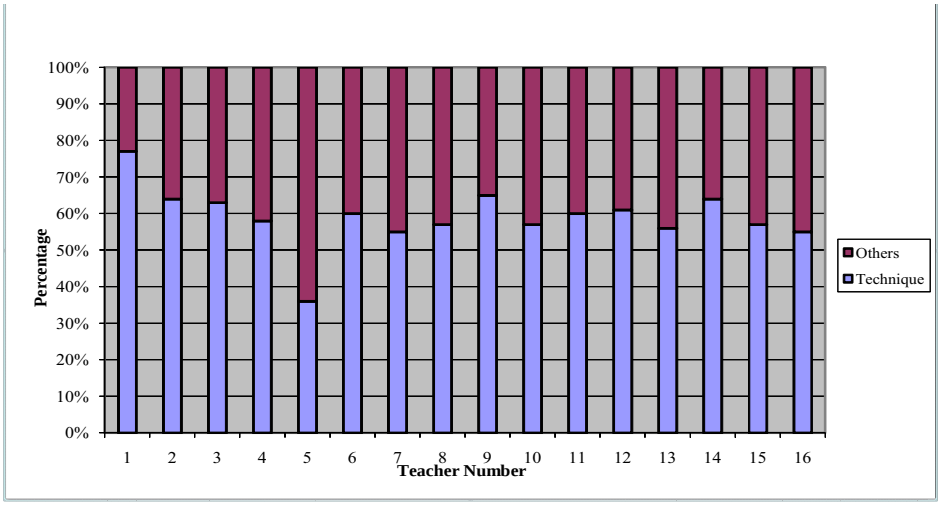
The most common response from students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers to the Question 35 was as follows:

> "In my lesson, the dialogue is effectively one-way communication and my verbal contribution is zero."

The main approach to the analysis of the data was to quantify the number of words devoted to Technique and the incidents of Command strategy. In addition, specific illustrative and qualitative examples of these were picked out from the transcripts. A key indicator of teaching style for example could be the proportion of words that related to teacher or student talk, or the number and type of questions asked. The sheer amount of time spent on Technique and the frequency of Command strategy at the expense of other areas of study or strategies became immediately evident.

Figure 6.7 shows the proportion of dialogue devoted to Technique in the lessons of Russian trained teacher. The average over all 29 lessons is shown at 59%, an enormous proportion in discourses ostensibly divisible into six possible areas of study. The highest proportion devoted to Technique was seen in the lessons of Teacher 1 (77% of all dialogue), and although the lowest proportion (Teacher 5) was 36%, seven out of sixteen teachers' lessons exhibited more than 60% of all dialogue devoted to technical matters.

Figure 6.7 *Proportion of all dialogue devoted to Technique in Russian trained teachers' lessons*



In Figure 6.8, the proportion of teacher/student talk in Russian trained teachers' lessons, averaged over the same lessons, is shown. As expected, the dominance of the teacher is high with the nine teachers closely matching or exceeding the group average of 95% (teachers 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16.)

Figure 6.8 *Proportions of Teacher/Student Talk in Russian Trained Teachers' Lessons*

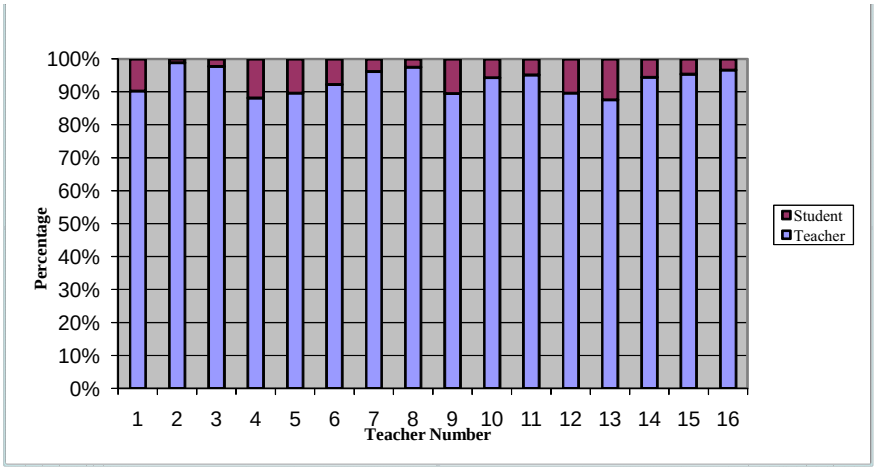
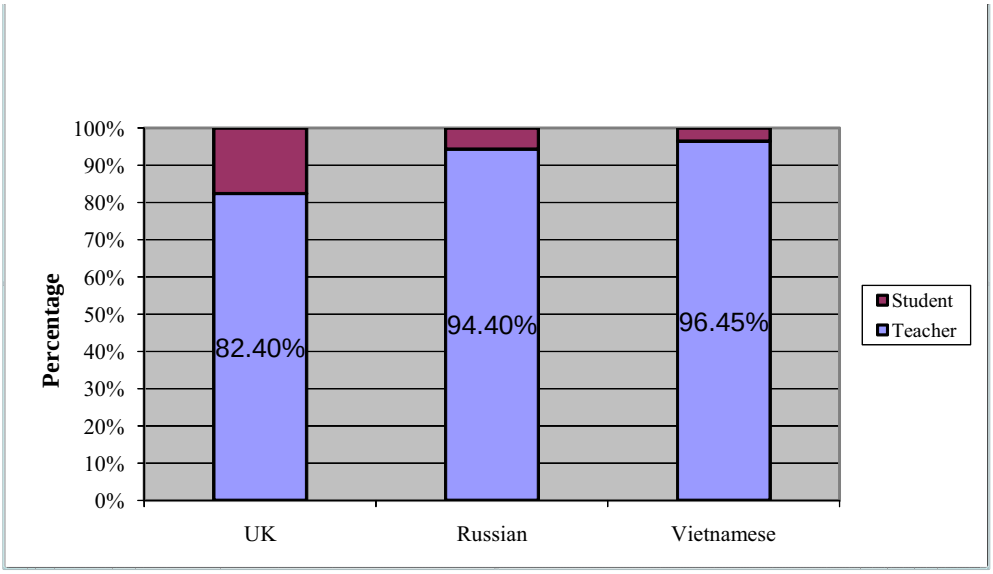


Figure 6.9 shows the comparison of proportions of teacher/student talk between three groups: UK trained teachers, Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers. The highest proportions of teacher talk were seen in the lessons of Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers (m = 96.45 and 94.40 % respectively) suggesting the dominance of these teachers was very high.

Figure 6.9 *Proportions of teacher/student talk, comparing the three groups*



In contrast to those of students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers, the response from one student of the UK trained teachers to question 35 was quite interesting:

> My teacher allows me to contribute to the discussion by asking me thought-provoking questions to develop my own thoughts. For example, questions like "is there anything in the score that suggests you change that crescendo?"
>
> or "Do you have an instinctive feeling to play rubato here?", or " what do you think about this counterpoint", or " Can you think about colour? What colour would be here? What sort of colour comes to your mind?", or "What happens when A flat major appears?" …etc.

The teacher used sequenced questions to draw the students along a certain train of thought. 75% of the dialogue in this lesson was devoted to Interpretation, of which the student contributed 34%. In addition, rather than taking a passive role, this student continues to attempt to identify her own problems and possible solutions. In this case, the teacher acts as a consultant, giving the student a model which she might be able to emulate in her independent work.

Question 37: Give your estimation of the degree of freedom you were given in making decisions regarding study aims, study progress.

Research has shown that the lack of organisational skills is detrimental to student progress, because students feel discouraged and unmotivated without clearly identified objectives. So the most practical way is to set students clear goals (Zhukov, 2004). A project in an academy of music in Sweden studied a group of students who were given a high degree of freedom in making decisions regarding study aims and study progress (Brandstrom, 1998). Sosniak (1985), who has studied the backgrounds of successful concert pianists, found that the pianist learned to work toward more difficult and distant goals as they learned to care about achieving those goals. As a student's facility, musical understanding, and ability to succeed expand, so will their goals. This study emphasised the importance of freedom in learning and personal development.

Discussion of study aims and study progress were infrequent among Russian trained teachers' and Vietnamese trained teachers', with means of only 2.7 and 2.4 respectively. The students of UK trained teachers were given more freedom in setting their own goals to progress as indicated from the following piano lesson reported in this study:

> **Teacher**: "Let's think about the pieces you want to play in the second semester. Do you have any aim that you wish to complete?"
>
> **Student**: "Well, I would study Chopin first and then I will think about some contemporary music."

This episode illustrates how the UK trained teacher initiated discussion of future planning for students to set their goals, something which was not evident in the lessons of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers. In fact, there was a tendency for a teacher

to make a decision regarding study aims and progress in the lessons of Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers, as more than one student of Vietnamese trained teachers and Russia trained teachers stated:

> "My teacher decides everything. She thinks that she knows what is good for me. She always gives us the pieces she used to play when she was a student and the pieces she likes. She wants us to follow her way that she got through her own experience"

Question 38: Give your estimation of the degree of freedom which you are given in making decisions on how to play a piece?

The results indicated that the students of UK trained teachers have more freedom in deciding how to play a piece. The high mean for students of UK trained teachers was listed in Table 6.3 (m=7.4). In contrast, the low means for students of Russian trained teachers (m=3.6) and Vietnamese trained teachers (m=2.5) were also revealed in the Table 6.3 suggesting that the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers were more like decision makers for their students. A student's description of his Vietnamese trained teacher illustrates this point:

> "My playing was limited to her teaching that is no freedom in making decision and no initiative at all. I studied in UK for 6 months and realized that the UK teachers were not that way."

The similar response of the student of Russian trained teacher is revealing:

> "She would not allow her young students much freedom like too much sentimentality, exaggerations or a lot of rubato in interpreting the piece. And I think this is good training for young, immature students."

In contrast to the responses of the students of Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers, one student of a UK trained teacher talked about her teacher:

> "My teacher is very open-minded about different interpretations."

There is no doubt that the UK trained teachers in this study gave more freedom to their students and encouraged them to be creative in learning as compared to Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers. However, Russian trained teachers' and Vietnamese trained teachers' teaching behaviours are worth taking into consideration. For example, they were reasonable and careful in giving their students freedom in learning in the early stages in which their young students were not mature enough to decide what is right and what is wrong for decision how to play a piece.

Question 39: Do your teachers allow you to develop an independent musical interpretation?

As shown in the Table 6.3, UK trained teachers were again rated highly (m = 7.5), suggesting that they encouraged their students to be more independent in interpreting the music. The following descriptions of UK trained teachers of the students in this study illustrate this point:

> "My teachers were very excited if you have a personality and your own musical interpretation. I was lucky to have a very open - minded teacher."
>
> "He was very open-minded and did not try to impose an interpretation if the playing was convincing."
>
> "He taught me how to be independent to find solutions as adult musicians by hearing great orchestras and chamber musicians."

These examples typify how UK trained teachers developed their students' independence of musical interpretation. In the case of Russian trained teachers, although they gave less freedom to their students as regard to student's own musical interpretation, they eventually wanted to see their students develop into independent musicians. The explanation of the student of Russian trained teacher illustrated this point:

> When I become older, and in the last year at the conservatoire, my teacher allowed me to have a little more freedom. She encouraged me to interpret things more in my own way, provided that it was

> convincing. She just gives some good suggestions and lets me feel a little more relaxed to demonstrate my musical interpretation.

Question 44: Do you welcome personal responsibility and freedom in learning?

The issue of students welcoming responsibility and freedom in their own learning development is an important subject for educators. Learning does not occur in lessons only. Piano students at the conservatoire level are doing most of their practice away from their teachers. When practicing, they are on their own, so the important question is how responsible and independent is their learning behaviour when practicing? The aim of this part is to examine to what degree the students in this study welcome responsibility and freedom in their own learning development. ANOVA showed a significant difference between the three countries ($p<0.095$). Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), but no significant difference between Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers ($p=0.99$). Therefore, one can assume that there is some difference between the UK trained teachers and the other two groups which needs exploring.

The results revealed the highest mean scores for the students of UK trained teachers ($m= 8.5$) suggesting most of them want to be given a high degree of freedom in making decisions in learning. No statistically significant differences existed among the students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers, as shown by the fact that the mean for each was identical: 6.4 (see Table 6.3). This was reflected in the students' interviews, which indicate characteristics common to most of the students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers regarding their approach to responsibility and freedom in learning.

FACTOR 4: PIANO TECHNIQUE (5 QUESTIONS)

Three questions require verbal answers and two require numerical answers.

Question 48: How did your teacher teach you to have a powerful sound on a grand piano?

Question 49: How did your teacher teach you to play legato, voicing? Please explain briefly.

Question 50: Did your teacher mention about the importance of relaxation and how to apply it to touch and tone?

Question 51: Did your teacher ever ask you to make the piano "sing"?

Question 54: What did your teacher do to help you improve both musically and technically? Please explain briefly. What do you think you gained from your teacher?

The questions in Factors 4 (Q. 48, Q. 49, Q. 50, Q. 51, Q. 54) asked about the importance of a powerful sound, legato, voicing, "singing" quality and relaxation in piano skills. It appears that UK and Russian trained teachers stressed the importance of these aspects, more so than Vietnamese trained teachers. The Russian trained teachers had the highest mean (16.8), followed by UK teachers (13.2), with the Vietnamese trained teachers the lowest (4.9).

In many observed lessons of UK and Russian trained teachers, the UK and Russian trained teachers often demonstrated solutions to technical problems on the piano. However, the differences between these two teacher groups emerged in the two categories of Relaxation and "Singing" quality. While the Russian trained teachers' mean for "Singing" was slightly higher (8.1) than that of UK trained teachers (6.1), and also for Relaxation (8.6 vs. 7.1), detailed analysis of interviewing revealed that both the UK and Russian trained teachers valued Legato, Voicing, Weight and Depth of sound as equally important. The results show that in addition to Relaxation, "singing" and sound vibration featured most prominently in the lessons of Russian trained teachers. An observation of a lesson of a Vietnamese trained teacher revealed that this student received the least technical demonstrations. Of some importance in Table 6.4 below is the fact that the standard deviations in each case are quite low indicating that there was certain unanimity across the responses of each group.

Question 48: How did your teacher teach you to have a powerful sound on a grand piano?

The interviews revealed that Russian and UK trained teachers are very effective in teaching students how to have a powerful sound on a grand piano. The following response of a student of a UK trained teacher is a very interesting description about their teachers' approach.

> "This was very valuable for getting the weight technique that he advocated, achieving a real feeling for depth of sound. He said that I need to learn the feeling of weight. That is the sound has to have weight behind it."

Two students' depictions of their Russian trained teacher's approach are even more revealing:

> "He had a grand sound. His whole body was used. When necessary, each joint of the body could participate so that strength came from the shoulders, stomach or back."

> "He keeps asking us to play to the bottom of the key. He advises us to use the weight of the arm. We need to have great reflexes for extending the arms out and back quickly. He played with force but without hardness or stiffness. He always told me that I need to use natural weight, not forced. He also made us work to get the arm to absorb the shock of the attack."

These interesting comments were made by the students of UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers during the interviews regarding how to produce a powerful sound on the piano. It was clear that weight technique and depth of sound were highly valued by both Russian and UK trained teachers. These comments reflect a teaching approach characteristic of, and common to, both Russian and UK trained teachers.

Question 49: How did your teacher teach you to play legato, voicing? Please explain briefly.

Legato is an important point to mention in piano technique. The interviews with the students revealed many interesting points of methodology used by Russian and UK trained teachers in how to achieve effective legato, voicing and singing tone. The responses of students of UK and Russian trained teachers expressed very similar views on legato and voicing. This may reflect the fact that there is clear consensus about matters of legato and voicing among both Russian and UK trained teachers. They both used valuable methods that are sophisticated and systematic. While the students of Vietnamese trained teachers revealed that their teachers only explained legato orally with very little demonstration on the piano and advice them to phrase the music, the following responses of the students of Russian trained teachers are expressed:

> "My teacher is wonderful for teaching legato. He dwelled on how to make a perfect legato and how to bring out the top notes in a series of chords. He showed us how to use slow, supple movements just like a singer might vocalize."
>
> "To have a really good legato, my teacher advised me not to practice with pedal. He said that if you play a melodic line or octaves using the pedal, it is not really legato. Even in octave passages, you have to find a place where one finger tenses and goes into the next finger in a real legato. Let your fingers do their jobs without using the pedal."
>
> "My teacher advises me to sing the melody and imagine the sound in my mind before playing it".
>
> "He wants us to sense articulation, legato, voicing from inside the hand, not from outside. He prefers rather flat fingers than high fingers."

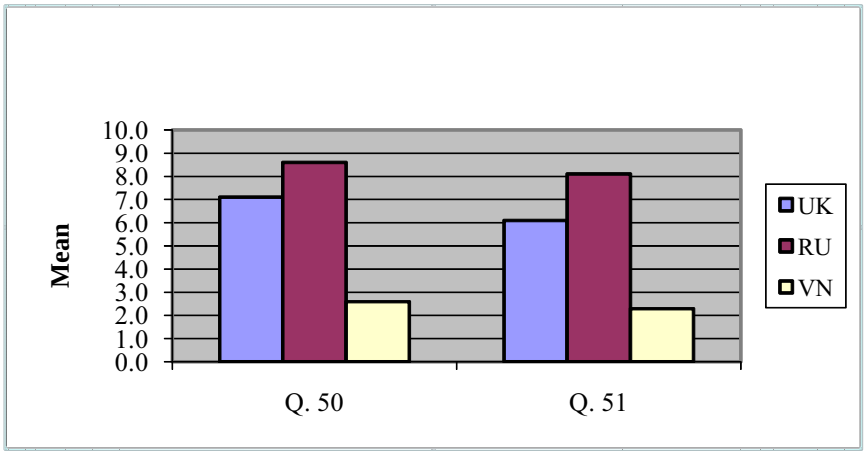
Like students of Russian trained teachers, the students of UK trained teachers expressed a similar point of view about their teacher's legato teaching using flat fingers. For example, one student of a UK trained teacher commented as follows:

"I learnt from my teacher the idea of playing broad, singing melodies with a relaxed wrist and flat, cushioned fingers. Every note in the music is meaningful, even grace- notes and the little notes in Chopin's figures."

Table 6.4 *Factor 4*

Questions	Mean	S.D.	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 50: Did your teacher mention about the importance of relaxation and how to apply it to touch and tone?	UK=7.1 RU=8.6 VN=2.6	UK= 1.0 RU= 1.5 VN=0.89	UK v RU p<0.0164 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 51: Did your teacher ever ask you to make the piano "sing"?	UK= 6.1 RU= 8.1 VN= 2.3	UK= 0.900 RU= 0.723 VN= 1.42	UK v RU p<0.0003 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001

Figure 6.10 *Proportions of teacher/student talk, comparing the three groups*



Question 50: Did your teacher mention about the importance of relaxation and how to apply it to touch and tone?

Instrumental music students are often not strictly aware of how they use their bodies when playing instruments, although both posture and relaxation have an enormous impact on their ability to produce a beautiful sound. Bruser (1997) states that:

> "Much frustration is caused by inefficient use of the body. Instrumental or vocal technique that goes against principles of healthy posture and movement creates unnecessary tension, which inhibits musical expression." (p. 10).

Similarly, Kochevitsky claimed that:

> "Any unnecessary muscle contraction will prevent us from achieving a skilful and natural execution. Our whole playing apparatus . . . and this includes not only the arm and the muscles of the back but also the feet in operating the pedals must be absolutely free in its movements and in its inner muscular functions…In our motor activity there is a constant interchange of contraction and relaxation of muscles… For piano technique, the short - lasting muscle contractions are of particular importance."

Kochevitsky (1967, pp. 38-39)

This question is intended to examine how the teachers in this study value the importance of muscular relaxation and how they apply it in their teaching. It appears that the UK and Russian trained teachers in this study value free and natural movement in piano playing highly, as indicated by the high means (7.1 and 8.6 respectively). The Vietnamese trained teachers were rated much lower (m=2.6), suggesting that the students of Vietnamese teachers received less attention from their teachers regarding relaxation and how to use a more physical approach naturally. The following is a typical response from students of Russian trained teachers:

> "My teacher always stresses the importance of physical relaxation at the piano. He explained that the body must be neither too tight nor too loose while playing. He also told me that many students including me exerted more muscular force than the music required."

The above comment is similar to the Bruser's (1997) judgement that when the body is loose and open inside, it serves as a resonating chamber for the sound produced by the instrument. The music vibrates freely within you because you are not constricted. These

unrestricted vibrations in the body travel back into the instrument and create a full, rich sound. Likewise, two students of UK trained teachers described how relaxation was taught in their piano lesson:

> "She taught us to play with relaxation in the arms, using rather exaggerated movements to free them up and get real souplesse. Sometimes she showed me how to play the chord with a relatively relaxed arm and shoulder which gives more power to the movement than occurs employing a tight muscle".

> "We have to use different muscles for different volume of sonority and give them sufficient time for rest. For example, when you play a long difficult passage or trills, you need to change the position of your wrist by raising and lowering it to get the muscles rest."

This view is in accordance with Kochevitsky's (1967) simple illustration in which he said that in our everyday motor activity, it is more tiring to stand for a long time than to walk. In walking, muscle work is redistributed between various muscle groups. The fatigue will be reduced with the help of small movements, such as transferring our weight from one leg to the other.

The interview with the students uncovered how the students of UK and Russian trained teachers were taught to use the body in a comfortable and natural way. Obviously, completely natural movements in playing piano require thorough teaching extending far beyond the scope of a music score.

Question 51: Did your teacher ever ask you to make the piano "sing"?

Subjects were asked to rate to what extent they experienced their teachers asking them to make the piano "sing". The results reveal that the students of Russian and UK trained teachers were often asked to highlight the singing tone in piano playing (Russian m=8.1; UK m=6.1). In contrast, little evidence concerning making the piano "sing" was found in Vietnamese trained teachers' lessons (m=2.3). The standard deviations are low in the responses in each group. For example, 0.9 for UK trained teachers, 0.7 for

Russian trained teachers and 1.4 for Vietnamese trained teachers, suggesting that there was not a lot of variation in the responses in each group.

Responses from students of Russian trained teachers emphasize this point:

> "My teacher's main interest was a singing tone and clarity of fingertips. She talked about the need for a singing, expressive sound. She suggested me to make the piano speak or sing. These were things that I most needed at my age."
>
> "The singing line was especially important to my teacher. He had really expressive colour in his playing."
>
> "My teacher always said while I was playing that I need to vibrate the melody."

Question 54: What did your teacher do to help you improve both musically and technically? Please explain briefly. What do you think you gained from your teacher?

The interviews revealed that most of the students of both UK and Russian trained teachers agree that their teachers' approach is quite effective and sophisticated in this regard. It appears that the belief that musical development and technical development, which should go hand in hand, is strongly recommended by both Russian and UK trained teachers. In other words, Russian trained teachers and UK trained teachers agree that any aspect of technique is governed by the musical content. The following response of UK trained teacher's student illustrates this point:

> "My teacher keeps asking me not to remove the musical meaning from whatever I am going over".

Another student of UK trained teacher said similarly:

> "My teacher made it clear that you cannot solve musical problems without solving technical problems and the reverse. Both have to be done in order to really know a piece. For him, technique and the music are the same for him in any case."

Likewise, the student's description of his Russian trained teacher is also revealing:

> "My teacher advised me that I should not look at the passage only from its only technical aspect, but also from a musical one. She also said that I always need to make music. Even if it is a technically difficult passage, I should look at it not, for example, as a fast tempo but as a musical passage and not as a technical one."

As indicated in the above examples, the UK trained teachers' views on musical and technical aspects are very similar on most points to those of the Russian trained teachers' views. The similarities may reflect the fact that there is great consensus about the link between musical content and technique among both UK and Russian trained teachers.

An interesting comment was made by the student of Russian trained teacher during the interviews regarding her teacher's emotional approach to help improve her performance:

> "In romantic works, she asked me to look for moments that were equivalent to sorrow, happiness, or whatever emotions seem appropriate. And she taught me to be able to identify both the most dramatic and the most tranquil moments in a performance."

This quotation exemplifies how music expression is transmitted from teacher to student. Meanwhile, Russian trained teachers also want to develop their students' technique along with a balance of musical expression. The following explanations by students of Russian trained teachers are good examples illustrating their approach:

> "Another important and positive aspect of his teaching was him having us maintain a certain amount of technical work which is full of musical images. I remember that my teacher assigned Liszt's Paganini Etudes for me to practice. At first it was nearly unplayable but then that helped me make great progress in improving the quality of my fingertips. He also makes me to do some Chopin etudes and a Bach prelude and fugue each week."

> "Musically, she wants to minimize my tendency to express overly romantic lingering. For example, in Chopin instead of being too lingering and sentimental, she wants my playing to move forward. She encourages students to use a lot of imagination."

When asked what they gained from their teachers, one student who studied with both Russian trained teacher and UK trained teacher commented:

> "I consider myself lucky to have had a number of teachers from different backgrounds and cultures to have received such varied technical advice and have been exposed to many points of view. I think that this has been good for me, for I have been able to make a synthesis of it all and make something unique out of it".

Other students admitted that their teacher formed them in term of technical skills and musical passion. It was clear that students' perception as to the importance of both musical and technical development as vital ingredients in achieving a successful performance were influenced by their teacher's attitudes and behaviours.

FACTOR 5: LISTENING (1 QUESTION)

Question 30: How important is going to a concert or listening to others playing?

Question 30 asks about the students' awareness and their views about how important they think going to a concert or listening to others playing might be for their own development. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the student responses classified by their teachers trained in each of the three countries ($p<0.0001$). Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) showed significant differences between each country for this factor: between UK and Vietnam ($p=0.0001$); between Russia and Vietnam ($p=0.0001$), but no notable difference was found between the responses from students of UK and Russia trained teachers ($p=0.5941$). This suggests that students of UK and Russian trained teachers are more likely than students of Vietnamese trained teachers to identify features that relate to listening.

It appears that the importance of listening and attending a concert is highly valued by students of Russian and UK trained teachers. Teachers trained in the UK and Russia are very positive about the role of listening, with a mean of 8.5 and 8.1 respectively, whereas those trained in Vietnam appear to be the opposite with a mean of 1.4. The results from students' responses revealed that the students of UK and Russian trained teachers were more likely to encourage attendance at concerts and listening to the recordings. The following explanations from two students of UK trained teacher in this study illustrate this point:

> "Listening to some recordings and to some concerts helped me to decide and also imagining that the piece was orchestrated. I imagined the upper notes would have been played by woodwind instruments and this helped me to know how to approach them."

> "Listening to the concert in addition to other recordings helped me in my understanding of the music."

Similarly, the following responses of the students of Russian trained teachers, extracted from an interview, demonstrate how the students value the benefit of listening:

> "I love listening to the recordings. It is fascinating to hear music of a good model playing a piece as a complete work. Because when you practice alone, you just play only one of many parts, thus you could not hear the whole thing."

> "I must say that most of my ideas about pedalling, including half pedals and flutter pedals came from listening to the model and recordings."

As indicated in the comments above, these students recognised the importance of listening. It might also create motivation. The beautiful sounds and phrasing of a favourite and inspiring piece of music make them love the sound and eager to play, as well as instilling a long- lasting wish to play it. Being enthusiastic listeners, they are more likely to express feelings of excitement about particular items. This stimulates the students to develop quickly.

FACTOR 6: TEACHER CONTROL (1 QUESTION)

Question 34: Did your teachers lead you through collaboration and discussion rather than just telling them to do things and follow their order?

There were important differences among teachers in how they regarded their own role in the piano lessons. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). Post Hoc tests (Scheffé) showed significant differences between each country, between UK and Vietnam ($p=0.0001$), between Russia and Vietnam ($p=0.0001$), between UK and Russia ($p=0.0001$). This indicates that the Russian, Vietnamese and UK trained teachers each lead the lessons quite differently.

The results reveal a striking contrast. The UK trained teachers showed a very high score with a mean of 8.1, but the responses from students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers have much lower scores with a mean of only 3.7 and 0.87 respectively. This indicates the Russian and especially the Vietnamese trained teachers tend to dominate the dialogue in the lessons to a greater extent as compared to those trained in the UK. The rating scale (0–10) has a midpoint 5.0 so the UK mean was well above halfway point while the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers' means were well below.

It was perhaps to be expected that the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers would be particularly dominant in the lessons devoted to Technique, an area in which expert instruction would be seem to them to be crucial. The findings from lesson observations of these teachers show that on average, over twenty nine lessons, 95% of all dialogue came from the teachers to ask the students to do things, leaving only 5% to be contributed by students. In the first month of semester, the Area of Study which was dominant in the piano lessons was found to be Technique and getting the notes right, with an average of 77 % of all dialogue in the same lessons, devoted to that area. Students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers responded to Question 34 as follows:

> "My teacher is generally a very dominating teacher. She wants me to be compliant to her suggestions and solutions she provides me with. I have very little opportunity to express my own idea and opinions"

> "I am overwhelmed by a never-ending flow of hints, tips and suggestions by my teacher. He shows me how to do things better and more correctly. I am supposed to imitate him as much as I can. I nearly do not talk during my lesson except for saying something like "good morning or goodbye"."

> "My critical questions are never welcomed. Sometimes I have something that I want to clarify and learn more. But my teacher is not happy because she thinks that I do not trust her teaching. My teacher's way of playing is dominating and I am supposed to internalise it before I can question this mode of playing."

In contrast to these responses, students of UK trained teachers responded to Question 34 as follows:

> "My teacher behaves as a professional adviser. She allows me to engage in a verbal and musical dialogue where I am able to present my own ideas, my music I wish to play. She never wants to push me. I feel that there is a co-operative interaction between my teacher and me."

> "I like to go to my piano lessons where I can get advice and feedback on my learning from my teacher. She is very nice."

The responses from the students reveal that there were significant differences in the behaviour amongst teachers, with the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers assuming a more authoritarian role in the piano lessons than the UK teachers. Many of the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers rarely tolerate students' different opinions, so the students had to learn to accept it. In addition to students' responses, the lesson observations in this study also confirm that Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers attempted to exert more control over their lessons than UK trained teachers. In the lessons of Russian trained teachers, some of them speak loudly giving directions to the students while they are playing. They ensured that their student understood what they want and would not accept any other views.

FACTOR 7: OTHER INFLUENCE (1 QUESTION)

Question 45: To what extent have other persons than teachers influenced the development of your practice behaviour during your study at the academy?

Discussion

As Suzuki (1969) repeatedly pointed out environment is one of the key factors in the apparent success of the method. Every single human being's personality - his ability, his way of thinking and feeling - is shaped by circumstances and environment. Part of this environment includes the presence of not only teachers but also family members and peers who are crucial in maintaining high achievement levels.

The aim of this part is to examine to what extent other persons than teachers influenced the development of students' practice. ANOVA showed a significant difference between the three countries ($p<0.095$). Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$) and between UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.03$), but no difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.50$). Therefore, one can assume that students of the UK trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers have something in common in relation to the influence from other sources.

The results revealed the highest mean scores for the students of Vietnamese trained teachers ($m=7.0$) suggesting most of them experience influences from family or friends regarding practice behaviour. Similarly, the students of UK trained teachers reported a mean of 6.2. However students of Russian trained teachers show quite a low mean of 4.8, suggesting that the students of Russian trained teachers display lower influences from other persons than their teacher as compared to the students of UK and Vietnamese trained teachers.

Family influences

The students of UK and Vietnamese trained teachers found that parents influence them in many ways, and the particular kinds of support parents provide and their continuous availability to cater for the student's needs have a significant influence on the student's

accomplishments during their academic study. Family involvement of parents, sisters or brothers seems to be a vital determinant of whether a student succeeds in learning music. One of the most important findings on the role of parent in child learning is demonstrated in a study by Sloboda and Howe (1991) who found that children who cease music lessons often have parents who have little involvement in the child's learning. This means that children with a high level of musical aptitude or potential will be disadvantaged if the involvement of parents is lacking. Suzuki says in his book "Nurtured by Love" (1969),

> "Children have to adapt to manifold environments and are brought up in superior or inferior surroundings depending on their parents" (p.24)

Parental involvement in practice will have a great effect on a student's progress. This is because much of the activity that determines an individual's level of achievement takes place at home during practice session. Bigler and Lloyd-Watts (1979) comment that even students who are less well coordinated, but are strongly supported by their parents, can eventually do very well because an important factor in the success of the program is the support the student receives at home. Therefore, it is predicted that the highest achieving young musicians will have parents who are highly involved in students practice. Practice with the parent also provides the student with a model of practice, assisting them to establish self-structured working patterns that can be employed when the student begins to work independently. Parents also give encouragement to them by reacting positively to their child's effort and give praise sincerely even over a small accomplishment.

The students of UK and Vietnamese trained teachers in this current study stated that both their parent and sister or brother often listen to their practice, and that they would "encourage by watching or singing along." This family support was more evident in the students of UK and Vietnamese trained teachers, suggesting that practice was clearly an activity in which the whole family was involved, as more than one student of UK trained teacher stated:

> "My mom always encouraged for each step I took during my learning process. This makes me feel eager to try another step until I reach the desired result in the practice session".

> "My parent was in the room for the whole session. They listened to me practising, asking what pieces I was playing, and made appreciative, encouraging comments"

These examples demonstrate how the parents maintain enthusiasm and provide encouragement to their child. This kind of closeness meets the child's emotional needs and is building security and confidence in practice. The student is free to learn and accept any learning experience as a pleasant challenge. They are free to become the best that their potential allows. This is in accord with findings which have shown that "even the most able individuals find it hard to motivate themselves to rigorous practice, and that role of the parents is absolutely crucial in this respect" (Sloboda *et al.*., 1996, p. 308).

It is clear that the family plays an all-important role in the production of young musicians. The final point that should be mentioned regarding family involvement is support from the older brother or sister. A response from another student in this study reveals that her older brother took on a guiding role, suggesting a way of expressing music. This guidance sometimes moved toward a teaching role, as demonstrated in the following episode:

> **Brother**: That did not sound beautiful. Can you start again?
>
> **Student**: (another attempt)
>
> **Brother**: You have not done that piece for a while, have you? You should play it more expressively. I think it requires you to convey a greater depth of emotion. This Nocturne has a melody which seems to speak equally of bitterness of regret and the sweetness of memory.

This extract demonstrates the brother's expertise at controlling his sister's perseverance. The older brother carried on with this teaching role until his sister played better. This

brother is able to provide a listening role and comments to enable his sister to play with greater emotional involvement.

Although the family members play an important role in the practice session, McPherson and Davidson (2002) have found that there is often a strong decline in parental participation over the years. This finding is consistent with the results from the interviews of the present study. Many of the students in this study stated feelings similar to the following. For example, a student of a Vietnamese trained teacher expresses:

> "The older I get the more I would prefer to be left unsupervised practice by my parents. I want to practise on my own. With unfamiliar pieces, I do not think that my parents could give much useful comments on my playing"

Another student of a Russian trained teacher said:

> "No question that I had been influenced a lot from my family. They formed my musical interest in practice from the very early age. However I feel more independent now in my musical learning, although my family still are very concerned with my musical progress and support me whenever I need."

It seems from the present findings that when the students move to a higher level of musical skills, the lack of domain-specific knowledge of musical practising often restricts parents' involvement in their children practice. The interviews conducted with the students demonstrate that the role of parents was mostly restricted to listening and making encouraging comments and the students were aware of their parents' limitations in providing specific help for them. Next to family, peers seem to exercise the most direct involvement in the student's musical development.

Peer influences

The students of UK trained teachers seem to value the opinion and influence of their friends. They appreciate advice from their peers and the benefit of playing together with them in ensemble. The discussion broadened at this point and some interesting points regarding ensemble playing arose:

> **Student A:** Some problems such as performance anxiety and a shaky run-through on the stage arose from lack of confidence, so I think ensemble playing with peers can be very beneficial. When performing within an ensemble such as a quartet, I felt pleased relying on each other well, connecting in playing and support efficiently for one another. My confidence and relaxation were enhanced and the performance become very encouraging, went well, and was much smoother.

The importance of trust and confidence while performing is evident in student A's response. She thought that uncomfortable feelings such as nervousness, which she was possibly affected by during performance, could disappear in ensemble playing. She found that she could rely on her peers and they could support each other during their ensemble performance. She believed that each member of the quartet relates effectively to one another. She also noted that the performance grew in confidence and nervousness had not been transmitted to her from the others.

The following points in relation to obtaining advices from peers were made by another student of a UK teacher:

> **Student B**: Peer assessment can be very useful in the sense that it provides feedback in order to help each other's performance. My friend could discuss and suggest a useful way that helped me to learn from mistakes.

This view is similar with that expressed in the "Self and Peer Assessment Workshop", the author attended at the Royal College of Music in June 2001 in which "peer assessment of the performances would be conducted by students attending the open rehearsal and evening concert as auditors". Approaches to peer assessment were outlined and discussed. Peer assessment facilitates and articulates their views clearly and constructively with positive comments and detailing things that could be improved (Hunter, 2004, pp. 176, 178). At an Open Rehearsal with the Chilingirian Quartet on Tuesday, 5 June 2001

> "...the performance provided the opportunity to carry out some self and peer assessment. Each performer was given the self-

> assessment form and each student member of the audience was supplied with a peer-assessment form. All performers felt that the session with the Chilingirians was beneficial, encouraging and insightful and useful. They noted the value of obtaining advice from the complete quartet, thus benefiting form a range of perspectives."
>
> Hunter (2004, p. 179)

FACTOR 8: TEACHER CRITICISM (1 QUESTION)

Question 47: Did your teacher ever tell you that you did not have sufficient power in making "elemental force", big sound?

Sonority and powerful sounds are important aspects of piano performance training. The purpose of this part is to examine the extent to which the teachers in this study required their students to have sufficient power in making big sounds. Comparison of the most popular responses from the students shows some striking differences. Indeed, the students of Russian trained teachers reported that their teachers' opinion was that they did not produce a powerful enough sound in their playing (m=7.0). In contrast, the students of Vietnamese trained teachers and UK trained teachers reported the opposite (m=3.1 and 3.4 respectively). They indicated that volume of sound requiring maximum force was less demanded by Vietnamese trained teachers or UK trained teachers. The following response from student of Vietnamese trained teacher illustrates this point:

> "My teacher was not overly critical. He was not in favour of the idea of weight playing or loud playing."

However, the students of Russian trained teachers revealed contrasting requirements from their teachers:

> "Sonority interests my teacher very much. She said that I did not have a enough big sound for a climax. She talked about arm weight

> for a bigger sound. She taught the importance of using the weight of loose arms, and how to use their muscles for greater strength."
>
> "My teacher told me that my sound was thin and she hated a thin sound. She knows how to develop a big sound without banging. She stresses the importance of using the shoulder and the need for relaxation."
>
> "I know that I am not powerful for a big climax in music. To help me, my teacher provided a very good synthesis that involved the back and shoulder, not just the fingers."

FACTOR 9: LESSON ATTENDANCE (2 QUESTIONS)

(1 verbal, 1 number)

Question 41: How often do you go to piano lesson? (Verbal answer)

Question 42: Is it compulsory to follow regular/weekly lesson? (Numerical answer)

Question 41: How often do you go to piano lesson?

The role of pedagogic structure in maintaining high practice levels is also indicated through the fact that individuals doing the most practice tend also to have the most weekly time in the presence of a teacher (Sloboda *et al.*., 1996, p. 307). The interviews with the students in this study reveal that the majority of students can make weekly lessons. Only a few students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers do not attend at the beginning of semester when they have had nothing to bring to the lessons or they have not practised properly.

Question 42: Is it compulsory to follow regular/weekly lesson?

Regular lessons every week with teacher instruction help students to constantly progress as compared to self practicing. Regular attendance in piano lessons also helps students develop their performance efficiently. The regulation of the conservatoires in Vietnam

requires students to be present on the prescribed dates, for example, twice a week attendance for piano lessons.

FACTOR 10: PRACTICE TIME (2 QUESTIONS)

Question 57: On average, how long per day do you spend for practicing? (Verbal answer)

Question 58: Do you spend more time on technical exercises, passages than on musical interpretation? (Numerical answer)

Question 57: On average, how long per day do you spend for practicing?

Practising is a major element of a student's musical training. In order for students to make substantial progress as successful students, it is essential for them to acquire the ability to practice regularly and effectively. Bigler and Lloyd-Watts (1979) affirm that daily practice helps to make the repertoire as familiar as one's own name and that established habits help to carry the student through plateaus that occur in the learning process. There was a strong relationship between musical achievement and the amount of formal practice undertaken. High achievers tended to be more consistent in their pattern of practice from week to week (Sloboda *et al..,* 1996).

Daily Practice

The results from the interviews revealed that the students differed significantly in the reported average daily amount of time spent practising. The students of Russian trained teachers did significantly more practice than the other two groups. It is notable that the students of Russian trained teachers undertook, on average, almost four times as much practice than the students of Vietnamese trained teachers, and around twice as much practice than the students of UK trained teachers. Not only do the students of Russian trained teachers do more practice than other students, but they also devoted a large proportion of this practice to technical exercises. The following explanation from a student who had a Vietnamese trained teacher before moving to a Russian trained teacher illustrates this point:

> "When I studied with teacher L, I used to practise two hours per day and there was a day I did not practice at all. But this year I moved to a higher grade and have a new teacher. With this new teacher, I practise for an average of four hours a day. The work I am now given in each lesson requires me to practice more."

Similar responses of five students of other Russian trained teachers were as follows:

> "Because of the works assigned by my teacher, I need to practise at least five to six hours per day, if I do not have to attend other classes at the conservatoire. I spend every free moment I have to practise."

> "I practice every day, no matter what else I have to do. I think I am ambitious. I want to prove something and the best way to do it is practicing. Well… I practice around 8 hours per day, sometimes maybe ten hours, in the morning, in the afternoon and at night also. My teacher looked happy when I prepared well for the lessons."

> "I practice because my teacher insisted on it and I do not have the fear of being unprepared."

> "My teacher's technical regimen requires at least four to five hours daily."

> "I practice 6 hours sometimes, because now I graduated high school so I have more free time for my piano."

As indicated in the above interesting comments made by the Vietnamese students of Russian trained teachers during the interviews regarding their practice time, the work they assigned required a tremendous amount of time, attention and self-discipline from the student. The teachers did not hesitate to show their frustration when a student did not meet their standards for any given lesson. But when the student played well, their satisfaction and pleasure were apparent. Perhaps it seems that practice time was enforced. At the very least four hours of practice time per day was likely to be a required minimum because their teachers tended to practice more than six hours a day when they studied in Russia. It was clear that students' perception as to the amount of

practice time was influenced by their teacher's attitudes, behaviours and Russian experiences.

The time the students in this study spent practicing varied tremendously. Some of the students of UK trained teachers spent every free moment they had at the piano. Others spent only as much time practicing as was required by a teacher. There were some students who were playing all day long and there were those who did little practicing. For students of Vietnamese trained teachers, preparing for the next lesson typically involved spending somewhere between ninety minutes to two hour a day at the piano. Typical comments of students of Vietnamese trained teachers when asked about practice time were:

> "Oh, not much at all. Maybe four or five times a week for about 2 hours each time."

> "I practice 2 hours every day because I have so many other subjects from school."

The time these students spent at the piano increased dramatically during the period of examinations. A tremendous amount of time then was devoted to practice. For some, it was much closer to a full-time job. This finding is consistent with research by Hallam (1997) who has demonstrated that students tend to increase their level of practice as an examination draws closer (Renwick, 2000, p. 14).

Those who had been practicing one hour to two hours a day began spending three or four hours a day at the piano. Those who had been practicing three hours a day found themselves working as many as six and half when examinations loomed. However, the subtle change in the quality of practice is more remarkable than just the increase in hours. Practice was no longer just a matter of length, but thought and consideration about the requirements of the music loomed larger. As more than one student reported:

> "When I have to prepare for the examination, my practice grew intensively to five or six hours. I put more thought about what I have to do, what I have to prepare to improve my performance and how to memorize the whole program."

> "I spent a great deal of time practising in preparation for recitals, exams and competitions."

Question 58: Do you spend more time on technical exercises, passages than on musical interpretation?

Technical practice is a vital ingredient of piano playing skills. Technical practising on its own may be insufficient to produce the highest levels of mastery at piano performance. Despite this problem, music researchers have directed little attention toward identifying the optimal amount of time that a student should devote to practising technique as compared to practising musical interpretation.

The results of the analysis of practice behaviour in this study are presented in this part. The findings have shown large differences in practice behaviour between individuals. ANOVA showed a significant difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$) in the proportion of time spent on technical exercises and musical interpretation. Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) confirmed that the students of Vietnamese trained teachers differed significantly from the students of Russian and UK trained teachers. Comparisons of countries show a significant difference between the students of UK and those of Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.007$), and between Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), but no difference was observed between the students of UK and the students of Russian trained teachers. The results suggest that the students of Vietnamese trained teachers spent a greater proportion of their time on scales and technical exercises than the students of Russian and UK trained teachers (m =5.1 vs. 3.0 and 3.0 respectively). Exercises, scales and arpeggios are given special attention in lessons of Vietnamese trained teachers. During the high school years of the conservatory, the backbone of daily work in their lessons comprises exercises including scales and arpeggio passages played in any key at various rates of speed, and with different degrees of dynamic force. These were always put into rhythmic form and metre, sometimes in triple, quadruple time in many varieties, were invariably indicated by means of accentuation. And teachers indicated that they should never be mechanical or uninteresting.

In contrast, the students of Russian and UK trained teachers were found to take a mixed, more balanced approach. However there was a large discrepancy found between the mean scores and that which the student of Russian trained teachers reported using one-to-one interviews. For example, the mean score of students of Russian trained teachers for question 58 indicating the proportion of time spent on technical exercises as opposed to musical interpretation was very low (m=3.0) suggesting that they spent more time on musical interpretation. However, detailed analysis of the verbal responses from the interviews of students of Russian trained teachers revealed that fifty-eight per cent of the time had a technical orientation with an emphasis on technical exercises like practising more etudes. However, they clearly viewed etudes as not simply technical work but also as musical interpretation, which may account for this anomaly. The following explanations from responses of the students of Russian trained teachers in this study illustrate this point:

> "I did a great deal of technique. I have always worked hard on all etudes and exercises which my teacher got me to do. In the running passages, the sense of music is always my concern. I have learned from my teacher the new way of thinking about music, ways that went far beyond the usual considerations of fingers."
>
> "I do a lot of technical works such as Chopin's, Liszt's and Rachmaninoff's etudes but I practise them within the context of the music."

Though there were differences between different students, the observations on their practice revealed that the content of practice of the students of Russian trained teachers had progressed to more musical interpretation, but was still dominated by technical work for 76 % of time they spent playing. Despite students' insistence in the interviews that Russian trained teachers stressed the importance of musical interpretation, including such pieces as Chopin Nocturnes, this aspect made up only 24 % of their time they spent playing.

Table 6.5 *Daily amount and proportions of different types of playing/practice done by the three groups shown as percentages of their total practice time*

	Students of Vietnamese trained teachers	**Students of Russian trained teachers**	**Students of UK trained teachers**
Scales practice	26%	18%	8.7 %

Technical exercises	49.3 %	58%	43.3 %
Musical pieces	24.7 %	24 %	48%

The content of practice observed in the practice of students of Vietnamese trained teachers was dominated to a surprising degree by playing scales, technical work (76%) or repertoire from notation. There was a significant difference between students in the amount of time spent practising technique alone. The observation revealed that the students of Vietnamese trained teachers averaged approximately three times as much practicing scales than those of UK trained teachers.

The interviews also revealed that the students of Vietnamese trained teachers did significantly more practice than the other two groups on scales. In the practice sessions of students of Vietnamese trained teachers, 26 % of the practice was spent on scales. Of the remaining time, two-thirds was spent playing technical works, and one-third was spent on musical pieces. This technical orientation may be explained by the influences from Russian piano teachers visiting and teaching at Hanoi Conservatory during the years 1970 - 1980. They gave some master classes to Vietnamese trained teachers in Vietnam. As a result, those Vietnamese trained teachers have transmitted what they were taught by Russian teachers to their current Vietnamese students. As revealed in the following response from a student of Vietnamese trained teacher:

> "Practice became very carefully scheduled, because I would have a way to practice things like approximately one hour and half on technical exercises, passages, scales, and the rest of time on musical interpretation."

Despite the large difference in the mean ratings of the students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers (m=3.0 and m=5.1 respectively), their predominant approach to practising and content of practice retained a highly technical orientation such as playing scales and exercises. One possible explanation for this tendency may be related to the current curriculum of the Hanoi Conservatoire which has a technical orientation more resembling the Russian curriculum during the 1980s in some respects, as illustrated in the following response from both students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers:

> "In the first haft of semester, we are required to play technical works including Bach's Preludes and Fugues and the etudes in the regular test. So we devote most of our time to practicing these pieces. Only after this time, do we spend more time for a larger works such as sonatas or concertos."

As indicated in the above, the content of the practice sessions of the students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers consisted almost exclusively of technical works. In these sessions, only etudes and Bach's preludes and fugues were practised, along with scales and arpeggios. Similar responses were found among the students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers. When asked, in the same interview, what she considered the most important thing to do when practising, one student of a Vietnamese trained teacher stated that it was to "improve technique":

> "I got much of a daily technical regime. I always did hours and hours of technique every day."

The students of UK trained teachers regard musical interpretation as an important aspect and a crucial component of a successful performance. They reported spending on average 48 % of their total practice time on expressivity and musical interpretation. When asked about how much time they would like to spend on expressivity, they reported wanting to spend 68 % on average, so the difference between actual time spent and time ideally spent was significant, although there were large individual differences. The results indicate that many students of UK trained teachers would like to spend more time on expressive skills than they do. As illustrated in the two typical responses from the students of UK trained teachers:

> "I like to spend more and more time on expressive skills to prepare for and try out the role of the pianist in increasingly more sophisticated and significant ways."

> "At the higher grade levels the achievement of satisfactory marks requires more than technical mastery of the notes, so I think expressive musicianship is also very important not only in examination success but also in the professional lives of conservatory level instrumental music students."

These views are similar to those expressed in the "Teachers' view on expressivity" (Lindstrom *et al..*, 2003), in which 51 instrumental music teachers from music conservatoires in Sweden and England were asked to fill out a questionnaire that focused on the issues of musical expressivity. The results

> "...suggest that teachers at music conservatoires spend a considerable portion of their time teaching expressive skills. It may be that consistent calls for more emphasis on expressive skills have had an effect. Finally, the teachers stressed the importance of addressing expressive aspects in instrumental music education early on."
>
> Laukka (2004, p. 53)

This teachers' view is in accord with the present findings of this study that the students of UK trained teacher spent a higher proportion of their session practising on musical interpretation. These similarities perhaps reflect the fact that UK trained teachers have been influential in transmitting their views on the subject of expressivity to the students. There was some evidence of musical interpretation emerging in the practice of the students of UK trained teachers as they demonstrated in the interview:

> "The expressive and interpretative skills deserve a lot of my attention during my practice. I need to understand what the composer wants and what is his musical style and be able to make the piece with emotions and feelings."

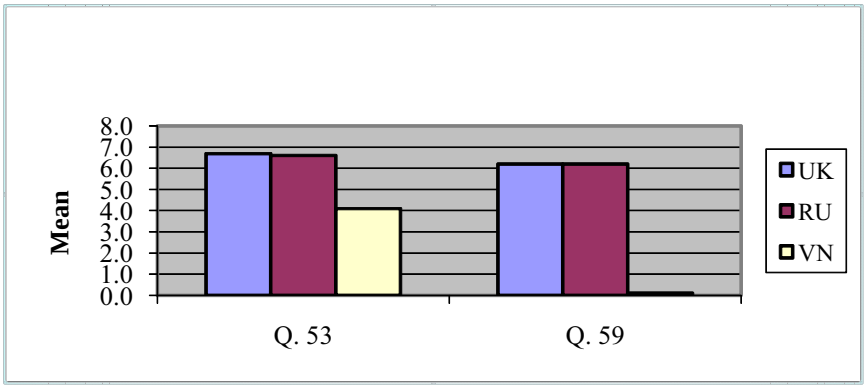
Thus, the behaviour of students of UK trained teachers regarding musical interpretation leads to the conclusion that strongly supports the view that expression, interpretation and emotion play an important role in the professional lives of conservatory level instrumental music teachers in the UK (Laukka, 2004).

FACTOR 11: PRACTICAL ADVICE (2 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.6 *Factor 11*

Questions	Mean	S.D.	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 53: Did your teacher suggest any particular practice, technique strategies?	UK=6.7 RU=6.6 VN=4.1	UK=0.7 RU=1.0 VN=1.2	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 59: How often does your teacher encourage you to employ mental practice and apply a variety of analysis strategies?	UK=6.2 RU=6.2 VN=0.1	UK=1.1 RU=1.4 VN=0.3	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001

Figure 6.11 *Factor 11*



Technical strategies in practice are recognised as an important element of musical training. Music educators certainly acknowledge the important of practice strategies - it is a prominent topic in many instructional methods. Consistent trends in practice research indicate that structured and organised practice seems to promote skill acquisition and learning (Santana, 1978). ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$) in terms of teachers' practical advice. Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) showed significant differences between UK vs. Vietnam ($p=0.0001$), Russia vs. Vietnam ($p=0.0001$), but no difference was found between Russia and UK ($p=0.9915$). Aggregating the mean scores for each question produces the following results: UK aggregated means m=13.0, Russian m=12.9 and Vietnam m=4.3, suggesting that Vietnamese trained teachers provided less support in terms of practice strategies than either those trained in the UK and Russia. Table 6.6 provides complete statistics for each question. A detailed commentary on the responses follows.

Question 53: Did your teacher suggest any particular practice, technique strategies?

Post Hoc Sheffe tests from Table 6.6 show that no difference was found between UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers (p=0.9922), suggesting that both UK and Russian trained teachers are aware of the importance of providing strategies to their student, as indicated by means of 6.7 and 6.6 respectively. They spent more time discussing technique strategies than the Vietnamese trained teachers. Indeed, the Vietnamese trained teachers' means were quite low (4.1) suggesting that discussion of practice strategies plays only a minor role in their lessons. The following responses from three students of Vietnamese trained teachers illustrate this point:

> "I did not get any specific exercises from her and she did not have set particular practice about technique. She always says "Practice! Practice!" but she did not say exactly how to technically improve."
>
> "My teacher was preoccupied with our playing the notes, the pulse. She did not talk about pedalling, the arms, how to phrase the music in practicing. And I have to play pieces after pieces, trying to learn the text well."
>
> "She sometimes explained how I should do those things but she did not transmit much what she knew how to do. Her technical advice was limited to fingers only. My teacher always talked about fingering and notation."

It seems likely that the teaching of Vietnamese trained teachers revolved around respect for the text, the pulse, fingers and strictness. They were reasonable when being careful to advise their students to work realistically for details and build up gradually from what their students can do. But piano playing is not just finger technique or being faithful to the text. And a factor of the dominant approach of playing through many pieces and repertoire once, rather than working on one piece until some degree of mastery had been achieved, has not been effective and certainly not marked by the highly structured deliberate technical advice that characterizes the acquisition of expert performance.

In contrast, three students of Russian trained teachers seemed to like their teacher's suggestions as they commented:

> "He redistributed notes between the hands to a greater degree than I had done before, and I think that his advice really works for me because after that I could demonstrate with a huger sound and greater accuracy."

> "I like to follow my teacher's advice about practicing trills with different speeds. She also had an interesting way of developing finger reflexes and touches by having us play each note of a difficult passage: one is lightly staccato and the other is strongly into the keys."

> "I never had a better teacher than him. He suggested me not to use one technique or the same muscles in the same ways. Instead, I should change different techniques and develop many different kinds of attacks depending on different types of works and composers."

The above advices of Russian trained teachers' were concise and helpful that their students would hardly forget. They guided their students how to practice and very clearly outline practice methods to have their students start into serious stuff. Similarly, three students of UK trained teachers expressed their teachers' useful advices:

> "Play fast but never so quick beyond the point that a note does not have time to say its name in passing. You have to try fingering at a fast tempo, to make sure that they work well. You should not practice slowly all the time. Although you have to practice slower than you want to perform, you must be able to play faster than the speed of that piece required."

> "My teacher told me that sometime I cause problems for myself by using uncomfortable positions. He advised me to sit back, letting the arms hang down in a natural, free way. That would help me to produce an interesting sound and avoid stiffness and inaccuracy. Practicing the motion slowly for freedom and security would be good idea too. Later, I can work faster and faster for accuracy and gradually minimize the motions."

> "You should pinpoint the problem and analyse it to discover the motion that uses the least effort."

The above comments of the students of UK trained teachers reveal that their teachers are very methodical. These teachers probably wanted their students to identify the problems, using their brain to find out why it is difficult in order to cope with a difficult passage. They wanted their students to find out if their fingers and their movements are right for that passage and think about right gestures and learn what was physically right for them in the piece which could solve problems quite quickly.

Question 59: How often does your teacher encourage you to employ mental practice and apply a variety of analysis strategies?

Music educators and researchers have increasingly become aware of the importance of the use of mental practice as a worthy area of investigation (Kohut, 1985; Ristad, 1982; Ross, 1985; Sandor, 1981). The students in the present study were asked to rate to what extent they thought their teachers encourage you to employ mental practice and apply a variety of analysis strategies. ANOVA showed a significant difference between the three countries ($p<0.001$). Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between Vietnamese trained teachers and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), but no difference between UK and Russian trained teachers ($p=0.9968$). This finding was reflected in the students' interviews which referred to characteristics common to most of the UK and Russian trained teachers.

The results also revealed very low mean scores for Vietnamese trained teachers suggesting most of Vietnamese trained teachers spent no time or too little time applying mental work as indicated by the mean of 0.15. In contrast, the UK and Russian trained teachers were reported to have the quite high scores. The scores of the UK trained teachers were almost the same as those of Russian trained teachers, as shown by the respective means of 6.286 and 6.256, suggesting that UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers have the same, or very similar, opinions regarding mental work and analysis strategies. The data revealed a variety of teacher behaviours. The Russian and UK trained teachers employed a rich repertoire of mental and analysis strategies ranging from silently reading the score, mental regrouping, and to analysing the polyphonic

structure and metrical rhythmic relationships. One Russian trained teacher gave advice to her students as follows:

> "Your fingers should not move faster than your thoughts which control your fingers on the piano. You need to exercise your mind more because your hand, arm and fingers will obey and adjust exactly what the mind dictates. Your velocity depends on your mental agility."

In contrast, there was almost no evidence of using strategies like mental practice in the practicing of the students of Vietnamese trained teachers. In one interview, one Vietnamese student claimed:

> "I have no idea, no clue as to how to memorize without physically playing."

The above response of this student of Vietnamese trained teacher revealed that mental practice has not been introduced in the lesson of Vietnamese trained teachers. The practicing behaviour of students of Vietnamese trained teachers showed the least concern with mental strategies in the study. The data revealed that there was an absence of mental work generally in the practice strategies of students of Vietnamese trained teachers. The predominant approach of students of Vietnamese trained teachers to practising was simply playing a piece through once and correcting some errors on the way: 69 % of playing time was concerned mostly with the first run-through of a piece. However, this behaviour contrasts with the description of one student of a Vietnamese trained teacher of her own practising methods in the interview:

> "I usually play the piece all the way through first and then came back to fix the parts that had problems. I practise one part at a time."

In terms of strategies, the students of Vietnamese trained teachers practised the pieces almost exclusively using the play-through approach. The study therefore confirms the very low level of mental strategies used by the students of Vietnamese trained teachers.

FACTOR 12: STUDENT EMOTION (1 QUESTION)

Question 60: Are you worried when making mistakes in the class?

Naturally, when making mistakes, students feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. In that case, they really need understanding and sympathetic teachers who are able to provide a relaxing environment to help them overcome some difficulties in their playing.

This part of the present study examines the degree to which the students were worried when making mistakes in the piano lessons and the behaviour of their teachers in response. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). The striking result obtained in response to this question was the significant difference observed between UK and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between UK and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), indicating that the students of UK trained teachers differed considerably from the students of Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers in the way they feel when making mistakes during lessons.

The results revealed the lowest mean scores for the students of UK trained teachers ($m=2.7$) suggesting most of them were given a relaxing learning atmosphere in which they did not feel stressful if they made mistakes while playing in the lessons. One explanation of the student of UK trained teacher illustrated this point:

> "My teacher is very nice and quite tolerant, so I do not feel worried when making mistakes."

Different scenarios were described in the piano lessons of the students of Russian trained teachers

> "I did not feel comfortable when making mistakes because if I make mistakes, my teacher will show her frustration."

> "I do not feel good when my teacher looks apathetic after she tried very hard to make me correct my mistakes."

Similarly, a student of Vietnamese trained teacher expressed:

> "I feel nervous sometimes, because my teacher complained every time I made a mistake or did not prepare well for the lesson."

The above responses illustrate a typical situation faced by the students of Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers when they did not perform properly in their lessons. The higher mean scores for the students of Russian trained teachers (m=4.6) and Vietnamese trained teachers (m=5.7) suggest that they were under emotional pressure in the lessons caused when they were insufficiently prepared for a lesson and by their teachers' responses to their mistakes. The errors in students' playing would lead them to feel stressed. This anxiety might increase the likelihood of making more mistakes. Some suggested that this may have a detrimental effect on the quality of students' learning and might result in the students receiving outcomes that do not accurately reflect their actual level of ability.

A few students of Vietnamese trained teachers also revealed that their teachers would swat their hands every time they missed a note or made a mistake or had a wrong hand position. This created incredible tension within these students. And the result was that it only increased the chance that they would err more. This could distort their functioning in several ways. However, there was no consistent evidence regarding this pedagogical violence observed in the piano lessons of this current study, it was only reported by some.

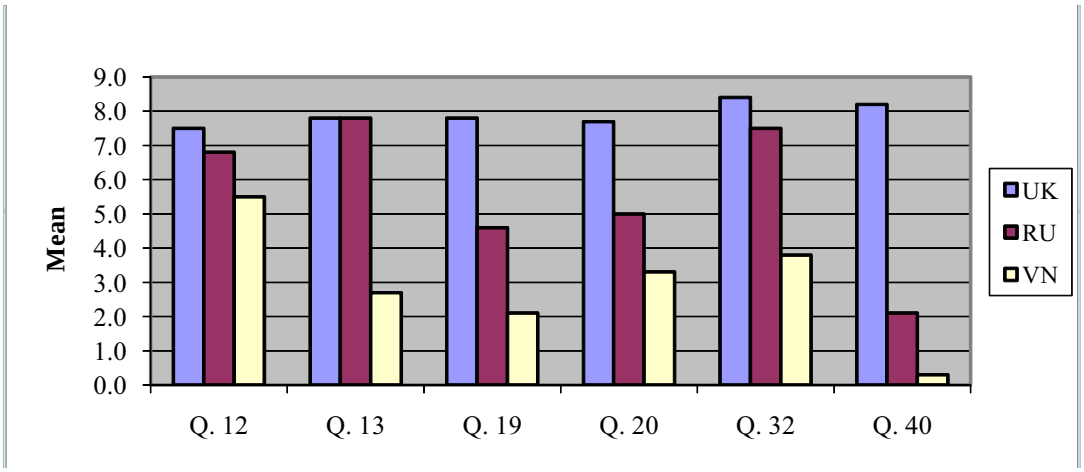
Due to the widespread nature of students' embarrassment when making mistakes, it is felt that a thorough understanding of the processes of teaching and learning and engendering a relaxing learning environment for dealing with this problem are needed. This is certainly worth serious consideration in order to avoid likely psychological damage and potentially destructive results of an approach to pedagogy which might have been invisible to them. Mastery of piano does not automatically make one a good teacher. Teaching skills can be sometimes neglected and left to develop unsystematically in some who focus entirely on their own performance excellence. Some teachers teach with compassion and respect, and who know what and how to offer advice. But others could be gifted in some areas and blind in others. There is a need to change for the better so that teacher and student relationships will flourish in their piano lessons.

FACTOR 13: TEACHER VERBAL AND PLAYING DEMONSTRATION (6 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.7 *Factor 13*

Questions	Mean	S.D.	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 12: Did your teacher analyse his/her own playing to explain to you how the teacher solves a technical problem? (Purpose: Student learn the better way of solving problem for themselves)	UK=7.5 RU=6.8 VN=5.5	UK=0.7 RU=0.9 VN=0.9	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 13: How often does your teacher demonstrate his or her playing?	UK=7.8 RU=7.8 VN=2.7	UK=0.69 RU=0.62 VN=1.06	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 19: Did your teacher give you good information about the background to the style and character of a piece?	UK=7.8 RU=4.6 VN=2.1	UK=0.9 RU=1.4 VN=1.0	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 20: If you knew things were wrong but did not know how to improve them, did your teacher communicate well how to change them for the better in addition to his/her demonstration	UK=7.7 RU=5.0 VN=3.3	UK=0.7 RU=1.9 VN=1.3	UK v RU p<0.0011 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0004
Question 32: Did your teacher convey their ideas clearly?	UK=8.4 RU=7.5 VN=3.8	UK=0.78 RU=0.62 VN=0.74	UK v RU p<0.0111 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 40: Did your teacher describe the whole picture of the piece of music before you actually started learning it?	UK=8.2 RU=2.1 VN=0.3	UK=0.95 RU=1.4 VN=0.5	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001

Figure 6.12 *Factor 13*



The aim of this part of the analysis was to describe teacher demonstration as regards to a verbal explanation and a modelling instruction in an advanced music setting in Hanoi, Russian and UK conservatoires. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) showed significant differences between each country ($p<0.0001$). There are six questions; each has a maximum score of 10 and a midpoint of 5.0. The UK is the most positive with mean scores ranging from 7.5 to 8.4. Russia is quite positive with mean scores ranging from 2.1 to 7.8. But Vietnam is quite negative with mean scores ranging from 0.3 to 5.5. Table 6.7 provides statistics for each question.

Question 12: Did your teacher analyse his/her own playing to explain to you how the teacher solves a technical problem?

As shown in Table 6.7, Russian trained teachers and UK trained teachers were rated highly (m=6.8 and 7.5 respectively) suggesting that they are quite methodical in their teaching as one student of Russian trained teacher commented:

> "My teacher very often asks himself how to do things and explains how to solve a problem, and this helped to make him such a good teacher. He said he used to have a technical problem such as stiffness, and he explained how he overcame it. I learn a lot from him."

The above typical example reveals an effective and beneficial approach that the Russian trained teacher used in the piano lesson. Students could learn a better way of solving problem for themselves through the experiences in problem solving of such a teacher.

Question 13: How often does your teacher demonstrate his or her playing?

In music education, modelling has been shown to affect student's music passion and lead them to appropriate music performance. It has also can be seen as the good treatment for student progress. According to Suzuki music education, what student hears is crucial to his or her musical development (Suzuki, 1969). Sang (1987) found a

strong and significant relationship between modelling activities and student performance.

ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences between the three above countries ($p<0.0001$). They differed in how much demonstration they granted the students in modelling and verbal instruction. The results show that modelling instruction was much more commonly used by UK teachers (m=7.85) and Russian trained teachers (m=7.84) than Vietnamese trained teachers (m=2.7). This modelling instruction was alternations between teacher modelling and student imitations. The teachers acted as the model demonstrating correct rhythm patterns, pitches, styles, articulation, and other elements of music performance. The students responded on the piano. Indeed, the responses from the students of Russian trained teachers and UK teachers showed that their teachers choose modelling strategies and give them more of a prominent role than Vietnamese trained teachers commonly do, as commented by one student who has a Russian graduate teacher:

> "I used to study piano with teacher C who probably never goes out of Vietnam for musical training and now I study with my current teacher named T graduated from Russia. To compare between them, well…I think that teacher T plays constantly much more than teacher C in the lessons and often showed me exactly what he wanted."

To reinforce this point, a student of UK trained teacher added:

> "Of course he demonstrates very often, and it was always marvellous, a really wonderful example for us. It is so stimulating."

The following provides a typical illustration of how a Russian trained piano teacher demonstrated to her student:

> **Teacher**: "Have a look at my hand and wrist position. You need different weighting." (Teacher demonstrated)
>
> **Student**: "Umm." (Student imitated and experimented with changing hand and wrist position)

> **Teacher**: "That is better. Also these running notes must not be too fast. They must have a life of their own. You should get it by practicing slowly with an intense legato which is deep and singing. You also can add vibrato pedal. Let's listen." (Teacher played).
>
> **Student**: nodded and repeated. Through watching and learning from the teacher, her playing improved. She played slowly the running notes and put her fingers down to the key bottom. By playing at a slow tempo, she could analyse the movements of her fingers, as well as her wrist and arm conditions.
>
> **Teacher**: "Bravo! That is what we want".

The above extract illustrates how a practical demonstration played by the teacher can improve and alter a student's sound and physical approach. The student can see exactly and understand the magnitude of the motion and music required. This implies that direct modelling with verbal explanation is the most effective way to improve a students' playing.

Similarly, the following extract from observations by the researcher of Yonty Solomon[9]'s piano lesson at the Royal College of Music in UK on 1st November, 2004 provides an interesting example of good modelling**:**

> **Solomon**: demonstrates his flexible right hand's wrist playing trills lightly and sentimentally.
>
> **Student**: watches, listens, and imitates.

---

[9] Yonty Solomon has been soloist throughout the world with many of the most important symphony orchestras, winning several major piano competitions, including the Harriet Cohen Beethoven Medal. Prince Charles elected Yonty Solomon a Fellow of the Royal College of Music, where he is currently Professor of Piano. He also is a professor at Trinity College of Music and recently elected President of the Alkan Society.

Solomon: He shows how to use the thumb from the wrist (right hand) and explains that it produces lightness of touch.

Student: "Yeah, I know what you mean."

Solomon: "trills should be down and up movement. The sound should have a flying quality". (He shows how he slices fingers on the key and releases the pedal 2/3 of the way to produce a diminuendo.)

Student: imitates. She seems happy when Solomon's suggestion seems to work very well with her.

Solomon: "The fingers could imitate the string by playing two thirds inside the key and slightly lift the finger toward the body. At the same time put your foot on the pedal sensitively and make a quick and light change to give vibration." (He demonstrates).

Student: follows teacher's advice by trying to play on the surface of the keys with only two thirds being pressed down.

Solomon: "Each sound is like each word. Use two fingers for one sound to produce an intimate sound." (He plays each phrase emotionally for the student to repeat. That allows the student to follow his demonstration so easily).

Student: Tries playing with two fingers at a time.

Solomon: "Yes, darling. You have a better sound quality and expression."

The use of such models in a teacher demonstration- student imitation cycle appears to be the best way to help a student feel correctly about the music and to understand a better the way to play it effectively. On the other hand, while the teacher playing modelling is the preferred teaching strategy amongst UK teachers and Russian trained teachers, fewer teacher playing demonstrations were evident in the lessons of Vietnamese trained teachers. The following verbal instruction of a Vietnamese trained

teacher was noted in a piano lesson observed for this study on 3rd March 2005 at the Hanoi Conservatoire of Music:

> **Teacher**: "Why did you bang on G? Let's play again."
>
> **Student**: played the phrase again and tried to soften note G.
>
> **Teacher**: "No, your sound was still very harsh. Let's do it again and soften it more."

The interview with this student was taken right after her lesson. When asked how she felt about the lesson and how far she felt her teacher helped her, she replied with a little frustration:

> **Student**: "Well, she is a very good person and a devoted teacher, but it was a little hard for me to articulate the note or phrase and express music the way she wanted me to, if she only told me what to do without showing me how to play."
>
> **Researcher**: "What happened in other lessons? How often does she show you how to execute the piece of music?"
>
> **Student**: "She very rarely shows me how to play. I would like her more if she could provide me more modelling by playing that would make it easier for me to understand how to do it and what the music should sound like."

When students of Vietnamese trained teachers were asked if their teachers demonstrate much at the piano during their lessons, a striking revelation from the responses was as follows:

> "In all my years of study with my teacher, I never heard her really play the piano. There was usually just one piano. She would sit next to the student and illustrate certain things in the highest register, usually with one hand, seldom with two hands."

> "My teacher does not take time to play much at our lessons. She rarely illustrates exercise for me, so that I would see exactly how her hands are being used."
>
> "She never once played in our lessons other than demonstrating something with one hand in the upper register."

Question 20: If you knew things were wrong but did not know how to improve them did your teacher communicate well how to change them for the better in addition to his/her demonstration?

Verbal instruction may be most effective and more helpful when combined with a direct model provided by the teacher. Significant differences were found among groups in relation to the combination of verbal strategies and modelling strategies to solve musical performance problems. The results of these studies also revealed that UK teachers appeared to provide more combined verbal and teacher playing models than either the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers. The UK teachers were ranked higher (m=7.7) than both the Russian trained teachers (m=5.0) and Vietnamese trained teachers (m=3.3) suggesting that UK trained teachers tend to use more a verbal explanation in conjunction with a direct modelling to help their students than did the Russian trained teachers or the Vietnamese trained teachers. The following extract from observations of Yonty Solomon's piano lesson at the Royal College of Music in UK on 1st November, 2004 provides an interesting example of a combination of verbal and modelling illustration:

> Third year student from Denmark playing the Grieg Piano Concerto 2nd Movement
>
> Solomon always plays and explains together. In the very beginning where the piano part starts, Solomon plays the left hand smoothly with no accent. He asks his student to think about timing in his left hand and not to play with too much freedom.

> Solomon suggests his student should use fingers 5-1-5-1 in left hand to make it more flowing. He shows how to do it and the timing by singing with counting.
>
> Solomon wants student to feel the change in harmony. He said the right hand should be like a flute and close to the keys. He asks the student to think about the melody of the four bar phrase.

Another example from the interview with Marie-Lee Gustafsson, third year student at Royal College of Music in London on November 1st, 2004, typifies how UK teachers combine verbal and playing demonstration. She talked about her master class with Bernard D' Ascoli on Wednesday 27, October 2004:

> "I agree with most things that Bernard said. He told me that I was not connecting the music – I was making pictures but he wanted more of a "movie-shot". He also focused on how I touch the keys and use the pedal, and he verbalized and played to show how to technically make the sound."

Some results of this study support earlier research (Siebenaler, 1997) which reported that the students of active teachers who provide more modelling tended to perform more successfully. As in the sports field, at basketball or football, players could learn and get better skills from playing with more skilful counterparts and by copying their technique. Also direct modelling in conjunction with verbal explanation in music teaching may be the most effective method (Rosenthal, 1984).

This has implications for instrumental music teachers in general and piano teachers in particular in the sense that modelling strategies should play a more prominent role than they commonly do in Vietnamese piano lessons. And because these skills are important, teachers should be trained in the skills necessary to enable them to act as models and use their piano constantly in their teaching in order to facilitate students' learning and increased music discrimination abilities in their students as well as improving instructional quality.

Question 19: Did your teacher give you good information about the background to the style and character of a piece?

One of the important aspects of musical training is helping the students to understand the style and character of a musical composition. This part of present study examines the extent to which the teachers equip their students with comprehensive knowledge about the piece they play.

The scores of the subjects of three types of teachers were analysed to determine if there were significant differences among the teachers. The results reveal there were notable differences in the teachers' behaviour regarding verbal demonstration. They differed in how much relevant information about the background, the style and character of a piece they provide their students. Indeed, the scores for UK trained teachers were much higher (m=7.5) than those for Russian trained teachers (4.6) and Vietnamese trained teachers (2.1), suggesting that UK trained teachers are much more likely than Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers to provide verbal explanations regarding the background of the piece. While the students of Vietnamese trained teachers claimed that their teachers give them only the basic information, student's description of UK trained teachers was expressed in the interview as follows:

> "She emphasized the structure of each piece, its colours, textures, and character. She takes time to talk a lot about different styles and concepts. She instilled in me the need to have a clear idea about the style and character of the piece. She also talked about using tempo to make the structure of a piece sound coherent."

As indicated in this example, the UK trained teacher recognizes the importance of structure, character and style as vital ingredients in achieving a successful performance. Without a thorough understanding of the style and character of a piece, students might easily overdramatise the music, or become driven and aggressive with the music. They might try to force the sound out by banging out the music, hoping to express themselves effectively. With a good explanation from the teachers, students might be able to fully appreciate texture, shape and sound of the piece. When students learn a piece in depth, they might brighten up the whole phrase by adding a slight change of inflection on note or bringing out a lovely change of harmony elsewhere.

Question 32: Did your teacher convey their ideas clearly?

Effective and clear verbal behaviours of piano teachers have been rated as components of good teaching. As indicated in the Table 6.7 UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers were both rated highly (m=8.4 and 7.5 respectively). Most of the students in this study claimed that in general, their teachers are quite precise in their requests. Their teachers' comments were always expressed in simple, clear, straightforward terms. Many students of UK trained teachers in this study acknowledged that their teachers have a demystifying approach to teaching, as one of them commented about UK trained teacher:

> "She expresses her ideas very logically and simply."

The student of Russian trained teacher also stated:

> "I learn a lot of musical things with my teacher. He has such sensibility and taste and is able to give such precise attention to detail. He knows how to transmit a composer's sensibility to his students. For example, if you play Debussy, he could pass on Debussy's sensibility to you and you really have the feeling as if Debussy was listening to you when you play it."

In addition to the issues of content and methodology, piano teachers in this study seem to consider the importance of their own verbal behaviour and how it functions as a factor in the teaching and learning process. It is important to understand the relationship between the student's experiences and teaching. If the teacher's pacing is good and explanations are clear, their students could grasp the ideas easily. If the teacher moves too fast and their explanations are confusing, the student will experience difficulties.

Question 40: Did your teacher describe the whole picture of the piece of music before you actually started learning it?

Verbal instruction can be thought of as the preparation that directed the students' attention to the style of the piece, the dynamic markings, phrasing, tempo, rhythmic interpretations and other musical elements. The result showed that UK teachers provided more of this kind of verbal guidance to the students than either Russian or

Vietnamese teachers. They are more likely than Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers to provide the students with useful and helpful information about the background to the style and character of the piece of music they are performing. In question 40, the difference in the teaching approaches of the three, in relation to describing the whole picture of the piece of music before actually playing, is more apparent. In this sense the whole picture of the piece refers to some understanding that the teacher provides the student about the structure, the characteristics of that music and the required tempo, tone quality, phrasing, expressive nuance and balance. The result showed that UK teachers were rated highly with a mean of 8.2, while the means of the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers were 2.1 and 0.3 respectively.

The following example taken from Bernard D' Ascoli[10]'s piano master class in the Durrington Room of the Royal College of Music, observed by the researcher on Wednesday 27 October 2004, represents an interesting verbal guide providing the background to the style and characteristics of the music:

> Before starting modelling the piece *L' Isle Joyeuse* by Debussy, he spoke about the characteristics of Debussy's music. According to him, his music is not philosophical like Brahms or Beethoven. Instead, it has an artificial nature that reflects water and air, not earth. He said he heard the music imaginatively. He also explained some very good characteristics of French school like clarity, transparency, a natural lightness of the fingers which are excellent for the music of Debussy. He also spoke about the colours of the changing harmonies that would create in the imagination the effect of different instruments on the piano. He talked about the logic and

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[10] Bernard d'Ascoli, blind since birth. He won the First Prize in the Barcelona International Piano Competition. Following his Third Prize in the Leeds International Piano Competition, he was invited to play in many of the world's most important music centres. He made a trip back in time from Debussy's vivid originality to Liszt and Chopin, still in their deeply romantic and ethereal world of poetry and love. Bernard's playing awakened us to all the infinite potential of the piano, beyond human limitations. The instrument lived under his hands as he invited us into his magic world. For Bernard d' Ascoli there is no one between man and God (Menuhin, 2000).

> cohesion of one leading to another. The painting, literature, poetry were also mentioned.

This corresponds with comments made by Vietnamese pianists who won the first prize in various international competitions in the UK (Robert William and Florence Amy Brant International Pianoforte Competition in 2000) and the US. They have experienced musical training with Vietnamese, Russian trained teachers, Russian teachers and teachers in the UK. They admitted that the teachers in the Western conservatoires appear to provide more background to the style and characteristic of the piece of music:

> "I think Russian teachers' teaching was very practical. But the teachers from a Western background seem to talk more about the style of the pieces, and the approach to performance. They explain a lot, which helped to transform perception of a piece with a story, creating images, or changes of scenery."

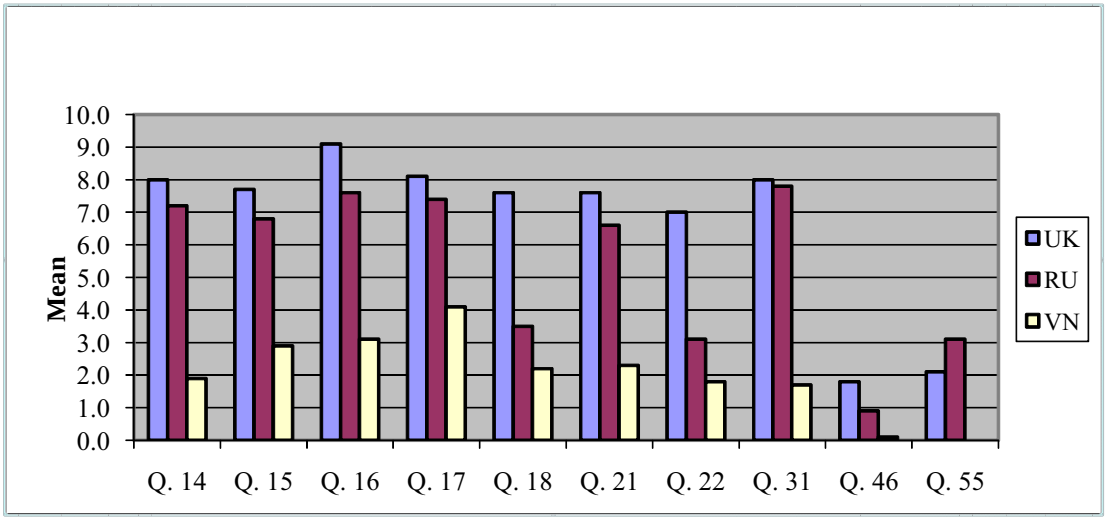
FACTOR 14: TEACHING APPROACH AND STYLE (10 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.8 *Factor 14*

Questions	Mean	S.D.	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 14: Did your teacher support and stimulate when you play by singing, tapping along?	UK= 8.00 RU= 7.12 VN= 1.93	UK= 0.57 RU = 1.04 VN= 0.82	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 15: Did your teacher give clear guidance about how to develop a good technique as a means to play musically and expressively?	UK = 7.71 RU = 6.78 VN = 2.87	UK = 0.75 RU = 0.83 VN = 1.05	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 16: Was the teaching consistent?	UK = 9.14 RU = 7.59 VN = 3.12	UK = 0.37 RU = 0.75 VN = 0.85	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 17: Did your teacher pay attention to details?	UK = 8.14 RU = 7.43 VN = 4.09	UK = 0.90 RU = 1.01 VN = 0.84	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 18: Did your teacher encourage independence such as individual voice and interpretation	UK = 7.57 RU = 3.46 VN = 2.24	UK = 0.97 RU = 1.58 VN = 0.79	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0007

through exploring and initiative?			
Question 21: Was the teaching flexible to match your individual needs?	UK = 7.57 RU = 6.59 VN = 2.33	UK = 0.78 RU = 0.97 VN = 0.89	UK v RU p<0.0459 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 22: Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way? (Purpose: this helps students have more fun and learn in enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere).	UK = 7.00 RU = 3.06 VN = 1.84	UK = 0.81 RU = 1.48 VN = 1.12	UK v RU p<0.0001 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0013
Question 31: Did your teacher focus on sound by asking you to listen to the intonation of each note that he/she played?	UK = 8.00 RU = 7.81 VN = 1.69	UK = 0.57 RU = 0.96 VN = 0.84	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001
Question 46: Did your teacher ever observe you practice? (purpose: able to discuss and develop students' independence in practicing)	UK = 1.8 RU = 0.94 VN = 0.06	UK = 1.34 RU = 1.79 VN = 0.24	UK v RU n. s UK v VN p<0.0051 RU v VN p<0.0265
Question 55: How often did your teacher ask you to play the pieces from memory in the first few lessons?	UK = 2.1 RU = 3.1 VN = 0.0	UK = 1.4 RU = 1.8 VN = 0.0	UK v RU p<0.0029 UK v VN p<0.0001 RU v VN p<0.0001

Figure 6.13 *Factor 14*



Research has identified teaching approach and teaching style as an essential part of instrumental music lessons that helps to improve students' performance skills and has a positive effect on student learning. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference

between the three countries ($p<0.0001$) regarding teaching styles. Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) showed significant differences between each country ($p=0.0001$). Aggregating the mean scores for each question produces the following results: UK aggregated mean = 70, Russian = 51.3 and Vietnam = 20.2. We can conclude that the Vietnamese trained teachers provided less support in terms of teaching approach than either those trained in the UK and Russia. The following table provides complete statistics for each question. This is followed by detailed commentary on the responses. In all, there were 10 questions which asked about students' responses to teaching approach and style.

Question 14: Did your teacher support and stimulate when you play by singing, tapping along?

Results

The students were asked to rate to what extent they thought their teachers support and stimulate when they play by singing, tapping along. ANOVA showed a significant difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between Vietnamese trained teachers and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), but no significant difference between UK and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.07$). Subtle differences existed among teachers of Russian and UK trained teachers, and were expressed in the students' interviews reflecting characteristics common to most of the UK and Russian trained teachers.

The results also revealed very low mean scores for Vietnamese trained teachers suggesting most of Vietnamese trained teachers spent no time or too little time applying behavioural teaching techniques to facilitate students' learning like singing or conducting or tapping, as indicated by the mean of 1.9. In contrast, the UK and Vietnamese trained teachers were given quite high scores. The scores of the UK trained teachers were slightly higher than those of Russian trained teachers, as shown by the respective means of 8.0 and 7.1 suggesting that UK trained teachers spent slightly more time than Russian trained teachers stimulating the students' playing.

The observations of the researcher revealed a variety of teacher behaviours. The Russian and UK trained teachers employed stimulation by singing along and a rich

repertoire of instructional gestures, from simple pointing to isolated, complex body percussion patterns or conducting gestures, while the Vietnamese trained teachers prefer tapping.

Discussion

The application of behavioural teaching techniques to facilitate learning and what makes any teaching effective have been the centre of increasing educational interest. If students enjoy learning, then the chances are that the teaching they receive is effective. By using various methods and individual musical expertise to deliver the musical inspiration to the students, the teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for teaching and provide enjoyable student experiences. Important indicators reported as essential for effective teaching (Collins, 1978). Hendel (1995) has found that positive student reaction toward their teachers' involvement in "singing, playing, and moving" during in-class activities improves performance. Yarbrough (1975) synthesized and viewed eight distinct behaviours as a single indicator which was useful in describing a conductor's ability to change behaviour dramatically in all defined categories at precisely the right time during the rehearsal. These behaviours were body movement; voice volume, pitch, and speed; activity; eye contact; gestures; and facial expressions (Hendel, 1995, p. 183). Similar effects might occur in piano teaching.

Student interviews and the researcher's observation confirmed that the UK and Russian trained teachers were actively involved in piano lessons. However one major difference among teachers' distribution of time occurred among Russian trained teachers and UK trained teachers. UK trained teachers spent slightly more time stimulating the students than Russian trained teachers, while Vietnamese trained teachers spent the least amount of time on the same tasks.

Observed lessons also revealed that each teacher varied the amount of time spent on singing, modulation of voice, tapping, conducting and moving gestures. For example, the Russian trained teachers demonstrated a higher rate of singing than the other teachers occupying approximately 15% of the music period, the UK trained teachers devoted around 12% of the music teaching time, and Vietnamese trained teachers around 3%. While the UK trained teachers gestured, they tended to use more expressive conducting gestures; the Vietnamese trained teachers seemed to prefer tapping. When

the student of a Russian trained teacher was re-interviewed shortly after observation in her lesson, she explained that:

> "My teacher always sang along while I played at my lessons. This gave me a real love of melody and inspiration. Not only is her playing demonstration excellent but also her voice is emotive. I really enjoyed working with my teacher and was always interested in what she was doing."

This student's response revealed how her teacher demonstrated intensity behaviours that reflected enthusiasm for teaching and provided enjoyable students experiences that is essential for effective teaching.

Student's description of one UK trained teacher is also revealing:

> "He sometimes did conducting to my playing which gave me a good sense of rhythm. My lessons with him were always inspiring and I would feel exhilarated and longing for the next one."

These examples typify how the teacher supported the student by singing or conducting. This kind of stimulation positively influenced students' attitudes toward music learning. This is in accord with previous findings which have shown that students reacted positively toward their teachers' involvement in "singing, playing, and moving" (Murphy and Brown, 1986; Yarbrough, 1981). When describing the teacher's manner of presentation, students recognized their teacher's musical skills, whether it be singing, playing piano, tapping or conducting are helpful instructional strategies and behaviours that contribute to more accurate and expressive performance. The students of UK and Russian trained teachers received more of this kind of stimulation, as illustrated in the following episode which occurred in lessons of both UK and Russian trained teachers:

> **Teacher**: "Now play that section again please" (teacher sings and gestures with arms as if conducting)
>
> **Student**: plays with more enthusiasm and inspiration.

This episode illustrates a typical situation in which the teacher aroused an emotional response in a student. The use of singing and gestures to stimulate a mood, feeling and

emotion to a student is an effective teaching strategy. The data from this study revealed that students achieved more expressive performance when stimulation was used. Such teachers exhibited highly flexible reactions, adjusting the rate of stimulation to student learning. Their instruction revealed their musical knowledge and competencies as well as their sensitivity to and understanding of the needs and interests of their students. Consequently, students recognized their teacher's stimulating and supporting behaviours which revealed the positive qualities possessed by Russian and UK trained teachers.

Question 15: Did your teacher give clear guidance about how to develop a good technique as a means to play musically and expressively?

The most important skill in piano pedagogy is how to help students develop a good technique when practicing. The conservatory music students would usually spend many hours practising by themselves. They need to be guided on how to improve technique and use practice time effectively. McPherson and Davidson (2002) stressed the important role of the teachers to show students "how to practice, to set manageable and appropriate goals for their progression, and to monitor the success or otherwise of the practice strategies". Rosenshine, Froehlich and Fakhouri (2002) support this view by suggesting that practice at home is facilitated if the teacher gives specific instructions about what needs to be worked on, how to do it, and what the result should sound like. The teacher instruction includes specific details regarding the task to be performed, expressive or technical. This may include correcting notes, fingering, dynamics, hand position and practice strategies.

The results in this current study indicated that teachers trained in UK and Russia were rated relatively highly with means of 7.7 and 6.7 respectively. A low mean of 2.8 for Vietnamese trained teachers was recorded in Table 6.8 suggesting that the students of Vietnamese trained teachers received less guidance from their teachers than UK and Russian trained teachers in relation to technical development. A response of a student of a Vietnamese trained teacher is a good example to illustrate this point:

> "My teacher gave some suggestions about how to improve technique but not much. She said that I should find my own way to

> sort out technical problems because people have physical differences, so each one has to understand how his or her body works in order to find his or her own comfort in playing."

The interviews with the students revealed some interesting points of instruction used by Russian and UK trained teachers in how to achieve a technical progress. For example, a student of Russian trained teacher described his teacher's guidance as follow:

> "He had me play slowly and *legatissimo,* with a *crescendo* on each note in one direction and decrescendo in the other. He gave me exercises for rotation of the whole arm and five note scales patterns fast, evenly and without accents."

The following quotation from observation in this study provides a typical illustration of how a Russian trained piano teacher gives clear guidance by developing a sense of good respiration and technique to her student:

> **Teacher**: "Inhale before a chord and exhale on the chord".
>
> **Student**: followed teacher's demonstration.
>
> **Teacher**: "The fingers should strike well but you must have great attention to suppleness. The A sharp was ugly." (Teacher played).
>
> **Teacher**: "The attack should be firm, but not marcato." (The teacher asked the student play one note ten times, trying each time to get a different sound. This kind of practice can lead to a nice, velvety sound in pianissimo sections.)

A student's description of his UK trained teacher is also revealing:

> "Although he was very musical, his technical ideas were worked out very analytically. He wants each finger to be independent and use the pad rather than the fingertip. He said that the feeling of dead weight and dropping into the key are very important. All this would make the sound deeper and richer."

These examples typify how teachers trained in UK and Russia develop their students' discernment of how to have a really global physical conception of piano technique. Someone can do certain things instinctively, but they might not explain it well. However the teachers trained in UK in this study do. Consequently it is reasonable to conclude that the students in this study have some differing beliefs about piano teaching, and that these differences relate to beliefs about the teacher's instructions. It seems that the guidance of Russian and UK trained teachers are quite similar in some respects.

Question 16: Was the teaching consistent?

Consistency in teaching helps students to easily comprehend and follow what teachers want and demonstrate. Inconsistence may cause students to be puzzled and confused in their learning.

These results show that while the UK trained teachers were rated very highly at a mean of 9.1, Russian trained teachers were also positive with a mean of 7.5, suggesting that they are both consistent in their teaching approach. The Vietnamese trained teachers' mean was quite low (3.1) suggesting that there was some inconsistent instruction in their lessons (see Figure 6.13). The following explanation from a student of a Vietnamese trained teacher illustrates this point:

> "My teacher's interpretations could be different. For example, in one lesson she asked me to create the maximum volume of sound, but in the following lesson she did not like that big sound. But I think not only her, some other teachers sometime are not consistent as well."

This student's response reveals the problems some Vietnamese students face at this moment in respect to the consistency in piano teaching. In contrast, UK trained teachers' students commented as follows:

> "My teacher is very consistent on special fingering. He explained that the choice of fingering was not only for comfort, but for a particular voicing or smooth passage. He said that this is a fundamentally important thing to do."

Question 17: Did your teacher pay attention to details?

One of the important factors that enhance the quality in piano teaching is the teacher's attention to the details of students' learning. By providing detailed and useful information and observing students' playing, teachers could help their students place attention on the sensations of touch and movement. This could help students avoid unnecessary mistakes from the beginning.

Although there were significant differences overall between the three groups ($p<0.0001$) as shown by the respective means of 8.1, 7.4, and 4.0 for UK trained teachers, Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers respectively, the interviews with students of all three groups of teachers seemed to reveal that they were given an appropriate attention to detail. Providing detailed attention appears to be an important factor in helping the students to follow teachers' instruction easily, as mentioned by a student of a UK trained teacher:

> "She teaches us how to play music and play it right. She helps and explains everything in detail until you get it right and understand it that makes me feel good."

Similarly, a student of a Russian trained teacher said that his teacher imitated his playing to let him differentiate between the two ways:

> "She detailed her demonstration. She shows me the right way to play, and then the wrong way to help me compare between the two."

Likewise, a student of Vietnamese trained teacher described her teacher:

> "She was a detailed teacher. She often reminds me: "That note is not quite right" or "be sure not to forget that note in the sonata"."

The above comments of the students revealed how they felt about their teacher's attentiveness, understanding, and participation in their music learning. The abilities of the teachers to assess the problem quickly and to respond with an effective strategy were appreciated by the students. Students were told specifically what needed to be corrected and were given strategies for improvement.

Question 18: Did your teacher encourage independence such as individual voice and interpretation through exploring and initiative?

In the learning process, the students should not remain only passive learners to copy what their teachers demonstrate, but they are also expected to act on their own initiative in learning and interpreting the musical performance. To ensure that students' independence and individual voice could aid their progress, teachers' encouragement plays an important role in stimulating students' creative responses.

The results show that there was a significant difference overall between the countries regarding teachers' encouragement to their students to be more independent and creative in interpreting the musical performance ($p < .0001$). It appears that encouraging students is highly valued by UK trained teachers, as recorded by highest mean of 7.5 as compared to the other two groups. The Russian trained teachers are more likely than Vietnamese trained teachers to accept students' individual interpretation, although it is not very common as shown by the respective means of 3.4 and 2.2 (see Figure 6.13). The following explanations from two students of a Vietnamese trained teacher and a Russian trained teacher illustrate this point:

> "He was not concerned with my interpretation. Initiative was often discouraged."
>
> "His teaching was old-fashion. Encouraging my individual expression? Well that was not my teacher's idea at all."

However another student of a Russian trained teacher revealed:

> "Yes, sometimes she accepted my interpretation, especially toward the end of the semester when I knew the piece very well."

In contrast, UK trained teachers' students commented typically as follows:

> "At the first few lessons, my teacher already expects me to provide an interpretation."

Question 21: Was the teaching flexible (use different ways) to match your individual needs?

One of the important aspects of musical training is the flexible teaching approach used by teachers. In piano teaching, stereotype instruction should not be applied because students' physical conditions are different. In addition to the differences in age, preference, musical experience, the psychology of first year students is different from that of senior students. So there is no doubt that the individual teaching methods need to be applied to individual students as necessary.

This part of the present study examines how flexible piano teachers are in their teaching in order to meet students' learning conditions. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$). The striking result obtained in response to this question was the significant difference observed between UK and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), indicating that UK and Russian trained teachers differed considerably from Vietnamese trained teachers in the way they cope with students' individual difficulties. Although most of the students of Vietnamese trained teachers were receiving weekly individual lessons with their piano teachers, these lessons were not especially well-tailored to their particular needs. When the teachers are not flexible, they lose the ability to respond to individual students, and that teacher's effectiveness in causing positive change is diminished. If the ways the teachers present tone, phrasing ideas, technical ideas the same and do not take into account the context of the student's technical and expressive capabilities, this is not virtuosic pedagogy.

It appears that UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers are more likely than Vietnamese trained teachers to be flexible in their teaching approaches as indicated by the high means of 7.5 and 6.5 respectively for UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers and low mean of 2.3 for Vietnamese trained teachers (see Figure 6.13). As one of the students of a UK trained teacher stated:

> "Well, my teacher is quite flexible in the sense that he always gives exercises that are adapted to the individual student's hand and technique. He would modify his technical approach to suit the

> student and the music at hand. He always had at least three solutions to suggest musically: "I do it this way, however you could do it that way".

Observation from piano lessons of Solomon at the Royal College of Music in London on November, 1st 2004 revealed that Solomon was so effective in his teaching. When he realized that his student could not play and gain the sound that he wants, he tried another way to explain by mentioning the landscape and nature (moon, river, trees …) of Denmark, where the student came from. As a result, the student's performance improved and started to gain what his teacher wanted.

Comments from students of Russian trained teachers revealed that their teachers also used different ways of teaching:

> "He has different approaches for different students. For example, while he tries to make others play more freely, he tries to make me play more strictly."

> "He was very familiar with the different kinds of technical approaches to piano playing. He went out of his way to meet many different teachers, pianists, reading a lot of books about the art of piano performance and absorbed a lot."

> "She has pedagogy in her blood because she can change her approach as the student changes. She had a recipe for everything technical with very ingenious ideas about how to meet students' needs."

The above responses demonstrate that the methods the UK and Russian trained teachers used depended on what was suitable for the particular student. They could suggest many possibilities to their students who have different abilities and physical conditions. Because everyone has a different hand and a different arm, everyone has a different everything, including weight. These findings suggest that it would be profitable for teachers to spend time analysing their own students. Some would flourish by hearing things. Others may prefer detailed explanations. Still others may learn more through a demonstration. Individual styles as important means of scaffolding their learning

strategies to a higher, more efficient level. With student A who has a low sense of good rhythm, for example, could be encouraged to play Bach, Scarlatti, Mozart or Beethoven piano music, all of which tend to require strict tempo. Conversely, student B who has not enough capacity in expressivity might profit from playing romantic composers like Chopin, Rachmaninoff and so on. Teachers' work with students needs to begin with the student's current capabilities, not where the teachers would like them to be or where you might assume they are. It is important to cultivate a series of fluid and creative responses based on where the students are and what they need.

Question 22: Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way? (Purpose: this helps students have more fun and learn in enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere).

Research has stressed a sense of humour as an important characteristic of an expert educator (Brand, 1990; King, 1998; Lautzenheiser, 1990). Researchers have found that the use of humour in instruction has positive effect on learning (Zillmann, Williams, Bryant, Boynton, and Wolf, 1980; Wakshlag, Day, and Zillmann, 1981).

The analysis of data in this study revealed that the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers do not seem to use humour at all in their piano lessons. The mean for teacher's jokes of Vietnamese trained teacher was very low 3.0), followed by Russian trained teacher (1.8). In contrast, the UK trained teachers are more likely to initiate humour in order to reduce their negative criticism in lesson and make student feel more relaxed when learning. The following quotations are typical examples of Teachers' humour observed in piano lesson in this study:

> **Teacher** (smiled): "Oh that is a harsh sound. Are you angry at me?"
>
> Student smiled and played the passage again.

The example above illustrates the use of humour by the UK teacher which serves to deflect a possible negative evaluation. The student smiled as an attempt to conceal his possible embarrassment. The highest rating mean (m = 7.0) for UK trained teachers suggests that perhaps they are more successful at diverting their censure by humour than

are Russian (m = 3.0) and Vietnamese trained teachers (m = 1.8), and that they receive higher ratings from their students. This was expressed as follows in the student's interview:

> “She was fun. She taught music in a “fun” way so you remember things. She tells jokes”.
>
> “I had a Vietnamese teacher who was nice, quite serious and focused on what she taught but she almost never told a joke. And also heard that Russian trained teachers do not like joking in their lessons either. Last year, a professor coming from UK gave a master class at our conservatory. He told a joke during his teaching that made us feel it was such fun. I had a very good impression about his master class."

The result of this study supports earlier research on the presence and importance of humour in professional teaching and provides further evidence to validate its existence in instrumental music educations.

Question 31: Did your teacher focus on sound by asking you to listen to the intonation of each note that he/she played?

A specific characteristic in piano teaching method is to help students perceive an aesthetic purpose and enhance their artistic sense so that they become more sensitive to the idea of a beautiful sound and the intonation of each note through listening to the teacher as a model.

It appears that putting such a strong emphasis on sound is highly valued by UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers as recorded by the high means of 8.0 and 7.8 respectively. Post Hoc tests (Scheffe) showed no difference between UK and Russia ($p=0.8789$), but significant differences were found between UK vs. Vietnam ($p<0.0001$), and Russia vs. Vietnam ($p=0.0001$) (see Table 6.8).

The Vietnamese trained teachers’ means were quite low (1.6) suggesting that discussion of the sound plays only a minor role in their lessons.

The following explanation from a student of a UK trained teacher illustrates that his teacher had a high respect for sound in the piano lessons:

> "I would say that every lesson of a teacher had to do with sound, to explore all the possibilities of it. My teacher stressed a need to stroke the keys to produce all the various gradations of sounds. On some notes you have a softer touch, on some you have a sharper touch, and on some a more delicate touch."

A student's description of his Russian trained teacher is also revealing:

> "From the moment he played, you were enveloped by the richness of his sound. His emphasis was on extreme purity of sound and developing the widest palette of colours. He taught how to deal with every aspect of sound."

Two students of Russian trained teachers described their teachers as follows:

> "He stressed the need to listen critically to every sound we made, to get a deep, rich and warm tone even when practicing scale passages."

> "He taught that the ear must always guide the sound. He told me, "improve your ear" not just fingers running along the keys for a fuller and more secure tone."

These comments typify how Russian trained teachers develop their students' sensitive attention to their ears. This is supported by Bella Davidovich, one of Russia's foremost pianists who won the Chopin Competition. She said that "There has to be an incredibly keen sense of attention in the ears, as if the ears are the radar of the person. This radar has to register all the sounds that you are producing while you are performing on the stage. This radar will help you measure yourself" (Ashkenazy, 1987, p. 41)

Question 46: Did your teacher ever observe you practice? (purpose: able to discuss and instruct students in practice)

The students were asked to rate to what extent they thought their teachers supervised their practice to provide instruction on how to practice effectively. Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show no significant difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.0051$), and between Vietnamese trained teachers and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.02$), but no difference between UK and Russian trained teachers ($p <0. 23$).

The results revealed very low mean scores for all countries suggesting most of the teachers in this study spent no time or too little time observing their students' practice. The UK trained teachers were reported to have the highest score ($m = 1.8$). The scores of both the UK trained teachers and the Russian trained teachers ($m = 0.9$) were higher than the score of Vietnamese trained teachers ($m = 0.006$), as shown by the respective means. Although some differences existed among these teachers, and were expressed in the students' interviews, these results reflect characteristics common to most of the teachers in each group.

Discussion

Research has shown that observation and supervised practice tends to be more effective than unsupervised practice (Brokaw, 1983). Of great importance is the need to observe student practise in order to provide guidance. The student's independent work represents "the greatest amount of time and probably therefore has the greatest influence on the final product. The very nature of private practice often means that we know little about what actually happens during this time and thus merits closer investigation" (Walters, 2004, p. 42). Barry (1992) found that a highly organised and systematic regime of supervised practice is an effective and efficient mean of improving musical performance. In her study, subjects were assigned under both structured and free practice conditions. The practice strategy used with the structured practice group was based upon a step-by-step practice procedure developed from recommendations of experienced music instructors (Barry, 1990). All structured practice sessions were supervised by an adult who was present throughout the entire session. Results of her study suggest that the practice procedures used by the structured practice group were more conducive to improvement in musical performance accuracy and musicality than

were the practice procedures utilised by the free practice group. And the physical presence of the practice supervisor resulted in a halo effect which may have contributed to the superior performance of the structured practice group.

A majority of the students reported that they have not received much supervision regarding practice from their teachers, as reflected by the comments of a student of a UK trained teacher:

> "Unfortunately, she never observed to see how I practise so that she could tell me how to organize my practice."

Similarly, a student of Vietnamese trained teacher revealed:

> "No one told me how my practice session should be structured and effective. When I practice a piece of music, I just play the piece over and over again, hour after hour."

These instances illustrate typical situations faced by the students regarding the lack of teachers' supervision in their practice. This suggests the needs for an optimum practice regimen for each student and a necessary "practice prescription" from teachers to tailor to the ability level of the individual student. This could include a specific guide for practice activities, the most effective order for practice session, and the appropriate amount of time which should be spent on each activity, with explanations of why some activities need more time than others.

However there are a few cases, in which students of UK trained teachers, Vietnamese trained teacher and Russian trained teachers reported that their teachers were very concerned with their practice process, as illustrated in the following responses from interviews:

> "My teacher instructed me how to have an effective practice. First she advised me to have practice diaries, which are very beneficial in the sense that it made you aware of having to plan your practice methodically. Now I am used to the way my practice session is structured and focused and much more driven."

> "My teacher has made me think in more serious terms about my practice sessions, the way in which they were organised and how I could approach them. She advised me to try various different things and some of the things I would have been inclined to dismiss".

As indicated in the above examples, some teachers do recognize the importance of a highly organised and systematic ways of supervised practice incorporating practice diaries and goal setting. Instructing students in practice techniques makes them realize that they are not alone in the problems they might encounter and can encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning processes.

Question 52: Was more attention given to technical skills or musical interpretation, or were they equally emphasized throughout your programme?

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) sets out guidelines for teaching standards in each subject area in higher education in England, and praises music teaching that is clear, focused, and balanced between technical and musical considerations (Mills and Smith, 2003, p. 5).

It appears that the teachers in this present study have a respect for a balanced approach between technical improvement and musical expression. As one of the students of UK trained teachers stated:

> "He worked with me not only technically, but also talked about music. He helps me to become more intellectual about how to phrase structure and what it meant and what I am trying to say through music."

However, two other students of UK trained teachers described about their professors as follows:

> "He did not emphasize technique with me. He was more interested in matters of interpretation."

> "He is a teacher with a more highly cultivated approach to sound."

A little different scenario was described by the student of Russian trained teachers:

> "I worked on technical details, but was asked to think about the music I was playing as well. She wants her students to play the right notes cleanly. But when you could do these things, she could take you much further."

Similarly, another student of Russian trained teacher described about her teacher's approach as follows:

> "Instead of asking me to practice the scales, my teacher put me on etudes first by Czerny then later by Chopin and Liszt, which he considered more musical. He thinks that can help me to develop expression and velocity."

In general, the students' reports reveal that a balanced approach between technical improvement and musical interpretation were favoured among majority of teachers in this study. However in some cases, Russian trained teachers tended to focus more technique which suggests a more analytical approach to teaching. In other cases, the UK trained teachers tended to emphasize expression and interpretation, which seems to indicate a more emotional approach with attention to such details.

Question 55: How often did your teacher ask you to play the pieces from memory in the first few lessons?

Although most of all the students claimed that their teachers might have great respect for playing from memory and they sometimes ask them to play a piece without looking at the score, there was little evidence that the teachers in this study required their students to play a piece from memory in the first few lessons. Indeed, the analysis revealed low mean scores for all groups of teachers. The Russian trained teachers were reported as more likely than Vietnamese trained teachers and UK trained teachers to ask their students to play from memory as shown by the means of 3.1 for Russian trained teacher. The means for UK and Vietnamese trained teachers were only 2.1 and even 0.0 respectively, suggesting that the Russian trained teachers appear to place more value on

playing from memory for their students in their piano lessons. One student's description of his Russian trained teacher is revealing:

> "My teacher often encourages me to play from memory. She thinks that playing from memory would bring a sense of freedom in musical expression because you are not busy looking at the printed page while playing."

Another student of Russian trained teacher said:

> "My teacher told me that if I am not thoroughly prepared I lose my place in performance, so I should play from memory in the lesson as often as possible."

Observations from piano lessons in this study reveal that Russian trained teachers tend to encourage their students to play from memory but it is not compulsory to play without the score in the first few lessons. This is contrary to the situation in Russia in which the Russian trained teachers are used to be expected to play from memory even in the first piano lesson. Re-interviewing the students of Russian trained teachers shortly after observation of their lessons uncovered the reason for this difference between Russian trained teachers' experience in Russia and their actual requirement with their students regarding playing from memory in the first few lessons. The students of Russian trained teachers explained:

> "I think it is very difficult for us to be expected to play from memory for a new piece which has never been played before to the teacher. If we are asked to do so, anyway we cannot do it except for some outstanding students who spent all summer vacation practicing it."

> "You know the school curriculum is overloaded so that we do not have enough time for piano, and even the curriculum in our conservatory is overloaded too. It is too hard for us to present a piece without looking at the score."

In the lessons of Vietnamese trained teachers, there was no evidence in relation to memorized playing, except for the case when their students approached closely to the exams.

6.3 30 QUESTIONS FOR ALL THREE TYPES OF TEACHERS – ANALYSIS OF FACTORS BY QUESTIONS

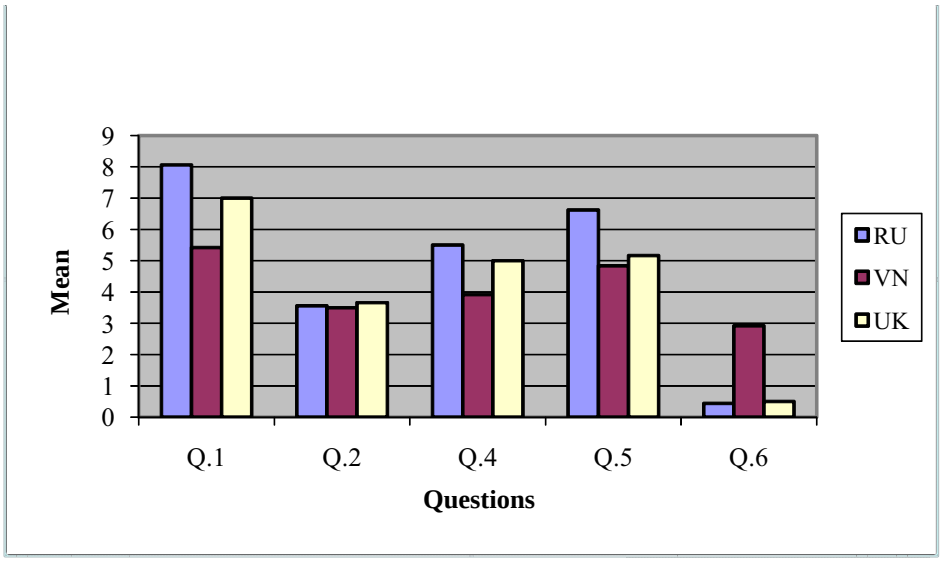
A total of 31 teachers: 16 Russian trained teachers; 8 Vietnamese trained teachers; 5 trained a short time in England for a period up to two years (UK trained teachers) plus 2 British nationals who were piano professors.

FACTOR 1: COUNTRY INFLUENCE (6 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.9 *Factor 1*

Questions	Mean	S.D	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 1: Do you think that the way that you teach now has been influenced by the way that you were taught? Please explain your answer	RU=8.063 VN=5.417 UK=7.000	RU=0.929 VN=1.084 UK=0.894	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK n. s. VN vs. UK p<0.0112
Question 2: Is there any other influence on your teaching?	RU=3.563 VN=3.500 UK=3.667	RU=0.892 VN=1.567 UK=0.816	RU vs. VN n. s RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK n. s
Question 4: Does this influence still exist? If yes, in what way? How far is this influence?	RU=3.917 VN=5.500 UK=5.000	RU=0.816 VN=1.564 UK=0.632	RU vs. VN p<0.0041 RU vs. UK p<0.0034 VN vs. UK n. s
Question 5: Does this have a positive effect on Vietnamese piano performance pedagogy?	RU=6.625 VN=4.833 UK=5.167	RU=0.806 VN=1.850 UK=0.753	RU vs. VN p<0.0036 RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK n. s
Question 6: Does this have a negative effect on Vietnamese piano performance pedagogy?	RU=0.438 VN=2.917 UK=0.500	RU=0.892 VN=1.782 UK=0.837	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK p<0.0027

Figure 6.14 *Factor 1*



Analysis of variance shows overall that in the category Country Influence there is a significant difference between the countries (p=0.0015) regarding teachers' opinions.

Question 1: Do you think that the way that you teach now has been influenced by the way that you were taught? Please explain your answer.

Daniel (2004) comments as follows:

> "The literature reveals that approaches to piano teaching often emerge from personal experience, and several authors reflected upon the fact that experience from instrumental teaching is a major influence on the choice of teaching approach (Jorgensen H. , 2000; Keller, 1994; Person, 1994). Mills and Smith (2003) give evidence of this in a recent study involving 134 instrumental teachers, 57% of whom claimed that the primary influence on their teaching approach was the way they were taught. This view is further supported in recently introduced courses for instrumental teachers, in which many claimed to teach in the way they were taught"
>
> Daniel (2004, p. 24)

This question examines specifically the extent to which piano teachers in this study think that the way they teach now has been influenced by the way that they were taught. ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$) regarding teachers' opinions. The striking result obtained in response to this question was the significant difference observed between UK and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0112$), and even more so between Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), indicating that UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers opinions differed considerably from Vietnamese trained teachers in the way they think their teaching has been influenced by their experiences with their teachers. Although there was no statistical difference in the beliefs of Russian and UK trained teachers, the Russian trained teachers were slightly more likely than UK trained teachers to claim that the way they teach now has been influenced by the way they were taught, as shown by the respective means of 8.0 and 7.0. The responses are shown in categories of response in Table 6.10 below.

Table 6.10 *Responses of all 31 Teachers*

	Number of responses	**%**
1: Yes. I teach how I was taught	22(RU = 12; VN = 5; UK= 5)	71%
2: Yes. I consciously teach differently to how I was taught	2 (VN)	6.45%
3: No. I am not completely influenced by the teaching I received	5 (RU = 4; VN = 1)	16.1%
4: Yes and no. It depends on the situation	2 (UK)	6.45%

More than two-thirds (71%) of the respondents assert that their current teaching is directly influenced by the teaching that they received. Five teachers, accounting for 16.1%, state that they are not actively influenced in their teaching by their own early experiences, and only 2 Vietnamese trained teachers 6.45 % state that they are never influenced in this way. It seems, then, that the influence of the early experiences is actually very strong. Teachers A, B and N trained in Russia responded to Question 1 as follows:

> **Teacher A**: "Mostly but not all. My knowledge not only comes from my Russian teachers. Living and learning in the Russian

> environment for more than 10 years, I accumulated knowledge through other sources like reading the books, going to concerts, listening to recordings, attending other classes etc. That means what I am teaching now does not completely come from my teachers and what I was taught."

> **Teacher B:** "Yes. A lot of my teaching comes from what I was taught, especially when I was very young and learnt with that teacher for such a long time, say nine years."

> **Teacher N**: "My teacher had a very strong influence on me. She taught and demonstrated in such a way that all the details have remained to this day a part of my thinking. Even now her advice is always in my mind when I play and teach."

Teachers C, D and E trained in Vietnam responded to Question 1 as follows:

> **Teacher C:** "My Vietnamese teacher was very strict. It was good because you were expected to know very well the notes and get the notes right from the piece by yourself. I think it is right to teach my students like the way I was taught."

> **Teacher D:** "I do not like my previous teacher. She was so strict. Every time I went to her lesson, I trembled with fear. So I quit her lesson and went to another Vietnamese teacher, who was less strict. I do not want to teach my students in that way."

> **Teacher E:** "My teaching now is partly influenced by the teaching I received but I try to teach more effectively than I was taught."

As expressed in the above responses, there were differences among the Vietnamese trained teachers' opinions regarding the influence received from their past experiences with their teachers on their current teaching approaches. Teacher C supported the traditional way of teaching she was given and wanted to make the most of it while the teachers D and E believe that they need to change and improve on that traditional education.

A teacher trained in UK received most of her prior training in Vietnam with Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers responded to Question 1 as follows:

> **Teacher F:** "I had a few months training in France before being trained for one year at the Royal Academy of Music in the UK. I realised that that one year in UK is so important to me: it changed me a lot. Now my teaching has been strongly influenced from what I received in UK."

The responses from the interviewers have shown that the beliefs about the influence of early teaching received by all three groups of teachers have much in common. The teachers B, C, F, and N assert that their current teaching is directly influenced by their early experiences as students, and teachers C and F, in particular, are keen to emulate the aspects of the teaching received. Teachers A and E admit that they have been influenced but only partly, teacher E also actively wants to teach more effectively than she was taught. Only teacher D does not want to support the strict way of teaching she received.

Question 2: Is there any other influence on your teaching?

ANOVA showed no difference between the three countries ($p<0.9600$) regarding teachers' opinions about influence from different sources on their teaching. This suggests that there is a strong agreement between the teachers. Indeed the scores for Russian trained teachers (m = 3.5), UK trained teachers (m = 3.6) and Vietnamese trained teachers (m = 3.5) are almost the same (see Table 6.9). Many teachers admitted that beside the influence that they received from the past experiences with their past teachers, there were also other sources that had been influencing their current teaching. These influences given in the responses to Question 2, fall easily into categories, as shown in the Table 6.11 below, where they are listed together with the number of respondents who identified them:

Table 6.11 *Influence on Teaching*

	Number of responses	**%**
Other teacher(s)	2 (VN)	6.45 %

Other training attendance	4 (VN = 3; RU = 1)	12.9 %
Own teaching experience	13 (RU 12; UK = 1)	41.9 %
Books	1 (RU)	3.23 %
Concerts and master class attendance	8 (UK = 6; RU = 2)	25.8 %
Other	3 (VN)	9.68%

41.9% of teachers cite the importance of their own teaching experience, and this is the most common influence mentioned in response to this question as indicated by the following:

> "My own teaching experience helps me to find the way to meet each individual need."

Master classes also feature highly among the responses, mentioned by 25.8% of teachers and 12.9% of teachers with reference to other training received. These responses are typical:

> "I think observing master classes has helped me a lot in teaching. I was so impressed by some master classes in London by Bernard d' Ascoli, Yonty Solomon, Leslie Howard and others, and in Vietnam by *Dang Thai Son*."
>
> (UK trained teacher)

> "Yes, I am also influenced by other sources. I am not a Yamaha teacher but having observed some individual and group lessons as a visitor, I think the method works very well so I incorporate a lot of those ideas into my own teaching."
>
> (Vietnamese trained teacher)

6.45% of respondents claim to be influenced by other teachers, but only 3.23% of those by books.

> "Conversing and exchanging ideas with other teachers is helpful."

> "I was fascinated reading a number of books about the piano methodology which is a benefit to me and my teaching in particular."

9.68% of respondents claim to be influenced by other sources. However, the numbers of teachers involved are small:

> "Now because of recordings, international competitions, radio, television, and many more concerts and master classes by foreign artists, the idea of Russian influence does not really exist strongly."

Question 3: What country has affected Vietnamese piano performance pedagogy? In what way?

Most of the Vietnamese piano teachers at the Hanoi Conservatoire believe that there is no doubt that the piano education at Hanoi conservatoire has been influenced by the Russian school through their learning with Russian teachers, and that they played a vital role in developing their pianistic career. However we need to examine how far this influence goes. My current study shows the following distribution across categories of response: 6.45%, 67.74%, 12.90%, and 12.90%. The responses were grouped into the categories shown in Table 6.12 below.

Table 6.12 *Country Influences*

	Number of responses	**%**
0: No response	2 (UK)	6.45
1: Russian influences through Russian graduate teachers, master classes by Russians, books, recordings, curriculum	21 (UK = 2; RU = 12; VN = 7)	67.7
2: Western influences through concerts, CD, master classes from overseas professional visitors, Western trained graduate	4 (RU = 3; VN= 1)	12.9
3: Other	4 (UK = 3; RU = 1)	12.9

Two-thirds (67.7%) of the respondents assert that Vietnamese piano performance pedagogy has been strongly influenced from the Russian piano school. 4 teachers, accounting for 12.9 %, state that the Vietnamese piano school has now moved more toward Western musical influences, and 4 Vietnamese trained teachers (12.9%) state that the Vietnamese piano school has been influenced from other sources than Western

Europe. It seems, then, that the influence of the Russian school is actually very strong at present. However, 12.9 % is indicative of a change in the future.

Question 4: Does this influence still exist? If yes, in what way? How far is this influence?

There were no differences in the responses between Vietnamese and UK trained teachers (p=0.6515) in relation to their belief about the existence of foreign influences on Vietnamese piano performance. However there are a few differences in the beliefs of the teachers with respect to the extent of that foreign influence. Vietnamese and UK trained teachers had means of 5.5 and 5.0 respectively, while Russian trained teachers had a mean of 3.9 (see Table 6.9). The three examples below of teachers' beliefs may illustrate these differences. The Vietnamese trained teacher responded to question 4 as follows:

> "Yes, it still exists of course, because a large number of piano students are being taught by most of piano teachers who graduated from Russia."

However the Russian trained teachers responded:

> "I think there are a number of factors such as learning environment, curriculum policy, and social matters that hinder us to apply our experience in Russia into practice in Vietnam. For example, playing from memory in the first few lessons for example, which was vital in our piano learning in Russia, is not applicable in Vietnam."

> "The difference is physical strength, I suppose. Russian people are generally much bigger than Vietnamese. Therefore their approach to the piano is a little bit different to that of the Vietnamese. So it can be understood why we cannot apply everything from the Russian school into their practice."

In Vietnam, the overload of the school curriculum that applies such pressure on Vietnamese students that some often need to study all day and even through the night.

They have no time and energy for the kind of extensive music practising required in Moscow, or for being creative. The teachers in Vietnam express their disappointment, especially since music is not always the first priority in most students' learning as they enter the Conservatoire from school. However, this is a more recent development, and was not the case decades ago when there was no such pressure on students because the Vietnamese general education system at that time did not have such a heavy curriculum as that of today. The current general school curriculum in Vietnam causes many controversial debates in the society, and does not provide much opportunity for students to focus on learning musical instruments especially if they are intending to be musical professionals.

Question 5: Does this have a positive effect on Vietnamese piano performance pedagogy?

ANOVA revealed a no significant difference in the teachers' opinion ($p < 7.5$), suggesting that most of them believe that the Russian school has a positive effect on Vietnamese piano performance. 100 % Russian trained teachers responded to question 5 as follows:

> "I agree that the Russian school has a positive effect on Vietnam, and we need to thank the Russian school. They have kept providing training for us for a few decades, especially between the period 1960 and 1990. Now we have a major number of professional musicians who graduated from Russia"

Question 6: Does this have a negative effect on Vietnamese piano performance pedagogy?

When asked about the negative effects, Russian trained teachers and UK trained teachers suggested that there is almost no negative effect. Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show no difference between Russian and UK trained teachers ($p<0.9879$), suggesting that there is a strong agreement between them. However Vietnamese trained teachers only moderately agree with this point of view ($m = 2.9$).

Some of responses from these teachers were reflected in the response to question 6 with respect to a negative effect of that influence on Vietnam:

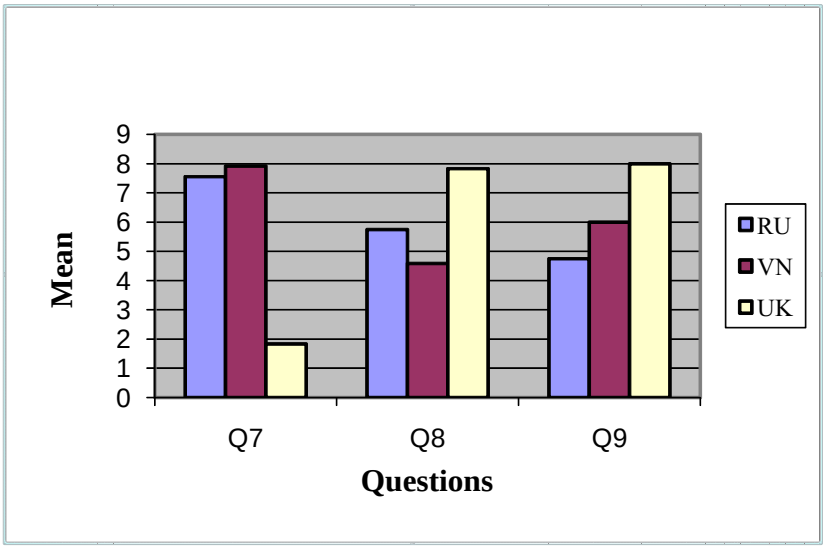
> "Negative effect? Well…uh … it is sometimes a little stereotype, but sorry, we do not have a chance to study in Western countries, so we could not give a precise comparison. However through some contacts with Western piano visitors who gave Master classes in Hanoi Conservatoire and numerous numbers of concerts given by Western pianists coming to Vietnam, I feel that the Western school is more diverse as compared to the Russian. I think the possible reasons probably are culture, economic situation, geographic, personality of typical Russian person, living styles and so on."

FACTOR 2: TEACHER CONTROL (3 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.13 *Factor 2*

Questions	Mean	S.D	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 7: Do you like to take a role of leading, controlling, and pushing the student as fast as possible, rather than supporting and advising?	RU=7.563 VN=7.917 UK=1.833	RU=1.031 VN=0.996 UK=0.753	RU vs. VN n. s RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 8: Do you think that students should normally take an active part in the lessons?	RU=5.750 VN=4.583 UK=7.833	RU=1.571 VN=0.900 UK=0.753	RU vs. VN n. s RU vs. UK p<0.0062 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 9: Should the teacher motivate the student by showing confidence in student which in turn makes them feel confidence in themselves?	RU=4.750 VN=6.000 UK=8.000	RU=2.017 VN=0.739 UK=0.894	RU vs. VN n. s RU vs. UK p<0.0004 VN vs. UK p<0.0429

Figure 6.15 *Factor 2*



Question 7: Do you like to take a role of leading, controlling, and pushing the student as fast as possible, rather than supporting and advising?

There are two common ways of teaching used by piano teachers. They are teacher centred approach and student centred approach. The former approach requires the students to be passive learners and follow their teachers' instruction, the latter allows students to be more active learners and their teachers play a supporting role as professional, experienced advisers.

ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$), indicating that there is big differences in the teaching style between piano teachers in this study. Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between Russian trained piano teachers and UK trained teachers ($p<0.0001$). The extent of the differences in the beliefs about teaching behaviour, whether controlling and leading students or advising and providing positive support, is striking. Scores for Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers are very high, as indicated by the respective means of 7.5 and 7.9 (see Table 6.13), suggesting that they prefer leading and controlling approach of teaching. The score for UK trained teachers is comparatively low ($m = 1.8$). Examining

the UK trained teachers' responses through the remainder of the questionnaire provides some insights into their ideas:

> "I think learning is a joint process between student and teacher rather than one of teacher control. It clearly becomes a give and take relationship between two adults who negotiate, collaborate, and share responsibilities and decisions."

> "I try to create a supportive learning environment as much as I can. It becomes important to create a pleasant and comfortable learning environment suitable for students. They need help in overcoming their insecurities, and they need much praise and encouragement. It is important to help them recognize even their smallest accomplishments and to help them realize that mistakes are a normal part of learning. All students, regardless of age, need praise and encouragement and a supportive environment for learning."

Similarly, a teacher trained both in UK and Russia revealed an interesting comparison between Russian and UK approaches that she received as follows:

> "I studied in Russia for a long time and was trained in England for two years. In my case, the teaching approach I received in London is a bit different from that in Moscow. The Russian approach tends to be more highly teacher-directed, a top down approach to learning; while my teacher in England is more flexible. He is very gentle and encourages a lot when teaching. I think both my Russian and British teachers are perfect in playing musically and technically. Their playing are at very highly international standard but the way they cope with student's problem is different."

Another Russian graduate studied for a Master of Performance Degree at Royal Academy of Music in London commented about her teacher:

> "My teacher in the UK was very nice. He used the different ways to help me, while my Russian teacher expected me to follow exactly the way he played as if I was a little girl. If my execution was not

> as good as it was supposed to be, my Russian teacher was sad and disappointed, sometimes angry and upset, while my teacher in the UK, realising that I could not play and get the sound as he wanted, attempted to impart the concept in another way."

In contrast, Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers justified their teaching behaviour:

> "How could I teach them more interesting things if they come to the lessons and expect me to correct the simple mistakes? I am always preoccupied with helping them to play the correct notes."

> "I do not like praising because if I do it, my students will become subjective and will not make an effort."

The above responses from the teachers reveal contrasting conceptions among them. If a teacher is in the habit of consistently pushing, leading and controlling to student's work with a judgmental attitude, it only adds to the power of the student's own internal negative and judgmental voice. What is needed are ways to express supporting, intelligent responses to the student's work that are honest, compassionate, respectful, and non-threatening. This healthy attitude towards their work will always be meaningful. Supporting also means reflecting back to the student the good things with a positive comment such as praising and helping them see what is good about their work.

Question 8: Do you think that students should normally take an active part in the lessons?

A good student is considered to be creative rather than being an object for manipulation. They should be able to express through their performance an emotional, intellectual and spiritual level of commitment. And part of teacher's job is to help them to refine and deepen the sensitivity of their abilities.

The results show a high score mean of 7.8 for UK trained teacher, suggesting that they strongly recommend their students to take an active part in the piano lessons. Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between Russian trained piano teachers and UK trained teachers ($p<0.0062$), but no difference between Vietnamese and Russian

trained teachers ($p<0.0662$). These few differences suggest that the beliefs of Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers with respect to being active for the students are quite similar, as indicated by the means of 5.7 and 4.5 respectively (see Table 6.13). Comparison of the most popular responses for British teachers shows some interesting insights:

> "I think it depends. It works well with a student who is more advanced and a divergent thinker, which is one who enjoys generating many possibilities and exploring them. They are not limited to only one solution. These students actually do better when they are encouraged to be active to make their own decisions. In this case, the teacher's role is only providing a framework within which the students' decisions need to be made. If their decisions cannot enhance the meaning of a piece, then there is the opportunity for both teacher and student for deeper discussion and demonstration. However this approach might not be successful for students who are convergent thinkers, who have not yet learned how to make musical decisions and who still need a model. They maybe become paralysed when confronted with too many options. It is helpful for them to replicate. We can teach interpretation by presenting a non-verbal demonstration of a passage on the piano, followed by a verbal description, and then return to the non- verbal demonstration. These students usually do better when they are given a model."

As expressed in the above comments from a British teacher, being active works well with students who are more already advanced and creative, copying the teacher as a model sometimes works well for students who are not ready to make their own decisions and still need to learn to become mature in their learning. There is a possibility for them to become active students at a later stage when they reach a higher level of proficiency.

Question 9: Should the teacher motivate the student by showing confidence in the student which in turn makes them feel confidence in themselves?

To bring into play the student's progress, the first important thing for the teacher is to believe in their student's success and encourage them to believe in themselves. Teachers need to let their students know about their expectations. Students need to hear from the teacher what they expect from them. It is completely appropriate for the teacher to base a student's responsibility and confidence on where he or she is at the time in their progress. Part of the teacher's work is to get them to the place where their confidence becomes broader and higher.

ANOVA showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p<0.0004$). The striking result obtained in response to this question was the statistically significant difference observed between UK and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0429$), and between UK and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0004$), indicating that UK trained teachers differed considerably from both Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers in the way they demonstrate their confidence in their students. Indeed, scores for UK trained teachers ($m = 8.0$) were significantly higher than the scores for Vietnamese trained teachers ($m = 6.0$) and Russian trained teachers ($m = 4.7$) (see Table 6.13) suggesting that while UK trained teachers might be more positive, Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers were less likely to show their students a positive future image that they were not sure about. As one of the Russian trained teachers stated:

> "I do not like to tell my students that they will succeed without putting in a great effort. I want them to know that success could not come easily without hard practicing."

A different opinion was expressed by UK trained teachers as following:

> "I think it is very important to show confidence in our students. After 15 years of teaching, I realized that if you make positive assumptions about a student, that student will find him or herself more able to develop into good performer and would grow into that image. I noticed that my willingness and ability to project the student's potential helped us both come closer to realizing it. You

> will be surprised at your students' abilities to grow into your vision of them. Conversely, if you regard your student negatively that will reduce a student's own beliefs, and that student will find him or herself less able to develop freely. Your measuring of them fixes them and makes it more difficult for them to change."

FACTOR 3: STUDENT CONTROL (1 QUESTION)

Question 10: What are the degrees of freedom which you give student in making decisions how to play a piece?

Good teaching method means helping students improve the way they think rather than telling them what to do. To many people, a common thought about teaching is usually telling and showing students what and how to do things. However, it also involves providing them experience and stimulating challenges to help them expand their perception beyond the boundaries instead of just telling what to think. A good teacher also knows how to provide students with ways to successfully meet challenges. If the teacher is a dictator in teaching, they might run the risk of giving students stress and make them passive in their learning. To impose a teacher's fixed and stereotypical ideas on a student would be less effective for the student's progress as opposed to encouraging them to be independent and creative.

Analysis of results (ANOVA) for this question showed a significant overall difference between the three countries ($p < 0.0001$) in the extent to which permission was given to students to be free to decide how to play the piece. Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between UK and Vietnam trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between Russian trained piano teachers and UK trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), but no difference between Vietnamese and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.1168$). This lack of difference suggests that Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers think similarly.

Results suggested that the teachers trained in UK give much more freedom to the students in making their own decisions about how to play a piece as compared to those

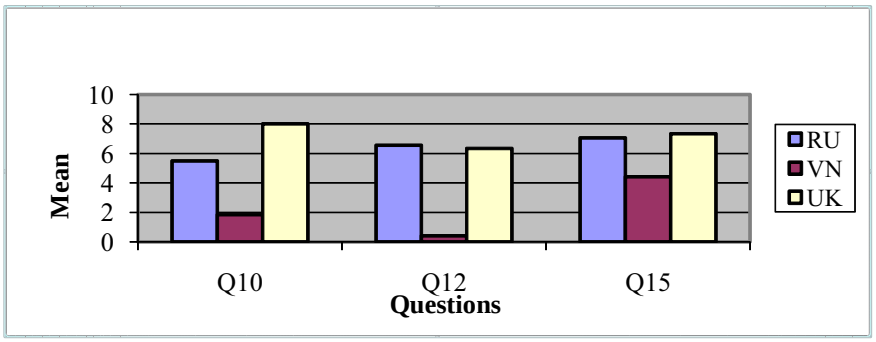
teachers who studied in Russia and Vietnam. Indeed, the UK trained teachers had the highest scores (m = 7.3). In a contrasting scenario, Russian trained teachers' score was only 2.6, followed by Vietnamese trained teachers with much lower scores (m = 1.7).

FACTOR 4: PRACTICAL AND TECHNICAL ADVICE (3 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.14 *Factor 4*

Questions	Mean	S.D	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 10: How often do you ask your student to analyse a new piece before playing it?	RU=5.500 VN=1.833 UK=8.000	RU=1.633 VN=0.718 UK=0.632	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0009 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 12: How often do you encourage student to employ mental practice without physical practice?	RU=6.563 VN=0.717 UK=6.333	RU=1.031 VN=0.515 UK=0.516	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 15: Do you always include specific instructions in how to practice?	RU=7.063 VN=4.417 UK=7.333	RU=0.998 VN=0.669 UK=0.816	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK p<0.0001

Figure 6.16 *Factor 4*



Question 10: How often do you ask your student to analyse a new piece before playing it?

One of the important aspects to ensure a successful performance is understanding the style and character of a musical composition. With good comprehension of texture, shape and sound of the piece they play, students could learn a piece in depth and play beautifully. The results show that UK trained teacher had a very high mean of 8.0,

suggesting that they value highly the importance of analysing a new piece before playing it. This is followed by Russian trained teachers with a mean of 5.5. Vietnamese trained teachers gained a low score of 1.8, indicating that analysing a new piece before playing plays a minor role in their lessons.

Question 12: How often do you encourage students to employ mental practice without physical practice?

The UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers were shown to be more likely than Vietnamese trained teachers to encourage their students to employ mental practice as indicated by the respective means of 6.3, 6.5 and 0.7. They value the importance of mental practice. It was clear that their perception of the value of mental practice was influenced by their past experiences in Russia or the UK. The lower mean for Vietnamese trained teachers indicates that there was an absence of mental practice in their lessons.

Question 15: Do you always include specific instructions on how to practice?

Learning the piano is a complicated process, so teachers are expected to provide specific instructions to students in very detailed and careful ways in order to help them to improve their piano skills in practice.

There were significant differences overall between the 3 groups ($p<0.0001$) but little difference between Russian trained teachers and UK trained teachers in their instructional behaviour reported as shown by the corresponding means of 7.0 and 7.3. The interviews with all three groups of teachers seemed to reveal that they all give appropriate instructions to their students as regards practising. Providing suitable guidance for practising appears to be a critically important factor in maintaining continued progress in student learning and helps them to follow program easily, as mentioned by one of UK trained teachers:

> "When giving instructions, I try to be specific with something like asking them to pay special attention to the melody and the way harmonic tension builds and resolves."

A Russian trained teacher expressed her view as follows:

> "I think students need specific guidance. I do not like to give an assignment under an assumption that students will know what to do. We need to guide them what to do for each task, why it is important, how to best go about doing it, what to change and how to change if they see they have problems."

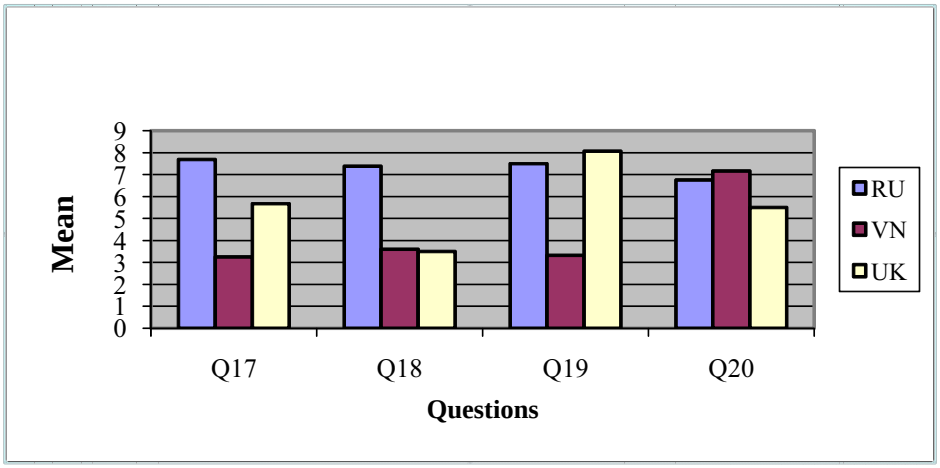
In addition to their responses, some observation of their lessons revealed that when it comes to instruct the student about their work, they were specific in the context of where the student was in terms of progress, and advice was based on the teacher's increasing ability to know students and to understand the real cause of problems. There is clear consensus among teachers about matters such as the need to provide detailed and specific instruction to students. The teachers' specific instructions were confirmed by the responses of students from question 15 (60 questions for students).

FACTOR 5: PIANO TECHNIQUE (4 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.15 *Factor 5*

Questions	Mean	S.D	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 17: Was a legato singing touch an important factor in your classes?	RU=7.688 VN=3.250 UK=5.667	RU=1.078 VN=0.866 UK=0.516	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0004 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 18: Do you ask students to make the piano "sing"?	RU=7.375 VN=3.600 UK=3.500	RU=1.147 VN=0.603 UK=1.049	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 19: How important is relaxation in your class?	RU=7.500 VN=3.333 UK=8.063	RU=1.389 VN=1.614 UK=0.548	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 20: How important do you think is the practice of scales and arpeggios?	RU=6.750 VN=7.167 UK=5.500	RU=1.291 VN=1.115 UK=1.049	RU vs. VN n. s RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK p<0.0309

Figure 6.17 *Factor 5*



The examples of teachers' beliefs about piano technique illustrate some differences in their teaching approach. While the Russian trained teachers focused on the importance of getting a singing sound, the prominent feature of their piano lessons in Russia, the UK trained teachers value the importance of relaxation. The Vietnamese trained teachers emphasise the need to practice scales and arpeggios.

Question 17: Was a legato singing touch an important factor in your classes?

and

Question 18: Do you ask students to make the piano "sing"?

These two questions examine piano teachers' perceptions as regards the importance of "singing" and sound vibration. It appears that Russian trained teachers put a much stronger emphasis on a singing tone in their lessons, as indicated by the high mean of 7.6 for question 17 and 7.3 for question 18. Observation by the researcher of their lessons confirms this result. The scores of UK trained teachers were not as high as those of Russian trained teachers, (m = 5.6 for question 17 and m = 3.5 for question 18), suggesting that they did not stress this aspect in their lessons as strongly as did Russian trained teachers. Vietnamese trained teachers scored lower means (m = 3.2 for question 17 and m = 3.6 for question 18) (see Table 6.15).

Question 19: How important is relaxation in your class?

It is impossible to produce a beautiful sound even with a slow piece of music or movement if muscles are tense. Students suffering from tension for a long time could be exposed to potential injuries. Understanding this tendency helps us to teach our students to be more aware of how to use the body.

Being aware that excess effort is a common problem that causes tight muscles and fatigue so that students cannot perform at top speed, UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers paid very strong attention to relaxation in their lessons. The results reflect this. UK trained teachers had a high mean (8.0), followed by Russian trained teachers (m = 7.5). This suggests that the UK trained teachers regarded relaxation as a more important factor than did Russian trained teachers. Finally, the Vietnamese trained teachers seemed to give the least attention to this aspect (m = 3.3) (see Table 6.15).

Question 20: How important do you think is the practice of scales and arpeggios?

Practicing scales can help you ease into performance gently. Proficient playing of scales in octaves, thirds, and sixths helps you to deal with technical issues. Everything becomes instinctive and whenever you see it in a new piece, because you would be able to play it without having to think. The importance of scale practice varies according to the level of the student.

It appears that playing scales is favoured most by Vietnamese trained teachers, as indicated by the high mean of 7.1 (see Table 6.15). Scores for Russian trained teachers (m =6.7) were higher than the scores for UK trained teachers (m =5.5), suggesting that while Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers valued practicing scales, UK trained teachers did not value it highly. As one of the students of UK trained teachers stated:

> "My teacher did not like the scales. She said that technique will develop itself through the pieces studied."

However many Vietnamese trained teachers view scales as a good form of improving technique for their students and some regard it as a fantastic thing to do. They think that

scales have an energizing, callisthenic quality. Similarly, Russian trained teachers encouraged their students to practice scales as follows:

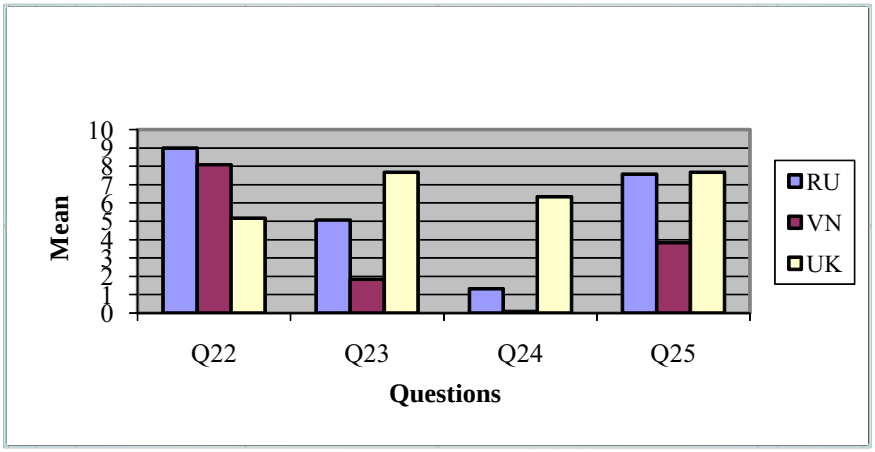
> "Let's practise them in a musical way. In a piece of music, every scale passage has a unique meaning and context and requires a unique practice approach. You could crescendo or decrescendo or both, or you could play legato or staccato."

FACTOR 6: REPERTOIRE (4 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.16 *Factor 6*

Questions	Mean	S.D	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 22: Do you usually prefer assigning music to your student?	RU=9.000 VN=8.083 UK=5.167	RU=0.516 VN=0.669 UK=0.408	RU vs. VN p<0.0007 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 23: Do you prefer for your student to select their own favourite music under: your instruction and agreement?	RU=5.063 VN=1.833 UK=7.667	RU=1.611 VN=0.718 UK=0.516	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0004 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 24: Do you encourage the student to learn the repertoire that you do not know, so you both could discover it together through decision about how to interpret it?	RU=1.313 VN=0.083 UK=6.333	RU=0.793 VN=0.289 UK=0.516	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 25: Do you suggest variety and breadth of styles?	RU=7.563 VN=3.833 UK=7.667	RU=0.892 VN=0.937 UK=1.033	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK p<0.0001

Figure 6.18 *Factor 6*



Question 22: Do you usually prefer assigning music to your student?

If the teachers do not know their students' preference regarding favourite style and repertoire, they might run the risk of giving them an assignment that will make them frustrated and confused. As a result, they might become inhibited.

The results indicate that teachers differed considerably in the way they assigned repertoires. Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers retain the habit of assigning the repertoire to their students, as shown by very high means of 9.0 and 8.0 respectively (see Table 6.16). They thought that they know their students' level of capabilities and what should be suitable for them. The UK trained teachers seem to be more flexible in this regard (m = 5).

Question 23: Do you prefer for your student to select their own favourite music under your instruction and agreement?

Allowing students to play their favourite repertoire could help them progress towards greater technical and artistic liberation. It is important to set goals together where the teacher and student can select music, set the pace and evaluate achievements mutually.

The results indicate that these three groups of teachers differed considerably in the way they assigned repertoires that are preferred by their students. Post Hoc comparison (Scheffé) revealed considerable differences between Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$) and between UK and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0004$). While the UK trained teachers encourage their students to choose their own preferred repertoires, as indicated by a high means of 7.6. In contrast, the Vietnamese trained teachers' mean was quite low (1.8) suggesting that they did not support the student's favourite repertoire in their lessons. The Russian trained teachers had a mean of 5.0 (see Table 6.16), suggesting that they might be aware of the importance of providing the pieces of music that their students are interested in playing and sometimes accepted student choice.

Question 24: Do you encourage the student to learn the repertoire that you do not know, so you both could discover it together through decision about how to interpret it?

It appears that learning repertoire that teachers find unfamiliar is not favoured by either Russian trained teachers or Vietnamese trained teachers as indicated by the low means of 1.3 and 0.08 respectively (see Table 6.16). The mean score for UK trained teachers (6.3) was significantly higher than those of Vietnamese trained teachers and Russian trained teachers, suggesting that while UK trained teachers might be much open-minded and prefer to discuss repertoire with their students. Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers did not tend to like their students selecting a repertoire that they did not know well, as one of the Vietnamese trained teachers said:

> "I usually assign my students the pieces I played when I was a student and the pieces that I like and know very well because I play and perform them many times."

Question 25: Do you suggest variety and breadth of styles?

The results show that UK trained teachers and Russian trained teachers view breadth of styles and covering a large repertoire are necessary for their students' learning. Indeed, the mean scores of Russian trained teachers and UK trained teachers were quite high (7.5 and 7.6 respectively). One of the Russian trained teachers explained as follows:

> "Depending on the level of their ability, I encourage them to extend their repertoire. They could learn a lot from experiencing different styles and composers of different times and centuries."

However the Vietnamese trained teachers saw things a little bit differently. Their mean was just 3.8. They expressed in the interview that they wanted their students to focus on a number of pieces they are currently playing in order to perfect them. Learning the pieces in depth is a good way to master the performance, they argued.

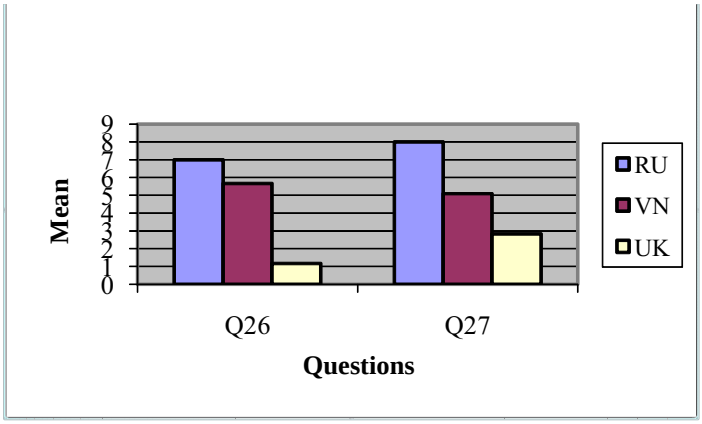
Developing flexible and creative thinking in assigning work to students needs to be based on where the students are in their development, what their level of capability is, and what might be most suitable for them at this time.

FACTOR 7: TECHNICAL SKILL (2 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.17 *Factor 7*

Questions	Mean	S.D	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 26: Was more attention given to technical skills?	RU=7.000 VN=5.667 UK=1.167	RU=0.121 VN=0.651 UK=0.753	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 27: Do you give your students more technical works (such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured form performance such as sonatas, concerto, rhapsody, scherzo...) in the early stage?	RU=8.000 VN=5.083 UK=2.833	RU=1.033 VN=1.730 UK=0.753	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.0060

Figure 6.19 *Factor 7*



Question 26: Was more attention given to technical skills?

and

Question 27: Do you give your students more technical works (such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured form performance such as sonatas, concerto, rhapsody, scherzo...) in the early stage?

It appears that although Russian trained teachers claimed that they prefer a balance between musical and technical training, they still put a strong emphasis on technical aspects, especially in the early stages of the study, as indicated by the high means of 7.0 for question 26 and 8.0 for question 27. For example, one Russian trained teacher stated:

> "They need to practice many technical exercises until they reach some level of technical proficiency. If they are not technically

> skilful, nothing positive could actually happen in their performance."

The Vietnamese trained teacher (m =5.6 for question 26 and m =5.0 for question 27) has a similar view:

> "I give them a lot of technical work such as etudes at first because I would prefer students have some good technical skills and know the text very well when they come to me, then I could talk mostly about the music."

However, UK trained teachers expressed a respect for a balanced approach between technical improvement and musical expression. Their low mean scores of 1.1 for question 26 and 2.8 for question 27 suggest that UK trained teachers did not focus on only one aspect of technical exercises in musical training, as two of UK trained teachers explained:

> "With me, technique is always related to the music, it was never just technique for its own sake."

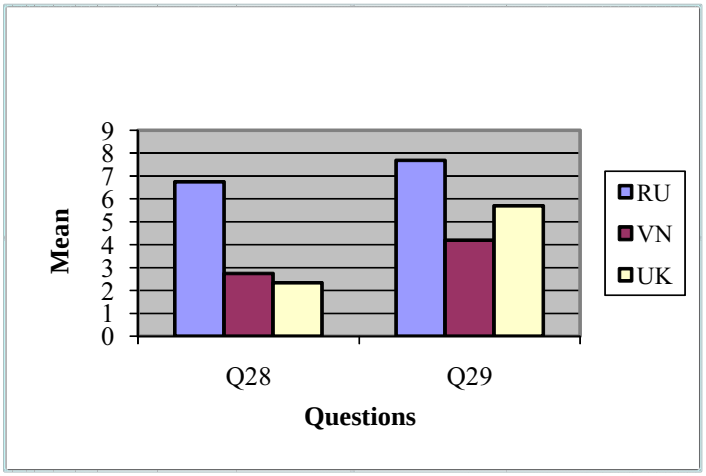
> "I try to make my students think intelligently about technique as well as about music."

FACTOR 8: NATIONALISM (2 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.18 *Factor 8*

Questions	Mean	S.D	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 28: Do you prefer to give your students more Russian compositions as compared to others?	RU=6.750 VN=2.750 UK=2.333	RU=1.342 VN=0.754 UK=0.516	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.9500
Question 29: Through learning Russian music, do Vietnamese students develop more artistic quality, heighten piano playing technique and emotional response to music?	RU=7.688 VN=4.200 UK=5.700	RU=0.946 VN=0.793 UK=0.816	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK n. s

Figure 6.20 *Factor 8*



Question 28: Do you prefer to give your students more Russian compositions as compared to others?

In the past 30 years in the conservatoire of music in Vietnam, there has been a tendency for the teachers to assign the repertoires that contain the music they absorbed when they were trained overseas. ANOVA showed a significant difference between the three countries ($p<0.0001$) in terms of teachers' reference towards assigning Russian compositions. Post Hoc (Scheffé) comparisons of countries show a significant difference between UK and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), and between Vietnamese trained teachers and Russian trained teachers ($p<0.0001$), but no significant difference between UK and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.95$). As expected, there was no strong preference for Russian music among these teachers. Perhaps one might expect this, but Russian piano music forms a strong body of compositions in the piano repertoire generally. Nevertheless, the scores for UK trained teachers were only 2.3 and for Vietnamese trained teachers were 2.7 (see Table 6.18). In contrast, the Russian trained teachers have a much higher score of 6.7, as one Russian trained teacher expressed:

"I never feel tired of Russian compositions."

Question 29: Through learning Russian music, do Vietnamese students develop more artistic quality, heighten piano playing technique and emotional response to music?

Famous Russian compositions fascinate many greatest piano masters and piano students worldwide. Rachmaninoff is one of those great Russian composers. His pianism is generally considered among the finest of the twentieth century. It displays important features and characteristic of the Russian school of piano playing: effortless technical ability; interpretative freedom; creative freedom in dynamics and phrasing. His Prelude in C # Minor, for example, shows great quality of sound, as well as fullness and beauty. Especially important is Rachmaninoff's use of unusually wide-spread chords for bell-like sounds: this occurs in many pieces, most notably in the Second Piano Concerto, and the B-minor prelude

ANOVA showed a significant difference between the three countries ($p < 0.0001$) in terms of teachers' belief towards students' progress in playing Russian compositions. As indicated in the Table 6.18, the results reveal high mean score for the Russian trained teachers (7.6), but lower mean scores for UK and Vietnamese trained teachers ($m = 5.7$ and 4.2, respectively). These results suggest that Russian trained teachers believe highly in the benefit their students might gain from learning Russian compositions. Two Russian trained teachers explained their views as follows:

> "By teaching a lot of Russian music, I think I can give students a musical culture that enlarges their techniques. For example, for bigger jumps and more extreme tempos and dynamics etc., and that development helps them play better in general whether it is Liszt, Grieg, or Schumann."

> "It cultivates emotional flexibility to the maximum, as well as promoting mental clarity, physical ease and vivid listening. All of these elements become integrated and work together."

FACTOR 9: LISTENING (1 QUESTION)

Question 30: How often do you have the student listen to high-quality examples or aural examples such as your demonstration or taped performance models?

As mentioned in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 (Listening), piano pedagogy should involve sensory learning through the development of listening skills which is most important for our students. The ears must listen intently for what is coming.

This refers to the comprehensive use of professional recordings of the studied repertoire as ideal models for students to learn. It has many positive effects on student playing. The UK (m = 6.3), and especially the Russian trained teachers (m = 7.6) are more likely than Vietnamese trained teachers (m = 1.8) to guide students towards stylistically appropriate recordings and suggest which particular versions they want their students to hear. This indicates that Russian and UK trained teachers are aware of the benefit of recordings, which helps their students to understand style and performance conventions better. These following are isolated extracts from Russian trained teachers' guidance to their students:

> "You need to listen more to the orchestral music, to the different instruments, that would enrich your musical imagination in terms of polyphonic element, dialogues, variety of tone. Opera is also good for you; you will know how to play beautiful legato on piano and how to phrase the music."

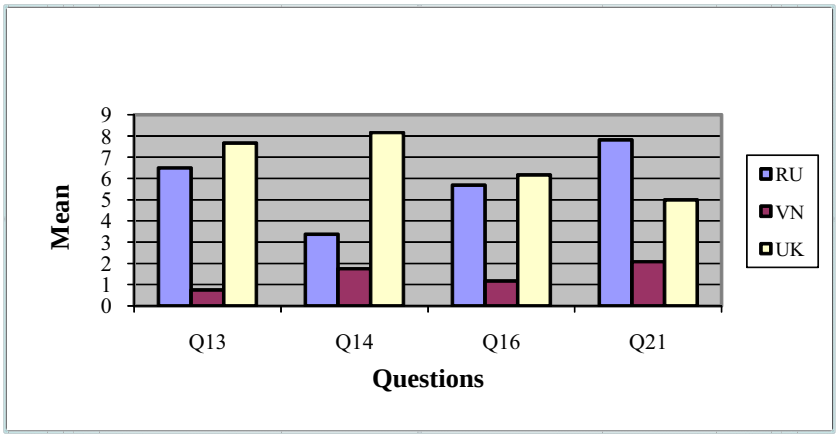
Having students listen to live performances or recordings is the best way to truly engage them in the art of listening to the language of music. Especially experiencing a live performance is inspiring. Obviously students need to be taught to listen for such nuances and to understand the subtle differences that distinguish the style of each composer and genre. From the beginning the ear must be developed.

FACTOR 10: TEACHING STYLE AND APPROACH (4 QUESTIONS)

Table 6.19 *Factor 10*

Questions	Mean	S.D	Post Hoc Sheffe
Question 13: Should the teacher analyse his/her own playing to explain to the student how the teacher solves a technical problem?	RU=6.500 VN=0.750 UK=7.667	RU=1.211 VN=0.622 UK=0.816	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 14: Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way?	RU=3.375 VN=1.750 UK=8.167	RU=0.806 VN=0.754 UK=0.753	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 16: Should a teacher describe the whole picture of the piece of music before actually teaching it?	RU=5.688 VN=1.167 UK=6.167	RU=1.852 VN=1.193 UK=0.753	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK n. s VN vs. UK p<0.0001
Question 21: How important do you think is playing from memory in your class?	RU=7.813 VN=2.083 UK=5.000	RU=1.109 VN=1.165 UK=0.632	RU vs. VN p<0.0001 RU vs. UK p<0.0001 VN vs. UK p<0.0001

Figure 6.21 *Factor 10*



Effective teaching approach facilitates student's learning process. While UK trained teachers value the importance of describing the whole picture of the piece of music before actually teaching it and presenting technical advices and supports in a humorous way, the Russian trained teachers focused on the importance of playing from memory in the lessons and the Vietnamese trained teachers were concise in analysing his/her own playing in order to explain to the student how they solved a particular technical problem.

Question 13: should the teacher analyse his/her own playing to explain to the student how the teacher solves a technical problem?

The results show that the scores of UK trained teachers were slightly higher than that of Russian trained teachers, as shown by the respective means of 7.6 and 6.5 (see Table 6.19). This suggests that there was no significant difference in their teaching approach regarding teacher's analysing his/her own playing to explain to the student how the teacher solves a technical problem ($p<0.058$). Although the statistic data show there were striking differences between Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers ($p<0.0001$); and between Vietnamese and UK trained teachers ($p<0.0001$) and the Vietnamese trained teachers' mean was only 0.7, observations by the researcher of Vietnamese trained teachers' lessons revealed that the Vietnamese trained teachers employed this approach even more than the UK and Russian trained teachers. The reason for this, it is suggested, is culture. The question asks them to rate a quality in their own teaching concerning explaining to their students an analysis of their own playing. In practice, as observed by this research, they did just that. The reason why they did not acknowledge this of themselves is entirely due to a Confucian attitude which tends to downplay one's own virtues rather than elevate them. The Confucian background of Asians, and especially in Vietnam, would not promote praising oneself.

In contrast, the UK and Russian trained teachers had no such cultural inhibitions. They merely answered as truthfully as they could as to whether or not they practiced such an approach. The following is a response from a Russian trained teacher, who supports the teaching approach of analysing her own playing to explain to the student how the teacher solves a technical problem:

> "I tell them sometimes about my past experience when I had problems and how I solved them. Bringing the student to an understanding of how you work out the problem is an important step. For example, when I did not produce a good sound, I discerned whether the problem is one of the hand position or inhibited physical sensitivity or that I simply could not reproduce what I heard in my inner ear and so on. Sometimes problems have simple solutions if you are willing to change your level of consciousness and be creative in thinking."

This response from a Russian trained teacher was expressed in the interview and it illustrates very clearly a similar attitude and approach to those of Vietnamese trained teachers. However, the Confucian characteristic of the Vietnamese trained teachers overcomes a sense of objectivity necessary to analyse what they do in their teaching:

> "If my student expresses difficulty, I told them that I had the same experiences in order to let them avoid the feeling of frustration. Because some students experience overwhelming difficulty, their first thought would be to assume that something is wrong with them."

The above explanations of both Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers indicate that learning through teacher's past experiences helps the student learn a better way of solving problem for themselves. They wanted their students to be aware of the problem and how they attempt to solve it. Problems are rarely solved without a fundamental change of insight. This change of insight allows them to change the process. They need to be able to discover a solution. When there are problems to be solved, it is important to examine the process and how it needs to change.

Question 14: Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way?

Zhukov (2004) states that the relationship between tertiary music teachers and students can be evaluated by the rapport between them and this rapport can be judged by the presence or lack of humour in lessons (joking, smiling and laughing between them).

The analysis of teachers' opinions revealed a considerable difference between UK teachers and Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers. It appears that UK trained teachers who had the highest rating means (8.1) value the use of jokes in the lessons, indicating that the UK trained teachers are more humorous in their lessons in attempting to deflect their possible negative evaluation to make students feel at ease. This helps students have more fun and learn in an enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere.

In contrast, it does not seem that the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers favour the use of humour as their teaching strategy in the lessons. Their means were low. This was

confirmed by their students' responses in question 11 from 60 questions for students. Although the Vietnamese trained teachers had the higher rating mean (3.3) for jokes than Russian trained teachers (m =1.7), the rating means of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers were far below the midpoint of 5.0, and the mean of the UK trained teachers (see Table 6.19).

Question 16: Should a teacher describe the whole picture of the piece of music before actually teaching it?

When introducing a new piece or a new technique, it would be good idea to give some basic direction and advice that can lead the student to successful mastery. Clearly framing the lessons with an expression of direction will help students understand the context of work. If the teacher presents material for the first time with clear and creative explanations about the piece, students will have a better opportunity to learn with ease and enjoyment.

The UK trained teachers had the highest mean score of 6.1, indicating that they support the teaching method of demonstrating the context of the piece before actually teaching it on the piano. This approach to teaching was observed in many master classes at the Royal College of Music in London including Bernard D' Ascoli's Piano master class on Wednesday 27 October 2004 and Leslie Howard's on 5 November 2004. Although the Russian trained teachers' score was slightly lower than that of UK trained teacher with the mean of 5.6, there was little evidence regarding this approach in the observation of actual lessons of Russian trained teachers. The same situation was observed in the lessons of Vietnamese trained teachers, as indicated by the low mean of 1.1 (see Table 6.19).

Question 21: How important do you think is playing from memory in your class?

As mentioned in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 (Memory), regular playing from memory helps students get familiar with the mental process of performing from memory in the concert context and learning how to cope with memory lapses. The results show that Russian trained teachers strongly recommended playing from memory, as shown by the

very high mean of 7.8. While the UK trained teachers also value this aspect of memorising the piece of music with a mean of 5.0. However, Vietnamese trained teachers had a lower mean of 2.0. One Russian trained teacher illustrated his view about the importance towards playing from memory as often as possible:

> "Students are usually anxious about being able to perform well from memory. I think no one could make sure that memory would be perfect in the performance, that nothing would go wrong. Human error happens to everybody. So what they need to learn is how to find the way out of the problem. They need to know the music well enough to create a safety net to catch them if some memory slip occurs while performing. For example, if their hand got lost and skips a few notes, they have to know what comes next and should be able to jump to the proper key without missing a couple of beats and go on as usual as though nothing had happened. This strategy would help student relax when playing from memory."

Interesting comments were made by the Russian trained teacher during the interviews regarding their support for playing from memory. It was clear that their perception as to the prevalence of playing from memory was influenced by their Russian teacher's attitudes and behaviours. The results of this study support earlier research on the need of playing from memory in instrumental music lessons. The different educational settings, in which the three types of teachers' education were undertaken, could possibly account for the difference in the finding on their teaching approaches.

CHAPTER 7

FINAL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, I wish to highlight a few findings of this study which I feel are most significant: achieving a powerful and substantial sound; the requirement for "singing" quality on the piano; the solid technical training which requires an enormous amount of practice time and the necessity to playing from memory. These are four prominent features of the Russian piano school. In addition, Vietnamese students' problems regarding rhythmic accuracy highlight an inherent difference between the Vietnamese and Russian piano schools.

Some other findings were also important, but perhaps less significant in terms of major differences between Russian teachers and those from the UK and Vietnam. These can be summarized under the following headings: use of mental practice; the role of listening; teacher demonstration; and finally freedom for students in learning and making decisions (choice of repertoire; performance opportunities for students; students' emotional reactions) and the more liberal approach of the UK teachers and the piano teaching styles at Hanoi Conservatory that have been influenced by the Russian piano school.

As discussed in Chapter 2, cultures in contact over a considerable period influence intellectual traditions, practices and habits are related to musical expression and the manner of teaching it. The energy generated by such contacts in educational and government institutions may result in new attainments which have a partially or wholly positive effect on the musical health of the society (Kartomi and Blum, 1994). This study investigates the results of cultural contacts in schools of music between Vietnamese and Russian-style piano pedagogy and associated educational ideas and methods. The convergence of Vietnamese traditional and imported educational practices

is seen as a favourable synthesis of both worlds. The data and results of the empirical studies in this thesis would seem to confirm that.

The purpose of this study was to compare various teaching approaches and learning styles, the reactions of students to the three different sources of training of piano teachers from Russia, Vietnam and England in order to investigate effects of culture on piano pedagogy, effects of different musical traditions and requirements of expression in piano performance where students are from a cultural background different from that of their teacher.

Since Russian trained teachers constitute the major source of the Piano Faculty of the Hanoi Conservatoire, this study attempted to investigate the following issues: 1) how Vietnamese graduates (Russian graduates) were trained by Russian piano schooling, and how their attitudes and behaviours changed after their Russian time; 2) to what extent the influence from the Russian School exists in Vietnam through Russian graduates' teaching at Hanoi Conservatory and what factors may weaken that influence on Vietnamese piano pedagogy. Beside Russian graduates teachers, a small number of teachers trained in England and Vietnam were also invited, and this thesis compared their approaches. This comparison enables the researcher to highlight a "typical" Russian trained teacher, the main transcribers of Russian influence on Vietnamese piano pedagogy.

POWERFUL AND SUBSTANTIAL SOUND

According to Gabriel Tacchino, a student of Marguerite Long, the Russian school is concerned with tone weight and a strong sound (Timbrell, 1999). According to Gerig (1974), the great Russian pianists such as Rubinstein, Heinrich Neuhaus and Neuhaus' students, Sviatoslav Richter and Emil Gilels, exerted a lasting effect and a profound influence in music education circles in Russia. In supporting the concept of a powerful sound, Professor Neuhaus stated that due to growing demands of composers to make the piano's volume of tone commensurate with a work such as Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto, it is essential to use this kind of force. He also claimed

> "that the principle "slowly and loud" or if possible "fast and loud" is only one of the many true principles of technical work…As a child and as a young man, Emil Gilels did a great deal of technical work this way…Richter, too, used to thump away when he began his concert career, and Vladimir Horowitz, when he was seventeen or eighteen used to bang so mercilessly that it was almost impossible to listen to him in a room. True, Gilels never banged, but at that age he was very fond of playing very fast and very loud."
>
> Neuhaus (1974, pp. 90-91)

To underscore the Russian approach of favouring a powerful and substantial sound, Lhevinne (1974) stated:

> "Rubinstein could be heard over the entire orchestra playing fortissimo. The piano seemed to peal out gloriously as the king of the entire orchestra; but there was never any suggestion of noise, no disagreeable pounding." (p. 292)

As regards to the importance of weight and depth of tone, and big sonority, one of the prominent features of the Russian school of piano playing, most of the Vietnamese music students seem to have problems with this. This was clearly revealed from the evidence in the questionnaires and interviews. Many of the Russian graduates reported that their Russian teachers thought they did not have enough "big sound" in the first few years of their study (e.g., question 55 from 100 questions for Russian graduates). As one of them recalled:

> "My teacher hated it when the sound was thin and uninteresting. She wanted a vibrant, expressive sound and favoured dramatic contrast of dynamics and touch. She taught me how to project sound in large halls".

In the response to question 47 (from 60 questions for students), the influence of the Russian school through these Russian trained teachers is more apparent when

interesting comments were made by their students during the interviews regarding the importance of a powerful sound. They revealed that their Russian trained teachers were very interested in a big sonority and were not happy and criticized them if they could not produce enough of a big sound. The Russian trained teachers focus on how to develop a big sound without "banging". It was clear that the Vietnamese students' perceptions as to the importance of a powerful sonority were also influenced from the Russian school in Vietnam through their Russian trained teachers' attitudes and behaviours.

A student who had a chance to study with both a Russian trained teacher and a Vietnamese trained teacher revealed an interesting comparison:

> "I studied with a Russian trained teacher first and then I moved to a Vietnamese trained teacher because my Russian trained teacher had gone overseas. I brought the same piece that I had studied with the Russian trained teacher to the Vietnamese trained teacher's piano lesson. The big sound in the climax that I played and which made my Russian teacher pleased turned out to be noisy in the opinion of my Vietnamese trained teacher".

These examples demonstrate how Russian teachers demanded a greater volume of sound than other teachers in this study.

A possible reason that Vietnamese students lack powerful sound in piano playing as compared to Russian pianists can be explained as follows. A main difference between typical Russian and Vietnamese people lies in their comparative physical strength and body weight. Although there exist some exceptions where Vietnamese people with a fine, strong body could produce a powerful sound, it is generally easier for Russian people with a larger body weight to play powerfully. As a result their general approach to the piano is a bit different to that of the Vietnamese. So it can be readily understood why Vietnamese teachers cannot easily apply everything they learned from their time in Russia into their pedagogical practices in Vietnam.

Some common responses from Russian trained teachers explaining this are as follows:

> "I think many of our Vietnamese music students seem to have problems with producing enough power in their piano sound. They lack the weight and depth of sound, one of the prominent features of the Russian school"

Although the Vietnamese students have been taught by Russian trained teachers, who probably have enough Russian piano technique to help their students, generally these teachers feel that their students still have a serious weakness in providing a big sound.

Another of the possible reasons which might explain this problem lies in the topography of each country. Vietnam is a tiny country as compared to Russia. Russian music depicts a highly romantic country with a rich history of romantic literature and the arts in the European traditions, and the enormous Russian rural setting with spectacular scenes across the vast country stretching into Asia provides a special perspective felt only by those growing up in Russia. The topography of Vietnam is completely different, and engenders completely different feeling, images, and situations. Although both Russian and Vietnamese music is romantic and melancholic, Russian music is polyphonic, heroic, impassioned, melodramatic, high in emotional tension and force, while Vietnamese music is monophonic, gentle, subtle, and lyrical. For these reasons, many Vietnamese students have been found to lack the necessary mental attitudes of thought necessary to naturally produce a powerful sound in their playing of Russian music. However, due to the nature of Russian and Vietnamese music, both of which have beautiful and lyrical tunes, Vietnamese students are happier with, and familiar with, a singing style and its expressive qualities, which represent another important feature of the Russian school and will be discussed in the following section (see *Dang Thai Son*'s comment about Vietnamese students' sensitivity to melodious pitch in Chapter 7- Rhythm).

DEVELOPING A "SINGING" QUALITY ON THE PIANO

> "Music all starts with singing. Every instrument, no matter how you look at it, still imitates the human voice."
>
> Simon (1987, p. 121)

This was discussed in Chapter 6 (questions 57, 58 for Russian graduates and questions 49 and 51 for students) and Chapter 3, in the section "Developing singing quality on the piano", describing how this can be achieved on the piano. The Russian school has traditionally been concerned with singing quality. Indeed, Gerig stated that:

> "Like Rubinstein and all of the Russian school, the emphasis is on thinking moods into the fingers and arms. A beautiful singing tone must first be conceived mentally. Then the richness and singing quality of the tone depends very largely (1) upon the amount of key surface covered with the well-cushioned part of the finger and (2) upon the natural "spring" which accompanies the loose wrist."
>
> Gerig (1974, p. 302)

According to Leschetizky who was the head of the piano faculty of the St. Petersburg Conservatory:

> Everything always had to sing (*петь*), to have a round sound.
>
> Timbrell (1999)

This is consistent with John Browning's comment. He was also a student of a famous Russian teacher Rosina Lhevinne. He stated that

> "You have to give the piano the ability to sing (*петь*). I think that this is what most pianists after forty wake up to, singing at the piano, which is the hardest single thing. The main thing we must

> try to do is to imitate good *bel canto* singing, both stylistically and in terms of sound (*звук*) ."
>
> Browning (1987, p. 29)

Neuhaus stated that inability to listen to the singing of the piano was the cause of mistakes among pupils of average attainment. He urged his students "to listen to good singers, violinists, cellists who have a perfect mastery of cantilena and know how to extract the full cantabile quality out of short notes" (Neuhaus, 1974, pp. 45, 46).

The importance of making the piano sing is also supported by Bella Davidovich, one of Russia's foremost pianists who won the Chopin Competition and was taught by a famous Russian Professor Constantine Igumnov. She said that

> From an early age, she was taught to make the piano sing and approach the keys very delicately on the keyboard and "to feel all the subtle differences between the various touches. There is a whole range of sounds which counts as the piano."
>
> Davidovich (1987, p. 41)

Similarly, Vladimir Horowitz voiced the view:

> "From the moment one feels that the finger must sing, it becomes strong."
>
> Gerig (1974, p. 106)

Gerig (1974) commented that this approach of Horowitz follows the older traditions and reflects major trends of the Russian school; that is, it leads to the expressive treatment of technique. So there is no doubt that the approach that reflects a key characteristic of the Russian music schools is an expressive treatment of technique, that is reflected in "singing" scales instead of playing to metronome monotony. This emphasises developing a legato singing touch, and playing musically at all times.

> "The cultivation of a singing touch should be a part of the daily work of every student"
>
> Gerig (1974, p. 302).

The results of this present study strongly supported the above statements. In question 57 from 100 questions for Russian graduates, all respondents agree that one of the prominent features in their piano lessons in Russia was to get a singing, vibrant sound (m = 8.1, S.D. = 0.8 indicating very high levels of agreement between each subject). They recalled that their Russian teachers put such a strong emphasis on a singing tone and the words they commonly heard in their piano lessons were *звучать* (to sound) and *петь* (to sing). Another Russian graduate also recalled her Russian teacher's suggestion:

> "I remember my teacher advising me to imitate the human voice, for example the voice of a singer and get an idea of how a good singer would shape a phrase."

The results from question 51 for students in Vietnam reveal some features in common with Russian graduates' piano lessons in Russia regarding singing tone in piano playing. The three types of students, of Russian trained teachers, of British trained teachers and of Vietnamese trained teachers, were all asked the same question: to rate to what extent they experienced their teachers asking them to make the piano "sing". The results reveal that the students of Russian trained teachers were more often asked to highlight the singing tone in piano playing than students of British and Vietnamese trained teachers, as shown by the respective means: Russian m = 8.1; British m = 6.1; Vietnamese m = 2.3.

As a final comment for this section regarding "singing" quality on the piano, the finding that the recollections of Russian trained teachers were relatively consistent with the responses of their students, suggests the Russian influence still affects their music teaching style at the conservatory in Vietnam.

TECHNIQUE

From the second half of the 19th century, the school of Russian pianists began to gain international recognition. And when the Russians finally came into their own, they quickly took over the piano scene. The Russians have always been quick to absorb the best of Western European influences (Gerig, 1974, p. 288). In Leschetizky's eyes, the Russians stand first because of their

> "Prodigious technique, they have passion, dramatic power, elemental force, and extraordinary vitality"
>
> Gerig, (1974, p. 287)

Lhevinne[11] (1974) expressed how the Russian pianist achieved his famous technique. He stated:

> "They build not upon sands, but upon rock. For instance, in the conservatory examination the student is examined first upon technique. If he fails to pass the technical examination he is not even asked to perform his piece. According to Russian standard assessment, united with musical values, technical training must be remarkably solid and thorough. Lacking technical proficiency is considered a similar deficiency as lacking the ability to speak simple phrases correctly."
>
> Lhevinne (1974, p.301)

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[11] Josef Lhevinne was Safonov's greatest student. He taught at the Moscow Conservatory before coming to the United States and became members of the piano faculty of the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. Among the Lhevinnes' enormous number of famous students was Van Cliburn - the winner of the first Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow at the height of the Cold War. Van Cliburn tore down cultural barriers years ahead of glasnost and perestroika, reaching out across political frontiers with a universal message all could greet with joy: the message of beautiful music

Lhevinne went on to explain that

> "... particular attention is given to the mechanical side of technique and the exercises. The full course at the leading Russian conservatories is one of about eight or nine years. During the first five years, the pupil is supposed to be building the base upon which must rest the more advanced work of the artist. The last three or four years at the conservatory are given over to the study of master works."
>
> Lhevinne (1974, p.301)

Rachmaninoff (Gerig, 1974, p. 302) and Prof. A.A.Nikolaev, prorector at the Moscow Conservatory, reinforces Lhevinne's description of conservatory technical development during the first five years of study:

> "We do not have a special technical program of examinations since any pianist or student of piano entering the conservatory is extremely well prepared in piano technique which he receives in any middle-educational institution prior to entering the conservatory. In our program of examinations, we include compositions bringing out a vast technical ability of a young musician. Frequently students perform etudes by Chopin, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Debussy."
>
> Gerig (1974, p. 301)

These descriptions were strongly supported by the evidence in the interviews of this current study (questions 63, 72 and 73 for Russian graduates). Browning, the American concert pianist referred to warm-up exercises:

> "What I do is largely double sixths exercises. They are Russian exercises that I do, in the way I was trained by Mrs. Lhevinne, and they are just mainly alternate fingers, strengthening the fourth and fifth fingers. The double sixths give stretch and also force a legato on the upper fingers." (Browning, 1987)

Gerig stressed the technical development in the syllabus of Russian school:

> "The teacher must in every way encourage the student to work on the perfection of his technique…velocity, agility, evenness are achieved by systematic work on etudes, scales, and exercises"
>
> Gerig (1974, pp.310, 311)

The influence of the Russian syllabus is clearly evident in that of the Hanoi Conservatory in Vietnam. The answers to the questions 56 for students, questions 72 and 73 for Russian graduates and questions 26 and 27 for teachers confirm this point. The syllabus stresses the importance of technical development gained through systematic work on etudes, scales, and exercises.

The Russian school's most lasting effect was felt in Vietnam where Russian trained teachers exerted profound influence in music education circles. The emphasis on technical exercises was clearly revealed by their students in the interviews (e.g., question 58 from 60 questions for all students), in which the students revealed that, in their practice sessions, fifty-eight per cent of the time they had a technical orientation with an emphasis on technical exercises like practising more etudes. Of the remaining time, 18 per cent of the practice was spent on scales, and only 24 per cent was spent on musical pieces.

This indication of the influence from Russian school of piano education (e.g., questions 63, 65 and 73 from 100 questions for Russian graduates) was again confirmed by Russian graduates, who stated that they spent a great deal of time on technique. The very high requirement of piano technique according to Russian standards must be obtained in an artistically qualified way that includes much more than the action of fingers and hands only. However in the early stage, teachers made them work hard on

different kinds of etudes and on Bach playing in order to provide young students with a good and strong base which served as a vehicle for expressing a technical approach to the piano. They had to work to strengthen their fourth and fifth fingers as well as on exercises for the wrist, finger independence, and passage of the thumb and so on.

The interviews revealed the typical content of Russian graduates' practice at the very beginning of their studying in Russia. The quality of the work and the constant refinement of the performance are more important than quantity which comprises merely a great number of exercises. They were not required to work on technique just with mechanical execution, but to think about nuance, evenness, touch, rhythm, artistic images, and similar things, in all the technical exercises.

PRACTICE TIME

This section examines the Russian influence, through the learning environment, on Vietnamese students in Russia regarding their change in attitude towards practice time. Ericsson, Krampe, and Heizman (1993) stressed the importance of environmental factors in the musical development of expert performers. They found that "from early ages their lives appear to maximize the influence of environmental activities relating to deliberate practice that improves a specific type of performance". The results of the present study confirm this finding. On the basis of interviews and questionnaires, Vietnamese students in Russia were found to spend a considerably larger amount of time per day on practice than they did before studying in Russia. They affirmed that their time in Russia changed their attitude towards practicing in terms of length and regularity. The results of questions 49 and 50 from 100 questions for Russian graduates revealed that their practicing behaviours differed significantly, with an average of around 3 hours and 30 minutes per day before their time in Russia, but this increased to around 7 hours whilst in Russia. This result strongly supports the findings by Sosniak (1985) and Barry and Hallam (2002):

> "Typically, 16 years of practice are required to achieve levels that will lead to international standing in playing an instrument"
>
> Sosniak (1985)

> "The individual usually begins to play at a very early age, with about 25 hours of practice being undertaken weekly by adolescence, increasing to as much as 50 hours."
>
> Barry and Hallam (2002, p. 152)

The Vietnamese students trained in Russia explained that this substantial change occurred due to the learning environment in Russia where other students around them also practiced all day, attended regular rehearsals and examinations, and the teachers' high requirements for achievement demanded an enormous amount of practice time.

These results of the current study also supported those reported by Howe, Davidson and Sloboda (1998) who stated that high levels of accomplishment invariably require lengthy and intensive practice and training. Ericsson, Krampe, and Heizman (1993) viewed practice as the most important activity for improvement of violin performance, and its daily amount is remarkably stable. As also mentioned in Chapter 4, Ericsson and his co-workers found strong correlations between the level of performance of student violinists in their twenties and the number of hours of formal practice they had engaged in. They also found that the best students in the performance class of a conservatoire spent double the amount of hours practicing as compared to that by students in the same institution who were training to be violin teachers (Ericsson, Krampe, and Heizman, 1993; Ericsson, Tesch-Romer, and Krampe, 1990).

To further examine if the Russian influence still exists in Vietnam through Russian graduates who became Russian trained teachers, questionnaires and interviews with their students were undertaken. Interesting results from question 57 (from 60 Questions for students) revealed that the students of Russian trained teachers did significantly more practice than the other two groups. On average, they did almost four times as much practice as the students of Vietnamese trained teachers, and around twice as much practice as the students of British trained teachers. So there seems to be a close relationship between Russian trained teachers' practice behaviours when they were in Russia and that of their students in Vietnam.

PRACTICE AND ACHIEVEMENT

There is a strong positive relationship between practice and achievement in musical performance, as reported in Sloboda *et al.*. (1996). They studied the relationship between achievement of examination grades and practice. Having established reliable group differences in achievement, they examined the relationship between grade level and accumulated practice directly. Their conclusion from the data was that the earlier achievements are a direct result of having accumulated the required hours of practice at a faster rate. For example the amount of practice reported for group 1 from the age of 4 up to the age of 17 increased from under 300 hours to just nearly 7000 hours (p. 295).

> "It takes about 350 hours of initial work to achieve the standards required for the preliminary grade, 100 additional hours for the next two grades, and then a gradually increasing amount for each subsequent grade. The average amount of accumulated practice required to reach Grade 8 is around 3300"
>
> Sloboda *et al.*. (1996, p. 300)

In accordance with this finding, Renwick (2000) also stated that time spent practising was related to performance achievement. Similarly, McPherson (2000) stated that practice time was a significant predictor of achievement.

In order to examine the relationship between practice and achievement, this study uses the measures of achievement in examination assessment at the Hanoi Conservatoire of Music which has the following differences between a minimal pass (6.0 to 8.0/10), a distinction (9.5/10) and high distinction (9.6- 10/10). Those who are awarded a mark below 8.0/10 are considered low achieving students and those awarded above 9.5 /10 are considered high achieving students. The results of this present study indicated that high achieving students required more than four hours per day of practise in order to achieve a high distinction.

Although there are wide individual differences, such differences occur in all groups, and the highest ratios of practice time are found among the high achieving students, rather than among the low achieving students. The low achieving students' practice behaviour

also suggests that it may not have been simply the small quantity of practice that led to sub-optimal musical achievement, but also the cognitive quality of that practice. Possible causes include differences in efficiency of practice strategies.

The lowest achieving students did proportionately the least amount of practice. This corresponds with the data produced by Sloboda *et al..* (1996) which showed that " high achievers practise the most, moderate achievers practise a moderate amount, and low achievers practise hardly at all" (p. 306). The following response of one of the students in this Vietnamese study illustrates this point. When asked what she knew about other low achieving students' practice time in this study, she answered:

> "Oh, I know those who always have low marks in the examination hardly practise and there were many days they did not practise at all. They only practise one month before examination in order to pass the exam"

This typical case of low achieving students happens in groups of students of both Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers indicating the tendency to cope badly with examinations. This low musical achievement, therefore, might be partly explained by the quantity of practice these students undertook. Interview data suggested an estimate of only around 30 minutes of average daily practice for such low achieving students, a figure that was considerably lower than the mean of the total sample which was 3.5 hours. These results confirm the findings by Oxendine:

> Individuals who are more competent in a particular activity can effectively practice that activity for longer periods than individuals who are less competent
>
> Oxendine (1984)

Likewise, O'Neill (1997) observed that higher achieving instrumental music students practiced more than lower achieving students.

STABILITY OF PRACTICE

Sloboda *et al..* (1996, p. 307) found that "high achievers tend to show more day-to-day stability in practising habits than low achievers". This finding corresponds with that of the study by Ericsson *et al..* (1993), in which high achieving musicians tend to concentrate practice in the morning to a greater extent than other groups. They had timetabled several opportunities for practice within the school day including practice in the morning before school. On average, the high achieving group (group 1) did around 44 per cent of their practice on scales in the morning compared to around 25 per cent for the other groups. In order to assess the stability of practice patterns over the course of the 42 weeks of the diary, standardized estimates of each individual's variation in time spent on scales and repertoire were calculated. *Post hoc* tests revealed that the high achieving group showed significantly less variation in scales practice over the 42 weeks than the other two groups. Thus it would appear that this group showed more stability in practice over the 42 weeks than the other groups.

The current Vietnamese study has confirmed these findings. The high achieving students in this study seemed to practice consistently as a habit, as many of them said:

> "When you have been a piano student for eight or ten years, habit has taken over quite strongly. I would get up and practice just like you would get up and have a breakfast. It was very natural thing to do and you just accepted it as something very normal".

The large difference between the practice behaviour of high achieving students and low achieving students in this study has now been clearly established. This finding is consistent with comments by Howe, Davidson and Sloboda (1998). They argue that evidence from a variety of research studies shows that lengthy, persistent and focused practice provides the most reliable predictors of musical achievement. Even if there is such a thing as innate ability, they argue, no one has achieved high standards in music or any other activity without hard work and focused practice. Further, the evidence for innate ability is, they argue, unreliable and unconvincing, largely because of the retrospective and anecdotal nature of the accounts of its occurrence. However, Feldman and Katzir (1998, p. 414) raised objections to this view by arguing for innate talent:

> "Irvin Rosen, principal violinist of the Philadelphia Orchestra's second violin section, said, after a performance by the then 11-year-old MiDori, that if I practiced three thousand years, he could not play like that. None of us could".

They affirm that "in the presence of superior talent, most practitioners would acknowledge that such talent is a natural gift" (Walker, 2007, p. 267). This suggests that practice alone cannot be the sole predictor of excellence in music. Some other arguments (Hallam, 1998; Williamon and Valentine, 2000) also cast doubt on the idea that just practising a lot will inevitably make you a first class performer. O'Neill (1997) also found that achievement is related not only to the length of time spent practicing but also to the quality of that practice. Similarly, Barry and Hallam stated that:

> "Musicians may take for granted the old adage that "practice makes perfect". However, literature in both psychology and music indicates that not only the amount of time invested in practice but also the manner in which one approaches practice will have a bearing on an individual's level of musical development."
>
> Barry and Hallam (2002, p. 161)

On the basis of all above arguments, it suggests that while cumulative practice may be a good predictor of the overall level of expertise attained, and the case in this present study is strong concerning the link between practice time and achievement in a conservatorium, it may not predict the very high quality of performance in the prestigious concert hall which the violinist above was talking about. Further research in this area is needed and deserves greater attention in order to determine precisely the importance of practice as compared with other attributes and behaviours which might contribute to developing expert performance skills.

PLAYING FROM MEMORY

Performing music from memory is a great challenge. Even professional musicians did not perform from memory until Franz Liszt introduced the practice in the nineteenth

century allowing the pianist to enjoy the freedom of not having to focus on the printed page (see Chapter 4). However students often panic about having a memory lapse in performance.

> "Anxiety about performance is common among musicians and even the great performers may suffer from stage fright"
>
> Hallam (2002, p. 24)

This view corresponds with comment by Senyshyn:

> "It would not be an exaggeration to say that the consideration of anxiety in live performance is an important one for all performers. Certainly, most artists experience some sense of anxiety before and during a performance"
>
> Senyshyn (2002, p. 118)

The great pianist Claudio Arrau has expressed the negative aspect of anxiety that leads to memory loss and wrong notes:

> "Almost every performer has to fight against escaping into failure…We frustrate ourselves constantly. Out of fear- fear of failure …we artists suddenly fall sick before major appearances. We create frightful emotional upsets"
>
> Horowitz (1984, p. 242)

Since there is widespread nature of performance anxiety caused by playing from memory in the musical profession "which can be a debilitating problem in the life of any performer" (Senyshyn, 2002, p. 118) and "can cause one to give up in the middle of an otherwise fine performance" (Horowitz, 1984, p. 242), it is felt important that a successful and natural approach to overcome the negative effects of anxiety is needed.

Senyshyn recommended that we "must not fear it but invite it" (2002, p. 118). This was strongly supported by Arrau's approach:

> "One should try to simply let things happen, and not worry so much about pleasing or succeeding. Then anxiety becomes less of a handicap, and more a part of the creative stream. I used to want to be

> perfect, divine beyond any flaw or memory mistake. But that always produces the opposite effect."
>
> Horowitz and Arrau (1982)

> "The most common strategy the musicians described for gaining a sense of control over anxiety was to be in a calm and relaxed state. They believed this could be achieved primarily through developing their self-confidence; self-confidence was thought to be achieved through various activities, such as 'performing rituals', 'positive thinking', 'social support', 'positive evaluations of one's competence', and 'sustained effort and practice' "
>
> Senyshyn (2002, p.119)

Senyshyn and O'Neill believe that the more experience you have of performing the less anxious you will be. They cite one performer's attitude:

> "If you did it [performance] everyday then it would be, the nerve aspect would be you know obviously get better and you will be able to cope with nerves. But because we do it like once a year its like, we just end up nervous wrecks (sic)."
>
> Senyshyn and O'Neill (2001, p. 47)

Senyshyn and O'Neill's belief regarding constant practice in order to overcome negative anxiety is strongly supported by Russian piano school. When discussing the Russian piano school, one of its important characteristics is regular practice playing the pieces from memory in the piano lessons. In addition to the discussion of the advantages of playing from memory mentioned in Chapter 4 (enhance technical proficiency and the feeling of knowing the work; able to concentrate on musical aspects of performance; freedom of expression; most direct psychological connection with the audience etc…), and to support the need to play from memory, Williamon (1999, p. 85) found that "performers who are less skilled technically may improve across all performance aspects after the additional time spent practicing for the memorized performances."

However, as regards to playing regularly from memory, there are a number of factors such as the learning environment, curriculum policy, and social matters that inhibit Russian graduates from applying their experiences in Russia into their teaching practices in Vietnam. Playing from memory in the first few lessons and throughout their classes was vital in piano learning for Vietnamese pianists when they first arrived in Russia (question 53 from 100 questions for Russian graduates). However this prevalence of playing from memory in the piano lessons was not reported by students of Russian trained teachers (question 55 for students). The Russian trained teachers regard playing from memory throughout lessons as very important, but they could not apply this method into teaching at the Hanoi Conservatoire (questions 4 from 30 questions for teachers). They said that although they do ask their students, their students could not play from memory in the first few lessons as they did in Russia. It is perhaps because of the overload of high school and the tertiary school curriculum that applies such pressure on Vietnamese students that they are unable to apply the right commitment which students in Moscow could, especially Russian students. This is supported in a study of Hallam (1997) in which a student who always played successfully from memory was asked about how she memorizes the music. Her answer was: "If you practice a piece long enough you know it". It suggests that an advanced student depends on considerable time of practice. Interviews with performers (Hallam, 1995; Noyle, 1987) and an observational study by Miklaszewski (1995) confirmed this view that "performing from memory does indeed require more practice time" (1999, p. 85).

It can be concluded that the emphasis on playing from memory is one of the hallmarks of the Russian piano school. It perhaps explains why "the past century has given so many great names and so many geniuses" (Alexeyeva). The findings of this study may be beneficial to both musical performance and pedagogy.

> Teachers can help their students to cope with anxiety by listening to them and allow them to reveal themselves in the hope to alleviate negative anxieties.
>
> Senyshyn and O'Neill (2001, p. 51)

Piano teachers in general and Russian trained teachers in particular should continue the great tradition of the Russian piano school in their teaching by discussing with their

students how to memorize the repertoire and develop memory strategies like analysing the musical structure (harmony, counterpoint, form) and theoretical aspects of the piece; visualizing pieces through silent reading and preparing for their technical execution through visualization before beginning to play them at the keyboard (mental practice and visual memory), effective listening (aural memory) and heighten sensory awareness etc… (Aiello and Williamon, 2002; Williamon, 1999) (see Chapter 4 sections: Cognitive Strategies and Memory).

RHYTHM

Some teachers in this study (question 4 from 30 questions for teachers) suggested that what weakens the influence from Russia are the differences in culture, physical geography and the physical strength of people from different nationalities. It could be explained by the fact that the nature of Vietnamese music is improvising, and that it is not fixed in notational form like Western art music and this includes the basic musical elements like pitches and durations (Arana, 1994). Vietnamese traditional music is set to music from poetry. Its music is rich in melody but not definite in tempo. Free rhythm is found in the chanting of Vietnamese poetry, in theatrical declamation and in improvised vocal or instrumental music. In contrast, "a larger number of Russian folk-songs are in even rather than in uneven time". Russian folk tunes and dance music have strong rhythms, and clear and definite movements (Swan, 2007), while the Vietnamese traditional music for dancing is mostly gentle, slow, sensitive, and charming. Many of the practices of the Vietnamese theatre and Vietnamese music are intertwined with each other, as well as with Vietnamese dance. Popular theatre forms such as *Hát tuồng, Hát chèo*, and *Cải lương* all often feature dance. However these Vietnamese dances are performed in a liberal manner without set rules (Dancing in Vietnamese Theatre, 2007), unlike many folk dance styles in Russia where the stamping of feet goes together with singing with a vigorous rhythm the dance songs which are often characterized by a very strong accent on the first beat (Swan, 2007). Some teachers felt that this difference greatly affects Vietnamese music students in learning Western classical music. Many Vietnamese students studying in Russia had to cope with the fast, steady rhythms of Western classical music which are quite different to those of traditional Vietnamese music which they heard from early childhood.

The Vietnamese students' problems with rhythmic regularity came through in their interviews (e.g., question 5 from 100 questions for Russian graduates) since many graduates from Russia admitted that they had rhythmic shortcoming at the beginning of their study in Russia. This view is supported by *Dang Thai Son*[12], the Vietnamese pianist who was awarded the First Prize and Gold Medal at the Tenth International Chopin Piano Competition 1982. When he was asked to talk about his experience of teaching in Vietnam, as compared to that in Russia and Canada, he said that there is a big difference between students' rhythmic ability. According to him, the possible reason for this problem is partly due to the nature of Vietnamese music and the Vietnamese tonal language and culture. Although Vietnamese students are very sensitive to melodious pitch and sound levels which allow them to play romantic music quite expressively, Vietnamese students are not good at observing strict repetitive rhythms and that affects them considerably when playing classical music such as Mozart, Beethoven, or Scarlatti, because this music requires strict, continuous tempo throughout. *Dang Thai Son* himself used to have problems with rhythm regularity before going to Russia and in the early stages of his study in Moscow. But he overcame it quickly and his problem of rhythm was solved. In his second year at the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire, he won the first prize of the Chopin Piano Competition. He thought that one of the possible solutions to rhythmic deficiency is to play more German music, attend concerts and hear such rhythmic music as much as possible.

This view corresponds with earlier comment by Josef Lhevinne, a famous Russian teacher who supposed that rhythm is infectious. He thought that the Russians seem to possess an instinctive sense of rhythm. It can probably be explained in that they have heard rhythmic music from their earliest years:

> "Rhythm is contagious to a certain extent; and for that reason the student who attends concerts and who hears fine rhythms upon the various mechanical sound- reproducing machines has distinct advantages…The Bohemians, the Hungarians, the Spanish, the Polish and the Russians seem to possess it instinctively so it is not

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[12] *D.T. Son* studied in Vietnam until he was seventeen years of age, after that he pursued his studies at the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire in Moscow, Russia. He now lives in Canada and teaches at the University of Montréal and sometimes comes back to Vietnam to teach and perform.

> so much a matter of heredity as that they have heard this rhythmic music from babyhood. Therefore, the student should hear all the rhythmic music they can as often as possible."
>
> Lhevinne (1972, pp. 6-7)

From the two comments above, the conclusion can be drawn that the nature of traditional music can be one possible reason that can cause rhythmic shortcomings in Vietnamese piano students.

MENTAL PRACTICE

Rubinstein often admonished his student:

> Before your fingers touch the keys you must begin the piece mentally- that is, you must have settled in your mind the tempo, the manner of touch, and above all, the attack of the first notes, before your actual playing begins. And bye-the bye, what is the character of this piece? Is it dramatic, tragic, lyric, romantic, humorous, heroic, sublime, mystic- what?"
>
> Rubinstein (1974, p. 295)

The student has to be taught not only how to play but also how to think musically. The application of mental practice and analysis strategies to facilitate learning has become a focus of increasing educational interest over the last few decades. Rosenthal *et al.*. (1988) examined the relative effects of five practice conditions (modelling, singing, silent analysis, free practice, and control) on instrumentalists' performance of a musical composition. The authors assigned 60 college music students to one of five practice conditions and asked them to perform the composition after a brief practice session. The authors evaluated each subject's performance in terms of correct notes, rhythm, phrasing or dynamics, articulation, and tempo. The authors found significant differences among the practice techniques in subjects' performance of correct rhythms, phrasing or

dynamics, and tempo. Their analysis demonstrated that subjects in the silent analysis group were more accurate in their performance of the rhythms (p. 250).

The results from the interview in this present study confirm this. The data suggest that, according to UK and Russian trained teachers, students can play as fast as needed through mental regrouping. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, some researchers have suggested that silent analysis of a work enables the musician to “hear” the music with his or her “inner ear”. In Rubin–Rabson’s (1941) study, skilful pianists acted as subjects, and silent reading produced nearly as vivid inner tonal hearing as did actual keyboard performance. Thus evidence from various sources suggests that silent analysis is an effective practice technique (Rosenthal *al et*., 1988).

The purpose of question 59 from 60 questions for students was to analyse to what extent the students thought that their teachers provided practical advice regarding employing mental practice and applying a variety of analysis strategies. There was a striking contrast between UK, Russian trained teachers and Vietnamese trained teachers in this respect. However no significant difference was found between UK (m=6.28) and Russian trained teachers (m=6.25) indicating that there is probably little difference in this activity between the two. The same scores for UK and Russian trained teachers suggesting UK and Russian trained teachers spent much more time than Vietnamese trained teachers on encouraging students to apply mental practice and analysis techniques to facilitate students’ learning. This included silently reading the score, mental regrouping, analysing the polyphonic structure and metrical rhythmic relationships. The very low and negative mean rating of the Vietnamese trained teachers (m=0.15) on this specific aspect of their teaching suggests that they do not value the importance of mental work and analysis strategies away from the piano.

Student interviews and the researcher’s observation confirmed that the UK and Russian trained teachers actively advised their students to be involved in mental practice. The following response of the student of Russian trained teacher (question 59 for students) from an interview in this study illustrates this point:

> "My teacher told me that I need to spend more time silently reading the score. She said while doing so, I notice better what is written

> around the notes and I could observe better many important signs which I might miss during actual playing. Visual impressions of the music scores are more easily and precisely printed on my mind and with more stability than a fleeting auditory sensation".

The above advice of Russian trained teachers in the present study is similar to Kochevitsky's (1967) statement:

> “The whole composition which is being studied should be read mentally from time to time. And we must remember Busoni's warning that one easily forgets about the musical meaning during the motor work at the piano. By mental reading without actual playing we can revive the clear acoustic picture of the composition in our mind and are stimulated in our efforts to master it technically" (p. 50)

Indeed, while practicing physically, a student has to watch several points at once: hand position, movements of playing apparatus, fingering, musical qualities, polyphonic structure, rhythmic relationships, dynamics, and so on. So the student could easily leave one point uncontrolled, this practicing could be detrimental, and wrong conditioned responses and connections might easily be formed in such a way. To avoid this, Kochevitsky (1967, p. 50) suggested mental practicing by analysing the musical composition correctly and clearly comprehending all its elements.

> "Before playing a composition, he has to become familiar with its form, harmonic and polyphonic structure, metrical rhythmic relationships, melodic design, phrasing, articulation, quality of desired sonority and dynamic shading".

There seemed to be a closer relationship regarding the use of mental practice between the lessons in Russia that the Russian graduates recall (question 10 from 100 questions for Russian graduates) and their actual teaching at the Hanoi conservatory. There was some evidence of using strategies like mental practice emerging in one lesson of a

Russian trained teacher (question 12 for teachers), in which the teacher said to his student:

> "The silent mental reading of a musical score would be very helpful for you, especially when you practise Bach's polyphonic music. Each voice should first be examined clearly and separately. Then you take two voices together in various combinations: first voice and second voice, first voice and third voice and so on."

Another piece of advice in relation to mental work was found in another lesson of UK trained teacher:

> "Mental practice is not only essential in preparation before you actually start playing, it is also essential at any period. If you have difficulty in some spot, you have to stop playing to think over how to find the best way to improve the situation. For example you might find this section that requires a fast tempo difficult to play in continuity. The real difficulty does not lie in pure motor activity of your fingers but rather in your ability to think fast enough. To achieve velocity, you should not read single notes but you should mentally unite these notes into several groups or scale patterns, find any kind of sequence and organize your thinking in such a way that you could prepare your playing apparatus for each situation".

This example typifies how the UK teacher developed his students' mental abilities in score reading and appreciation of the importance of mental work. Technical deficiency can be attributed to failure to find the appropriate position and movement forms of the playing apparatus and undeveloped musical thinking. Kochevitsky (1967, pp. 45, 47) stated that:

> "Mental regrouping offers an immediate opportunity to overcome some technical difficulty and therefore makes execution much easier… we cannot read a row of nonsense syllables quickly because we are unable to unite these syllables into meaningful

> words and sentences. Practice in repeating them would not be of much help; only when grasping the sense of what we are reading can we read quickly. As the swiftness of our speech apparatus depends on our ability to think quickly, the agility of our motor apparatus depends more on our ability for fast musical thinking than on long practicing and numerous repetitions of movements."

LISTENING

Since music is a tonal art that speaks only with sound, listening is a critically important factor in musical learning progress. Neuhaus (1974) stated in his book "The Art of Piano Playing"

> that tone is one of the most important means of which a pianist should be possessed. Training a student's ear by having them listen could directly influence his tone and refine his ear.

Indeed, listening is one of the vital elements in musical training. Students can learn how to produce a finer sound and develop musical sensitivity by listening to tape recordings and compact disks for the modelling provided by great artists. Musical ability is improved through accumulated listening experiences and sensitivity to the musical expressions heard and assimilated. These benefits that constant listening brings about gives the student a broad understanding and a strong feeling of music, and through this process they become able to express freely their own musical ideas in their own way (Bigler and Lloyd-Watts, 1979).

This study examined piano students' perceptions regarding to listening to models, recordings or going to concerts but bearing in mind the pedagogical differences between their UK, Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers. Comparison of the most popular responses from the students shows some striking differences (see Chapter 6, Question 30 Factor 5 from 60 questions for students). Indeed, the students of UK teachers and Russian trained teachers had very high mean scores for the opinion that listening is very important. The scores of the students of UK teachers were slightly higher than the

scores of Russian trained teachers, as shown by the respective means of 8.5 and 8.1. In contrast, the scores of the students of Vietnamese trained teachers were just the opposite with a very low mean of 1.4 indicating that the importance of listening and attending a concert was much less valued by students of Vietnamese trained teacher. The following illustrates this point:

> "We almost have never discussed it. My teacher rarely talks about that subject. Probably she thought that anyway there are not many concerts available to students."

This student's response reveals the problems many Vietnamese students face at this moment. This suggests that the problems in student's awareness of the importance of listening can be partly attributed to the lack of teacher's emphasis on listening and the lack of regular opportunities to hear prominent and renowned concert pianists.

The possible reason for the high mean scores of students who have UK teachers can be attributed to the influence from their teacher and the availability of and access to many recordings of the standard repertoire through the use of libraries. Likewise, for students of Russian trained teachers, their perception of the importance of listening has been reinforced through their teachers' overseas experiences. Going to concerts, listening to a model performer live or from recordings are almost daily or weekly activities for their teachers while they studied in Russia. Question 79 from 100 questions for Russian graduates confirmed this point. By providing their students with opportunities to listen to the models as often as possible, the teachers stress the importance of listening. The following three responses of students who have UK and Russian trained teachers provide some insights into the provenance of teacher influence:

> **Student A**: "I think listening to the model is very important. My teacher advises me to listen to a number of recordings of the same piece to enable me to compare different kinds of interpretations."
>
> **Student B**: "My teacher always wants me to listen to music as much as possible. He always informs me about forthcoming concerts both in the Opera House and at the Conservatoire."

> **Student C**: "My teacher advises me to listen to all kinds of other music. For example if you study a Mozart sonata, you should listen to symphonies, concertos or quartets of Mozart to understand the style. Chamber music teaches you a lot too. The piano should be viewed as a small orchestra, with a potential of strings, winds, brass, and percussion. Since orchestral colours stimulate your playing."
>
> **Student D**: "My teacher always talked about orchestration in his teaching and the need to listen to orchestral works. He spoke about layers of sound, different colours, different instruments. He also had a very orchestral approach to piano playing by mentioning specific instrument to specific tune or passage or using a lot of half-pedal with vibrations".

In the response of student A, who has a Russian trained teacher, the influence of his teacher's attitudes and behaviours on the importance of listening is apparent. He recalls encouragement by his teacher to go to concerts and to be able to compare different performances. The students who experience long periods of careful listening are able to distinguish between good and bad performances. They know how high standards can be, and are able to analyse and synthesize those standards. With a broad knowledge of music through listening, they can create their own interpretations.

Students B, C and D are aware of the importance of listening through their teacher's advice. Very interesting comments were made by the student C and D during the interviews regarding the benefit of listening to all different kinds of music. It was clear that students' perceptions during listening were expanded and enriched, and that this would obviously contribute to the progress of their own performance.

TEACHER DEMONSTRATION

The importance of teacher demonstration as regards to modelling and verbal instruction has been the subject of much interest among researchers (Dickey, 1991; Rosenthal,

1984; Siebenaler, 1997; Sang, 1987). According to Brigitte Engerer – a student of Neuhaus - teaching by imitation and modelling are valid. Likewise, certainly throughout history painters have learned technique by copying their masters until they found their own style (Timbrell, 1999). Further interest into the effectiveness of teaching methods has also highlighted various issues regarding the combination of teaching models and discussions (Gonzo and Forsythe, 1976; Moore R. S., 1976). The present study therefore addressed a number of relevant issues regarding how UK teachers, and Russian, Vietnamese trained teachers use verbal description, a teacher-playing model, and combined verbal with modelling strategies in their piano teaching and the relative effectiveness of the three above methods of instruction were compared across the three sets of teachers by country.

Findings from the interviews (question 13 for students) and lesson observations revealed that UK and Russian trained teachers invest considerably more lesson time for their playing demonstrations than did Vietnamese trained teachers, as shown by the respective means of 7.85, 7.84 and 2.7. The reasons why UK and Russian trained teachers are more keen to use the teacher a model is perhaps partly due to the Western and European piano music education that they received themselves (question 91 for Russian graduates). At the piano lesson settings at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory and the Royal College of Music, for example, the teacher always sat at one grand piano and the student sat at another one. While in the Vietnamese trained teachers' class, the teachers sat most of the time next to the students and mostly talked (question 13 for students). The UK and Russian trained teachers' illustration occupied a large part of a piano music lesson. The teacher would then play and the student would follow and imitate the teacher. And in some cases they would just play together. As one Russian trained teacher revealed in an interview:

> "My Russian teacher was always such an inspiration for me, especially when we played on two pianos together. It was a challenge to feel the same way she did, to phrase the same, to feel the same and to be instinctively musical. That is the approach I want to bring out in my students".

Furthermore, through observations of their lessons and their piano performance in the concerts, it is clear that UK and Russian trained teachers have highly capable piano performance skills which allow them to act as an effective model. In addition, the considerable amount of time devoted to playing at sight and the most difficult repertoire while studying in Russia would be the reasons that contribute to the effective modelling skills in Russian trained teachers.

The Vietnamese teachers who were trained in England or Russia gave piano lessons in ways that are more similar to those taught in England and Russia. Perhaps these teachers passed through their own higher education seeing their piano lessons differently to their peers who were not trained in England and Russia.

In contrast, the typical situation observed in the piano lessons in this study and comments from Vietnamese students of Vietnamese trained teachers indicate that Vietnamese trained teachers seem to prefer to provide a verbal explanation of musical elements, letting the student realize the music by his or herself. It would appear that teacher verbal instructions alone could take much longer to achieve the desired result. Moreover, modelling strategies may be more effective than verbal instruction alone because the latter does not provide sufficient information and help for solving a musical performance problem. These findings were supported in earlier research by Dickey (1991) who reported that music is not effectively taught through verbal description.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND FREEDOM IN LEARNING

The issue of students having responsibility and freedom over their instrumental learning is a controversial question. The theories of Carl Rogers, Jerome Bruner and Eric Fromm emphasized the importance of freedom in learning and personal development (Jorgensen, 2000). However, Brandstrom's study (1998) found that personal responsibility and freedom in learning is not welcomed by all students. After six terms of the project, with a total of fifty-three students participating, the researcher concluded that although most of the students (about 80 per cent) reacted positively to the freedom they were given, some students reacted with anxiety in this situation. From the piano teacher's view, the positive elements were well-prepared students in the lesson, but the

most negative aspect was the unpredictable nature of his own work schedule. For example, some days many students wanted lessons, other days very few did, and often a student would cancel his lesson at the last minute. Jorgensen (2000) emphasized an important conclusion: that we are constantly reminded of the individual nature of each person's adaptability and willingness to take responsibility for our own learning. In addition, there is the importance of the learning context to take account of.

The aim of this part is to examine how independent and responsible students' learning behaviour might be in relation to the three different types of teachers in this study. It appears that the students of UK trained teachers in this study value the importance of students' responsibility and freedom in learning as indicated by the mean of 8.5 (question 44 for students). This result confirms Mills' (2002) findings in which she claimed that recent research in an English conservatoire suggests that many students believe that they are taught autonomy as performers. No difference was found between students of Vietnamese (m= 6.4) and Russian trained teachers (m = 6.4) suggesting that each of these student groups reacted similarly to responsibility and freedom in their learning. The following is a typical response from students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers:

> "Well, it is ok to be given more freedom in learning like choosing the repertoire, setting the studying goal. However we also feel ok to do the accepted thing and do as we are told".

This example typifies how students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers feel about their responsibility and autonomy in learning. They want their teachers to make decisions for them and in some ways they are quite passive in their learning. The results from 60 questions for students clearly revealed the following: the Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers were more like decision-makers for their students regarding study aims (question 37); teacher told them how to play a piece (question 38), how to interpret music (questions 18 and 39), and what repertoire to play (factor 2 from 60 questions). The students of Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers were also given less freedom in choosing their own favourite repertoire (question 25), unequal opportunities to perform (question 27) , and less relaxing learning atmosphere (question 60) as compared to those in England.

The students' passive behaviours may well be explained by Vietnamese culture in education in general and in music education in particular. Vietnamese students have usually been well trained to follow what the teachers want, rather than to make decisions for themselves. The general approach to teaching in Vietnam has traditionally been teacher-dominated, a top-down approach with the teacher lecturing and students making notes. There has been little discussion or significant student involvement. It seems that Vietnamese and Russian students do not appear to want the type of freedom, independence and personal responsibility in learning which the students of UK trained teachers seemed to enjoy and relish. Instead, they prefer to follow the existing conventions and obey the rules.

In contrast, the students of UK trained teachers reacted positively to the idea of independence and freedom for their own learning processes as follow:

> "I want to formulate what elements in my pianistic skills I plan to improve during the semester and the variety of repertory I want to study".

This example typifies how students of UK trained teachers emphasised the importance of freedom in learning and personal development. For example, some want to have freedom in relation to the range of styles that may be studied. However, it is possible for a student to concentrate exclusively on developing their skills if that is their wish. It is recognised that student's independence and involvement benefit the learning experience. It adds a significant dimension to the process and encourages student reflection in learning.

An interesting comparison made by *Phạm Hồng Hạnh*, a Russian trained teacher who pursued her master degree at McGill University, Montreal, Canada after graduating from the Gnesin Academy of music (*Институт имени Гнесиных*) in Moscow. During the interview (questions 88 and 97 from 100 questions for Russian graduates), she commented as follows:

> "I felt more confident in my performance in the lessons when I was in Canada than in Moscow. In Moscow, I did not feel my

> performance was good enough, but in Canada, my performance received a lot of praise which reinforced my confidence and I could interpret my performance in the way I really enjoyed."

The advantages and benefits of freedom in music performance are discussed as follows by Jorgensen (2000) who questioned whether the value was

> "because this is a good "method" that facilitates more efficient learning, or is it that we believe it to be the most "natural" approach to learning, reflecting a fundamental characteristic of human nature? And another aspect is the utilisation of student initiative and responsibility as a means to further a narrow aim of learning, or is it (also) to strengthen their independence as learners and musicians" (p.67)

She also states,

> "I am aware of cultural differences and disagreements concerning freedom and individual, independent action. The prevailing social, religious and human values in a society will strongly influence its educational system, including conservatoires for higher instrumental education"
>
> Jorgensen (2000, p. 76)

With this in mind, it is interesting to observe the differences in the relationships between teachers and students in this study. These cases are, of course, too few for a general conclusion about differences between English and Russian Vietnamese modes of relationship between teachers and students to be drawn, but they remind us that discussions about students' independence and responsibility must be carried out in a social context.

TEACHING STYLES

One of the emerging issues, when investigating piano teaching, is the lack of systematic research concerning comparison of teaching models. While the literature related to teaching methods and theories within the music classroom is both extensive and up to date (Jorgensen, 2003; Mark, 2002; Phipott and Plummeridge, 2001), theoretical underpinnings as applied to the one-to-one learning environment are not only limited, but also did not tend to emerge as important to consider, analyse, or compare the educational outcomes of the various approaches until recently (Daniel, 2004). This may be due to the significant complexities and challenges associated with the nature of the field of teaching that often relies more on the individual. As Swanwick (1996) stated, instrumental teaching is a "very haphazard affair with idiosyncratic extremes, depending on the individual nature of the teacher".

Keeping in mind the importance of the need for detailed, descriptive research that focuses on specific teaching strategies to offer the profession a clearer understanding of the many variables involved in effective music teaching (Tait, 1992, p. 526), a better understanding of how different strategies and styles can have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning could provide a clear foundation upon which to establish effective models in piano teaching. The findings of these present investigations might provide the profession with a clearer agenda for investigating improvement.

By looking closely at the practices of piano teachers, their beliefs about piano teaching, and the reactions of students to the three different sources of training of piano teachers found in Vietnam, Russia, and England, the researcher hopes this might provide a framework within which to analyse and compare their approaches and styles.

Young *et al..* (2003) characterised the most "teacher-directed" strategy as a "Command" teaching style, in which the teacher makes all the decisions, giving direct instruction and directions; the learner responds by adhering to all the teacher's decisions. A "Student-led" strategy was used to describe a teaching style in which the student was allowed to take increasing initiative, invited to make musical decisions and given the opportunity to negotiate the course that the lesson takes. Young *et al..* (2003) also found a significant association between Technique and Command because the Command approach works easily with the acquisition of technique, but not so easily with interpretation. This finding has considerable support in the present study.

In addition to the interviews and questionnaires which provide additional contextual data, the observation confirmed that Technique and Command strategies were indeed predominantly employed by Russian trained teachers. The results of questions 7 and 8 (Factor 2 Teacher Control); question 10 (Factor 3 Student Control); and question 22 (Assigning Repertoire) from 30 questions for teachers indicated that Russian and Vietnamese trained teachers prefer a leading and controlling approach of teaching. These results were strongly supported by responses of their students to questions 34 and 35 (from 60 questions for students) in which they revealed that the Russian trained teachers seemed to take a more authoritarian role and exert more control in the piano lessons. The Russian trained teachers were also found to be particularly dominant in the lessons devoted to Technique.

It may be no coincidence that Russian trained teachers who gave proportionately more of their attention to Technique, were also the teachers whose lessons involved slightly more teacher talk as compared to British trained teachers (94.4 % versus 82.4 % shown in Figure 6.9 in Chapter 6). This would no doubt have significant implications for the strategies used in this context, suggesting that a focus on Technique as an area of study and teacher talk are associated with the use of more teacher-led strategies or the Command strategy.

Observation confirmed these results. One example of Commands taken from the lesson of a Russian trained teacher shows the teacher offering himself as an exemplar:

> **Teacher:** I will play it for you and you can see how it works. Do not change the pedal quite so often and do not play that section too slowly.

The evidence of this transcript concerning the use of teacher demonstration in addition to instruction without any explanation, suggests that the student was expected to comply without question. This instructive mode might be said to be a Command teaching style. In some other cases, Russian trained teachers made their students repeat passages until they could hear back their own conception exactly. This might be called repetitive pedagogy or a direct imitation pedagogical approach.

The results also found a strong influence from the Russian school through direct coincidence between Russian graduates' teaching in Vietnam and their training experience in Russia (questions 95, 96 and 97 from 100 questions for Russian graduates) in which many of them experienced the Command teaching strategy, particularly in the high schools of Russian Conservatoires, where they were supposed to follow their teacher's instruction. Indeed, there was considerable agreement about the teachers' belief that more than two-thirds (71 %) of them claimed that their teaching now is influenced by the teaching that they received (question 1 from 30 questions for teachers). Mills and Smith's (2003, p. 22) study has the same result supporting the finding that a teacher's experience of being taught has a strong influence on their teaching style.

These findings have important pedagogical implications. The more teacher control there was in the lessons, the less a student would contribute to lessons actively. These findings were supported in a study by Jorgensen in which she found that:

> "Teachers may be described as dominating, exploiting student initiative and responsibility very little. On the other hand, there is evidence of a certain differentiation of approach, where teacher and student obviously engage in a verbal and musical dialogue where the student is able to present his own ideas."
>
> Jorgensen (2000, pp. 68-69)

This is the possible answer to the question raised by an eminent professor at the Hanoi Conservatory in which he questioned: "Why do our teachers work "harder" with students than those teaching in Western conservatories but the result is converse: their students play better than ours?". The answer lies in the problem of teacher dominance and consequent lack of student development as autonomous and creative performers. This problem may well be a product of the highly centralised political control in both Russia and Vietnam as compared with England.

As a final comment for this section, it should perhaps be mentioned that while it might be reasonable to use a direct imitation pedagogical approach in the early stages in which their young students were not professionally mature, expecting the students simply to

duplicate the teacher is not always really an ideal pedagogy and it may diminish the student's creativity. The teachers' job is to help their students learn, grow and develop. The lesson is about their students. Expecting the student to be able to duplicate their positions, movements, technique, sounds or artistically musical ideas will only frustrate both parties. Self- centred ability often forgets the paths that must be passed through. In other words, the successful and confident teacher who merely expects students to imitate them ignores the hard work required to reach this stage.

FINAL COMMENTS

DIFFERING ATTITUDES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

The results of this study show clearly that Russian teachers and Vietnamese teachers are generally more authoritarian than their English counterparts. And this may well be due to the different socio-political histories of the three countries, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

The UK is a group of islands off the west coast of Europe and has not been invaded by foreign armies since the year 1066 AD, with the invasion of the Normans (now French) under William the Conqueror. The Spanish tried to invade England in the 16th Century without success and Hitler tried in the 2nd World War, also without success. This means that the UK has been developing its identity without foreign intervention for a thousand years. The notion of democracy developed early in the UK during this time. The most famous early attempt was the Magna Carta in 1215, where the King, then King John of England, was compelled to sign this document which limited his powers and instituted the idea of the rule of law, rather than just the rule of the monarch. This was unusual since most monarchs regarded themselves are omnipotent regarding the law, and a total ruler who could do what they liked. It was the beginning in Western thought of the idea of a commonly agreed way of deciding things and organising life, property, laws etc. In this way there has been a sense of the importance of all the people developing in the England for hundreds of years, as opposed to the idea of everyone giving in to the king or queen irrespective of what they wanted to do.

In Russia it was very different, with wars, a storm of revolutions and social upheavals and continual invasions uprooting people for hundreds of years, and by the early 20th century the Russian Czars regarded their power as absolute. This was the case across Europe - Kings believed in what they called their Divine Right from God. The French Revolution in the late 18th century and the American one just before that was a reaction where they threw out the English from their North America colonies and the English King as their ruler. The Russian Revolution of 1917 did the same and established the first Marxist state under Lenin and then Stalin. In Vietnam and across Asia the rights of the King or Emperor were absolute and then the European explorers arrived and by the 18th and 19th centuries were conquering Asian countries, as colonies, Vietnam included. So the point is that there is no long history of democratic ideas and actual practices in Russia or Vietnam like there has been in England. This must have a major impact on the way people think and behave which has deep roots.

This idea of cultural transmission is strongly supported by Dawkins (1989) where he argues that cultural ideas and practices, like music, literature, dance etc., democracy, live on in cultures and are passed from generation to generation, from one group to another like genes over long periods of time - he calls them memes.

> "Memes, according to Dawkins, provide for the transmission of culture, and with them the ideas we use to construct our lives…products of culture keep their identity over several generations more easily than do genes. The impact of genetic transmission halves with each generation, explains Dawkins, but the cultural equivalent – a theory, a story, a melodic fragment- can be retained in people's brains with or without modification and be passed almost intact to others and to future generations."
>
> Walker (2004, pp. 170-171)

Similar ideas were put forward by Cavalli-Sforza (2001) explaining the same thing in his book, *Genes, Peoples and Languages*. This is now regarded as an important part of human culture and life, the passing on of ideas and practices from one generation to another which means that each generation is influenced by the past.

This view corresponds with statement made by Alexeyeva (2005) in which she commented that "the great traditions of the Russian piano school continue, undiminished by time. They carry on from generation to generation, from teacher to student, from hands to hands."

Based on the above theory and arguments, it can be concluded that the differences in socio-cultural and political environment in England, Vietnam, and Russia might account for the differences in teaching styles and the way teachers treat students.

The results of this study would seem to imply that the Western students were more autonomous and had greater self-efficacy than their Vietnamese peers. However, it must not be forgotten that all the research into the development of expertise points to the crucial importance of focused, persistent, and extensive practice. Just giving students more freedom and improving their self-efficacy is not sufficient in itself to ensure higher standards of performance ability. There has to be a balance between high levels of discipline and student autonomy. It is not clear how teachers manage to ensure that students can manage to be highly disciplined, and yet al.so enjoy freedom.

More liberal or less authoritarian approaches to teaching do not necessarily inculcate the discipline required for high achievement technically and expressively. There needs to be a balance between liberal approaches and encouraging the student to become autonomous in their efforts, and ensuring that they realize the importance of being disciplined in their practice habits. Nevertheless, the truly outstanding students who seem to have been born with high self esteem and high levels of motivation do require more freedom than most others, as, for example, in the case of Midori.

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APPENDIX

100 QUESTIONS FOR VIETNAMESE GRADUATES TRAINED IN RUSSIA (RUSSIAN GRADUATES)

Personal Details and Problems (7 Questions)

Question 1. At which institution did you study in Russia?

Question 2. How old were you when you came to Russia to study?

Question 3. For how many years did you study in Russia?

Question 4. How did you relate to the Russian method? Easily or with difficulty?

Question 5. When you arrived in Russia did you have pianistic problems such as tension, stiffness, playing legato, voicing, sound quantity?

Question 6. Have they now been sorted out partly or completely? Explain

Question 7. When were these problems resolved?

Practice strategies

Please read each question carefully and decide whether or not you agree or disagree. Indicate how much by selecting a number from 0, which means “not at all” to 10, which means “excellent or full agreement”. Use the ratings as indicated:

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree
3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Outstanding

Question 8. Did you notice a change in you after Russia in terms of your attitude towards practicing strategies?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 9. How often did you use strategies such as silent study or analysis prior to playing before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 10. How often did you use strategies such as silent study or analysis prior to playing during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 11. How often did you use strategies such as silent study or analysis prior to playing after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 12. How often did you play slowly to sort out technical problem BEFORE your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 13. How often did you play slowly to sort out technical problem DURING your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 14. How often did you play slowly to sort out technical problem AFTER your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 15. How often did you test out different possible solutions to a problem BEFORE your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 16. How often did you test out different possible solutions to a problem during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 17. How often did you test out different possible solutions to a problem after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 18. How often did you divide the piece into “working areas”, to play segments in different tempi before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 19. How often did you divide the piece into “working areas”, to play segments in different tempi during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 20. How often did you divide the piece into “working areas”, to play segments in different tempi after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 21. How often did you play each hand or pedal separately or both hands or one hand and the pedal separately before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 22. How often did you play each hand or pedal separately or both hands or one hand and the pedal separately during your time in Russian?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 23. How often did you play each hand or pedal separately or both hands or one hand and the pedal separately after your time in Russian?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 24. How often did you change rhythmic structure before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 25. How often did you change rhythmic structure during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 26. How often did you change rhythmic structure after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 27. How often did you develop exercises based on parts of the piece before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 28. How often did you develop exercises based on parts of the piece during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 29. How often did you develop exercises based on parts of the piece after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 30. How often did you use metronome before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 31. How often did you use metronome during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 32. How often did you use metronome after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 33. How often did you mark music before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 34. How often did you mark music during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 35. How often did you mark music after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 36. How often did you use strategies to relate auditive and visual pictures beyond the scores to the performing of the piece before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 37. How often did you use strategies to relate auditive and visual pictures beyond the scores to the performing of the piece during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 38. How often did you use strategies to relate auditive and visual pictures beyond the scores to the performing of the piece after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 39. How often did you minimize patterns of movements to chords before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 40. How often did you minimize patterns of movements to chords during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 41. How often did you minimize patterns of movements to chords after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 42. How often did you listen to others' performance and recording to sort out technical problems before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 43. How often did you listen to others' performance and recording to sort out technical problems during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 44. How often did you listen to others' performance and recording to sort out technical problems after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 45. How often did you start a piece somewhere in the middle to strengthen your memory before your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 46. How often did you start a piece somewhere in the middle to strengthen your memory during your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 47. How often did you start a piece somewhere in the middle to strengthen your memory after your time in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 48. Do you agree with the following statement?

My attitude towards length and regularity of practice after my time in Russia changed profoundly:

0 (Not at all) 1 or 2(very slightly) 3(agree a little) 4 (to some extent) 5(agree moderately) 6(above average agreement)7(yes-agree) 8 (high level of agreement) 9 (very high level) 10(Very Strongly).

If you agreed very strongly that your time in Russia completely changed your attitude towards practicing, please explain how this occurred, and what was the nature of the change which you noticed in yourself?

Question 49. How many hours did you practice daily before your time in Russia: …hours… minutes

Question 50. How many hours did you practice daily in Russia:….hours …minutes

Question 51. How many hours did you practice daily after Russia:….hours …minutes

Details of lesson study

Question 52. How often did you play from memory to your teacher before going to Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 53. How often did you play from memory to your teacher in Russia?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 54. Before Russia, did your teacher tell you that you did not have sufficient power in making “an elemental force”, big sound?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 55. In Russia, did your Russian teacher tell you that you did not have sufficient power in making “an elemental force”, big sound?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 56. How did your Russian teacher teach you to have a powerful sound on a grand piano?

……

……

……

……

Question 57. Was legato singing touch an important factor in your classes in Russia?

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree
3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Very much

Question 58. How did your teacher teach you to play legato, voicing?

……

……

……

……

Question 59. How important did your teacher regard relaxation before Russia?

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree
3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Very much

Question 60. How important did your teacher regard relaxation in Russia?

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree
3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Very much

Question 61. Did your teacher asked you to make the piano “sing” before Russia?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 62. Did your teacher asked you to make the piano “sing” in Russia?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 63. At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, was more attention given to technical skills?

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree

3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Very much

Improvement

Question 64. What was the most important change which you observed in yourself?

……

……...

Question 65. Describe how you have improved technically?

……

……..

Question 66. What did your teacher do to help you improve both musically and technically?

……

……..

Question 67. Describe your technique before studying in Russia?

……

……..

Question 68. Describe your technique after studying in Russia?

……

……..

Question 69. Describe the way you usually practiced a new piece of music before you went to Russia?

……

……..

Question 70. Describe the way you usually practice a new piece of music after you started studying in Russia (did you listened to the tape or high standard model first?)

……

……..

Question 71. Overall, what did you gain from studying in Russia?

……

……..

Repertoire and style

Question 72. At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, did your teacher give you more technical works (such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured pieces such as sonatas, concertos, rhapsodies, scherzos...)

……

……

Question 73. At the very beginning of your studying in Russia, what technical exercises (scales, etudes) did your teacher assign to you? Please name composers and their pieces.

……

……

……..

Question 74. What experience did you get from your teacher when playing the following:

Chopin (please name the composition)……

Beethoven……

Bach……

Mozart…….

Liszt……

Etc…

……

……..…….

Question 75. During your studying in Russia, did you play the music of Russian composers more than others?

……

……..

Question 76. At the present time, would you prefer to include Russian compositions in your performance? Explain why whether your answer is Yes or No?

……

……..

Concert attendance and listening

Question 77. Do you agree with the following statement?

My attitude towards my listening habits after my time in Russia changed profoundly:

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree
3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Very strongly

Question 78. Before your time in Russia, how often did you go to a concert? How many times per week or per month?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 79. During your time in Russia, how often did you go to a concert? How many times per week or per month?

0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Never	Rarely		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Usually	All the time

Question 80. How important was going to concerts and listening to music in relation to overall music studying?

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree
3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Very much

The Teacher Personality

Question 81. How did you get on with your teacher?

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Well
3	Agree a little	8	Well
4	To some extent	9	Very well
5	Agree moderately	10	Very well

Question 82. How did you find the attitude of your teachers in Russia, as compared with what you experienced previously in Vietnam?

0	Not helpful	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Helpful
3	Agree a little	8	Helpful
4	To some extent	9	Very helpful
5	Agree moderately	10	Very helpful

Question 83. Was he/she enthusiastic?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 84. Was your teacher patient?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 85. Did your teacher respond to your requests for advice about musical or personal matters and sympathetic to your problems and difficulties?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 86. Did your teacher teach you with a positive attitude such as praising and provide positive support?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 87. Did your teacher show his/her inspiration and love of music to you?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 88. Did your teacher show her confidence in you which in turn made you feel confidence in yourself?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The teaching approach

Question 89. Did your teacher analyze his/her own playing to explain to you how the teacher solves a technical problem? (Purpose: Student learn the better way of solving problem for themselves)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 90. Did your teacher give you good information about the background to the style and character of a piece?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 91. If you knew things were wrong but did not know how to improve them, did your teacher communicate well how to change them for the better in addition to his/her demonstration?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 92. Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way?

(Purpose: this helps students have more fun and learn in enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere).

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The Teaching Content

Question 93. Did your teacher suggest variety and breadth of styles?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 94. Did your teacher provide large variety of musical opportunities such as CD, tapes, concerts...

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 95. Did your teachers lead you through collaboration and discussion rather than just telling them to do things and follow their order?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 96. Give your estimation of the degree to which you felt that you were normally taking an active part in the lessons

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 97. Give your estimation of the degree of freedom which you are given in making decisions on how to play a piece?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 98. Did your teacher ever observe you practice? (Purpose: able to discuss and develop students' independence in practicing).

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Mentoring influences

Question 99. Who has influenced you most in your piano career?

……

Question 100. Who are your favourite pianists? Who are your favourite foreign teachers and professors? Why were you impressed by those favourite teachers, professors and pianists?

.....

.....

60 QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF ALL THREE TYPES OF TEACHERS

The Teacher Personality

Please read each question carefully and decide whether or not you agree or disagree. Indicate how much by selecting a number from 0, which means "not at all" to 10, which means "excellent or full agreement". Use the ratings as indicated:

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree
3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Outstanding

Question 1. Did your teacher enjoy working with you? Please circle one number which you think indicate how strongly you agree with the question by circling the appropriate number below:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 2. Was he/she enthusiastic?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 3. Was your teacher patient?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 4. Was your teacher humble?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 5. Did you feel that they were committed to making a success?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 6. Did your teacher respond to your requests for advice about musical or personal matters? (Purpose: to find the attitude of teacher)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 7. Did your teacher teach you with a positive attitude such as praising and provide positive support?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 8. Did your teacher show his/her inspiration and love of music to you?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 9. Did your teacher criticize you when you did something wrong?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 10. Did your teacher show her confidence in you which in turn made you feel confidence in yourself?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 11. Did your teacher have a sense of humour?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The teaching approach

Question 12. Did your teacher analyze his/her own playing to explain to you how the teacher solves a technical problem? (Purpose: Student learn the better way of solving problem for themselves)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 13. How often does your teacher demonstrate his or her playing?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 14. Did your teacher support and stimulate when you play by singing, tapping along?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 15. Did your teacher give clear guidance about how to develop a good technique as a means to play musically and expressively?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 16. Was the teaching consistent?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 17. Did your teacher pay attention to details?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 18. Did your teacher encourage independence such as individual voice and interpretation through exploring and initiative?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 19. Did your teacher give you good information about the background to the style and character of a piece?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 20. If you knew things were wrong but did not know how to improve them, did your teacher communicate well how to change them for the better in addition to his/her demonstration?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 21. Was the teaching flexible (use different ways) to match your individual needs?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 22. Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Teaching Content

Question 23. Did your teacher encourage you to learn repertoire that the teacher did not know, so you both could discover it together through decision about how to interpret it?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 24. Did your teacher provide wide repertoire and suggest variety and breadth of styles?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 25. Does your teacher teach the music you like?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 26. Did your teacher provide appropriate repertoire?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 27. Did your teacher provide access to performance opportunities?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 28. Did your teacher provide large variety of musical opportunities such as CD, tapes, concerts...

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 29. Did your teacher guide you about who are the best performers and what is the best CD to listen to?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 30. How important is going to a concert or listening to others playing?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 31. Did your teacher focus on sound by asking you to listen to the intonation of each note that he/she played?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 32. Did your teacher convey their ideas clearly?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 33. Were your teachers sympathetic to your problems and difficulties?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 34. Did your teachers lead you through collaboration and discussion rather than just telling them to do things and follow their order?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 35. Give your estimation of the degree to which you felt that you were normally taking an active part in the lessons

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 36. Circle the number which you felt indicates how much your teacher granted you responsibility in developing a repertoire.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 37. Give your estimation of the degree of freedom you were given in making decisions regarding study aims, study progress.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 38. Give your estimation of the degree of freedom which you are given in making decisions on how to play a piece?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 39. Do your teachers allow you to develop an independent musical interpretation?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 40. Did your teacher describe the whole picture of the piece of music before you actually started learning it?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 41. How often do you go to piano lesson? Indicate with a cross.

Daily Weekly Every 2 weeks Monthly More than a month

Question 42. Is it compulsory to follow regular/weekly lesson?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 43. Did your teacher suggest you more Russian compositions as compared to others?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 44. Do you welcome personal responsibility and freedom in learning?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 45. To what extent have other persons than teachers influenced the development of your practice behavior during your study at the academy?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 46. Did your teacher ever observe you practice? (Purpose: able to discuss and develop students' independence in practicing)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 47. Did your teacher ever tell you that you did not have sufficient power in making "elemental force", big sound?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 48. How did your teacher teach you to have a powerful sound on a grand piano? Please explain briefly.

……

Question 49. How did your teacher teach you to play legato, voicing? Please explain briefly.

……

Question 50. Did your teacher mention about the importance of relaxation and how to apply it to touch and tone?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 51. Did your teacher ever ask you to make the piano "sing"?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 52. Was more attention given to technical skills or musical interpretation, or were they equally emphasized throughout your program? Please explain……..

Question 53. Did your teacher suggest any particular practice, technique strategies?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 54. What did your teacher do to help you improve both musically and technically? Please explain briefly. What do you think you gained from your teacher?

……

Question 55. How often did your teacher ask you to play the pieces from memory in the first few lessons?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 56. At the very beginning of your studying, did your teacher give you more technical works (such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured form performance such as sonatas, concerto, rhapsody, scherzo...). Please explain.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 57. On average, how long per day do you spend for practicing?

Hours ….. Minutes……

Question 58. Do you spend more time on technical exercises, passages than on musical interpretation?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 59. How often does your teacher encourage you to employ mental practice and apply a variety of analysis strategies without physical practice?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 60. Are you worried when making mistakes in the class?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

30 QUESTIONS FOR ALL THREE TYPES OF TEACHERS

Please read each question carefully and decide whether or not you agree or disagree. Indicate how much by selecting a number from 0, which means "not at all" to 10, which means "excellent or full agreement". Use the ratings as indicated:

0	Not at all	6	Above average agreement
1-2	Very slightly	7	Yes - agree
3	Agree a little	8	High level of agreement
4	To some extent	9	Very High level
5	Agree moderately	10	Outstanding

It would be appreciated if you could also add any comments which you think would be helpful to any of the questions after you have used the rating scale. Any comments which explain your answer more fully would be appreciated.

Question 1. Do you think that the way that you teach now has been influenced by the way that you were taught? Please explain your answer.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 2. Is there any other influence on your teaching?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 3. What country has affected Vietnamese piano performance pedagogy? In what way?

.....

.....

Question 4. Does this influence still exist? If yes, in what way? To what extent is this influence?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 5. Does this have a positive effect on Vietnam? If yes, in what way?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 6. Does this have a negative effect on Vietnam? If yes, in what way?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Teaching Approach

Question 7. Do you like to take a role of leading, controlling, and pushing the student as far as possible, rather than supporting and advising?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 8. Do you think that students should normally take an active part in the lessons.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 9. Should the teacher motivate the student by showing confidence in student which in turn make them feel confidence in themselves?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 10. How often do you ask your student to analyse a new piece before playing it?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 11. What are the degrees of freedom to which you give student in making decisions how to play a piece?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 12. How often do you encourage student to employ mental practice without physical practice?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 13. Should the teacher analyze his/her own playing to explain to the student how the teacher solves a technical problem? (Purpose: Student learn the better way of solving problem for themselves)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 14. Were good technical advice and support presented in a humorous way? (Purpose: this helps students have more fun and learn in enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere).

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 15. Do you always include specific instructions in how to practice?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 16. Should a teacher describe the whole picture of the piece of music before actually teaching it?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 17. Was a legato singing touch an important factor in your classes?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 18. Do you ask students to make the piano “sing”?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 19. How important is relaxation in your class?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 20. How important do you think is the practice of scales and arpeggios?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 21. How important do you think is playing from memory in your class?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Teaching Content-Repertoire

Question 22. Do you usually prefer assigning music to your student?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 23. Do you prefer for your student to select their own favorite music under your instruction and agreement?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 24. Do you encourage the student to learn the repertoire that you do not know, so you both could discover it together through decision about how to interpret it?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 25. Do you suggest variety and breadth of styles?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 26. Was more attention given to technical skills or musical interpretation, or were they equally emphasized? Please explain.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 27. Do you give your students more technical works such as etudes) rather than other materials (large structured form performance such as sonatas, concerto, rhapsody, scherzo...) in the early stage?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 28. Do you prefer to give your students more Russian compositions as compared to others?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 29. Through learning Russian music, do Vietnamese students develop more aesthetic, heighten awareness, emotional response to music?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 30. How often do you have the student listen to high-quality examples or aural examples such as your demonstration or taped performance models?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10