

Teamwork on a Musical Basis

Hans Erik Deckert

Malling/Denmark, *email: hed@os.dk*

formerly: Royal Academy of Music, Århus/Denmark,

Abstract: Based on the 1st movement of the Octet by Franz Schubert organisational processes within an ensemble of eight players are explained. Along four examples it is shown on how to extract the functions of the different players and how teamwork is built towards improvement in performance in case these functions have been correctly identified. The process of a brief music workshop tutorial is described of which the structure, process and outcome may serve as a source for other disciplines to overcome management issues in disparate fields of science and technology.

1. Introduction

In large organisations as well as in disparate fields of science and technology there is an essential question of integrating disparate fields of activity. Communication between people has specifically become a major issue due to an increasing specialisation in these different fields. The key to solving that issue is collaboration or teamwork – a challenge of highest priority within today's and future management. An area of activity solely based on teamwork has been identified in that context which is chamber music. This paper deals on how such a teamwork in music is generated through active awareness of music phenomena. The major idea of presenting music in the context described here has been to let participants experience the force of music building a community along a chamber music master piece that any music making collective requires. The piece having been selected is the 1st movement of the Octet by Franz Schubert. To get this practically realised eight players had to be found throughout Osaka City University that have been able to play the instruments Schubert prescribed, which includes: clarinet, bassoon, horn, 1st violin, 2nd violin, viola, cello and double bass. Luckily there seems to be not too much of a problem in still finding players with adequate skills in a big university.

What regards organisational issues within music there is neither a chief executive officer (CEO), nor a 'board' nor any other 'levels' implied upon the 'system'. Music exclusively consists of collaborators being active on the same level and within a total dependency of each other. Of course the role of the conductor has to be mentioned in that context. There are enough reasons in today's life of music that allow to question that role. It is however the nature of the whole matter that the conductor can neither be more nor less than the 'primus inter pares' as a responsible

'impactor' acting in devotion towards music as the delegate of chamber music processes within a community of equal musicians. A conductor has not to be in the focus but has to 'disappear' once music evolves! The same applies with regard to the art of teaching. The teacher is not 'above' and the pupil 'below'. The teacher is just his own 'deputy' who initiates the teacher within the pupil. A major question is now: What has to be understood to be chamber music processes? Is there someone around taking over leadership? Who is communicating the impact for jointly making music? Does playing in a group lead to become anonymous? The answer is that each member in a group is in charge of the same responsibility. Each member has permanently to be prepared to either take over leadership and to be led. It is the art of a permanent give and take. When is it a give, when is it a take? It is solely the musical conditions that decide on the distribution of the roles and the permanent change of the roles. It is my role as a music instructor to prove these conditions in music using the 1st movement of the Schubert octet as an example.

2. Practising music towards a team

After that introduction the Schubert movement needs playing. The listener first experiences the variety in sound among the instruments participating. It is then worth to introduce each instrument by itself. Characteristic themes can be selected from the movement that can be identified as a kind of 'solo' parts for each of the instruments, or passages that have a significant function within the music's structure and implied by the respective instrument. In such a way the listener can experience a 'taste' of the magnificent and characteristic world of the clarinet, the

bassoon and the horn. The remarkable difference in the role of the two violins can be heard with the tendency of brilliance towards the 1st violin compared to the more ‘accompanying’ but no less important function of the 2nd violin that allows the music piece to survive. The noble sound of the viola can be heard, that represents the very important core of the ensemble and the cello can be experienced by its heart warming tone. Finally the double bass presents itself, being the foundation of all musical practice, often appreciated at a much too little degree. The remarkable difference in these eight instruments is impressive. A teamwork with these eight individualists cannot be self-evident. How can a contact be established between the clarinet and the 2nd violin? How should a communication be possible between the horn and the double bass?

Trying to find a solution to the above questions the author’s work has been based on developing a music collective along specific facts of the Schubert movement. This work can only be roughly sketched in a limited amount of time. Each masterpiece of chamber music offers an overwhelming multitude of options on how to enter into establishing music communities. The following four examples will show the degree of differentiation along which this process is established.

3. Example 1, Measure 1

Fig. 1 shows the score of the first example. Each line of the block of eight lines in the score represents what each of the instrumentalists has to play. The first tone F requires eight sounds to merge such that the unambiguous intonation of that tone is guaranteed. As such the contra-F of the double bass has to be heard first. Built upon this tone the cello follows with F, bassoon and viola with f, horn and 2nd violin with f¹ and clarinet and 1st violin with f². The major problem within that process is the dominating sound of the wind instruments, specifically the horn, when compared to the volume of the string players. This already requires the highest deal of sensitivity among all the members of the ensemble. The wind instrumentalists have to integrate their initial forte into the sound of the string instrumentalists and the string instrumentalists have to listen into the clear tune of the wind instrumentalists – a common F in the finest balance has to be the result. No one is allowed to step out through his individual sound! A best example for the need of a teamwork!

4. Example 2, Measures 2-4

The basis F established through the wind instruments and the double bass, which is also called a pedal note in the language of music, builds the basis for experiencing the harmonies in the following three measures (Fig. 1). The viola has the task to align into that pedal note through measure 2 to 3, which is then taken over by the 2nd violin in measure 4. The remaining string instrumentalists develop the subtle harmonic network out of that pedal note

– the hymnal introduction of a work by Schubert with six movements! Each tone of the harmony obtains its tint depending on its respective harmonic function. Questions now arise like: Which has been the root of the seventh accord in measures 2 and 4? Which has been the third, fifth, seventh? Who represents the levels of the triad within the 6/4 chord in the third measure? Throughout the following it is important to realise the various leading notes up to the dramatic darkening and immediate brightening on the verge of measure 5. This experience of darkness and light expressed in sound and being highly characteristic for Schubert’s music can be felt as the reflection of any human activity: conflict versus resolving has been realised here through joint coverage within a teamwork.

5. Example 3, Measures 19-31

Here at the beginning of the Allegro of which the score is shown in Fig. 2 the network and as such organisation of the chamber music ‘road-users’ is important. Who has been allocated to a group? Who plays together with whom? Who plays ‘against’ whom? Who has the melodic function? Who builds the rhythm? Who represents the harmonic foundation? The outstanding effects within these processes are the contramotion of clarinet and cello/double bass up to the syncopated pedal note of the 2nd violin/viola (measures 23-24 and 27-28) as well as the lively rhythmic and melodic dialogue of different groups (measures 30-31). A give and take within a continuous stream – a ‘pingpong’ on a musical level is established! This is again a reflection of human cooperation.

6. Example 4, Measures 183-193

In this section of which the score is shown in Fig. 3 the double bass takes over the role of forging the link back to the recapitulation, which is the focal point for the return of the supporting elements within the movement. Who ever has the motivation to follow a double bass? Here it becomes an obligation for the seven remaining members of the ensemble. The double bass is now active as a leading voice in two ways – (A) being the rhythmic motor as well as (B) through its harmonic models resulting from its arpeggios and leadership in the tunes. These two musical phenomena require a flawless integration of all the other voices. Further on the double bass acts as an overriding authority within the imitating dialogue between the wind and the remaining string instruments. This is again a surprising aspect of processes in chamber music: experienced differentiation within the development of communities!

At the end of the presentation of this small music workshop the whole movement has to be plaid again. The listener has now the chance to experience that work has been done along the social dimension of that piece of music. It can however also have happened differently. The ‘result’ of an effort does not always have to be obvious, however in most cases it luckily has. The fascination of

chamber music teaching even made open to the public at any time must however be seen in a transformation of loads. The listener now experiences more if not even at all the process of development and less the result coming out of it.

7. Conclusion

What has to be considered as the development here? It is the **musical** process by itself, the process of **learning unambiguous laws of music within a community of musicians and listeners**, and not 'interpretations'. Should interpretations drive the process, real music communities would not establish. A teacher or conductor may be able to make someone believe of such communities. However the consent that can develop through experiencing music is solely based on the freedom of the individual within the perception of phenomena in music.

We cannot say what music is. But we can experience when music develops. We can experience when tones are correlated and when a permanent present eliminates the dimensions of time. In chamber music the members can correlate together without losing themselves. This is the essential and big chance at the same time to experience music as the school of the human being.

This chamber music presentation is an experiment to release chamber music from its elitism being wrongly understood. The original dimension of music can again be experienced and a saying in Latin from the 14th century has again been confirmed: *Sine musica nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta*. Which can be freely translated as: Without music nothing is ongoing in that world.

8. Acknowledgement

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A score of the octet from Franz Schubert has been published by Bärenreiter Verlag coded TP 302 (ISMN M-006-20261-4), from which the examples have been taken with permission.

Oktett in F

D 803-op. post. 166

Februar-1. März 1824

Adagio

Clarinetto in Si^b/B
Fagotto
Corno in Fa/F
Violino I
Violino II
Viola
Violoncello
Basso

6

pp cresc. fp decresc. pp
pp cresc. fp decresc. pp
pp cresc. fp fp decresc. pp
pp cresc. fp fp decresc. pp
pp cresc. fp fp decresc. pp

Figure 1. Franz Schubert: Octet F-Major, Introduction of 1st Movement (Examples 1 & 2)
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19
Allegro

26

Figure 2. Franz Schubert: Octet F-Major, 1st Movement (Example 3)
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182

pp pp pp p cresc. p cresc. p cresc. p

192

fp ff ff cresc. ff p cresc. ff p cresc. ff p cresc. ffz

Figure 3. Franz Schubert: Octet F-Major, 1st Movement (Example 4)
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