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Formation of musical identity through the teacher's perspective

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Table of Contents

Isolde Malmberg & Milena Petrović Music and its Significance for People. Meaning Ascribed to Music – Meaningful Music Education. An Introduction	7
I. MUSIC FROM A SIGN-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE – MUSICAL SEMANTICS	
Mihailo Antović (Serbia) Implications of the Theory of Multilevel Grounded Musical Semantics for Music Education	17
II. MUSICAL SENSE-MAKING – INTERPRETATION OF MUSIC	
Sandra Fortuna & Luc Nijs (Italy and Luxembourg) The Effect of the Quality of Body Movement on Musical Sense-Making	35
Issa Aji & Tyler Howie (United States of America) Who's Listening? The Role of Genre in the Creation of Musical Meaning and Emotion	51
Regina Saltari (Greece and United Kingdom) Communication in Children's Musical Games: Reports from Greek School Playgrounds	65
III. MUSICAL IDENTITY – MUSIC AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO A MEANINGFUL LIFE	
Karen Burland, Christopher Dalladay, Llorenç Gelabert Gual, Alexandra Lamont, Sabine Schneider-Binkl & Eva-Maria Tralle (United Kingdom, Spain and Germany) Music Education and Lifelong Musical Meaning	79
Mark Aitchison (United Kingdom) A Study into Musician Identity in Year 8 Students in England	93

IV. MEANINGFUL TEACHING IN THE MUSIC CLASSROOM

- Rafaela Troulou & Lida Stamou (Greece)
Online Early Childhood Music Classes:
The Challenge of Creating Meaningful Learning Environments **111**
- Christos Matziris & Nikolaos Zafranias (Greece)
The Contribution of the “Musical Notes Challenge” Game
to the Enhancement of Situational Interest **125**
- Demosthenes Dimitrakoulakos, Bianca Hellberg & James Libbey (Luxembourg)
The Benefits of Student-Moderated Concerts:
A Practice Paper in Meaningful Music Education **145**
- Filip Verneert & An De bisschop (Belgium)
Bridging the Gap:
A Participatory Music Project as an Inspiration for Meaningful
Music Education through Improvisation in Schools **159**

V. MUSIC EDUCATION AS A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMER

- Anthony Anderson & Martin Fautley (United Kingdom)
Why Composing Matters for Disadvantaged Young People **179**
- Marina Gall & Anna Backman Bister (United Kingdom and Sweden)
The Importance of Music Education for Young People
with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities:
Swedish and English Perspectives **193**
- Axel Petri-Preis (Austria)
Doing Universality through Music Mediation:
(Re-)Manufacturing Shared Values and Practices
in a Society of Singularities **211**

VI. BELIEFS AND SELF-CONCEPTS OF MUSIC TEACHERS AND EFFECTS ON THEIR TEACHING

- Natalija Šimunovič & Katarina Habe (Slovenia)
Formation of Musical Identity through the Teacher’s Perspective **227**
- Joana Grow & Anna Theresa Roth (Germany)
Music Between Social and Personal Meaning:
Teaching Music History in the German Music Classroom **247**

VII. MEANINGFUL MUSIC TEACHER EDUCATION

Oliver Krämer & Maximilian Piotraschke (Germany)

Meaningful Rehearsals:

Criteria for Musical Work with Small Instrumental Ensembles **265**

The Editors **281**

The Authors **283**

Natalija Šimunovič & Katarina Habe

Formation of Musical Identity through the Teacher's Perspective

Introduction

Musical self-concept comprises perceptions, attitudes and cognitive schemas about an individual's musical disposition, ability and aptitude (Morin, Scalas & Vispoel, 2016). It is closely related to participation in musical activities (Austin, 1988,1991). Spychiger (2017) attributes a key role to musical self-concept in transforming musical experiences into a constructed musical identity, which she argues is the product of the formation and development of musical self-concept during adolescence. Musical self-concept and musical identity are therefore the same psychological phenomenon, expressed at different stages of life as self-awareness and self-presentation.

Spychiger et al. (2009) present the musical self-concept as a multidimensional psychological construct. Following the general self-concept model (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976), the authors identify academic and non-academic components of self-concept in the structure (Spychiger, Gruber & Olbertz, 2009). The academic component represents the domain of musical self-concept related to musical skills, while the non-academic domains represent the social, physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual components of musical self-concept.

MacDonald (et al., 2002) define musical identity as characteristic musical patterns in an individual's identity (*music in identity*) or personal identity markers concerning music (*identity in music*). *Identity in music* is also linked to the characteristics of particular musical instruments and their opportunities for social interaction in the environments where musicians perform and establish themselves as instrumentalists/singers (Kemp, 1996).

In addition to genetic factors, the development and formation of musical self-concept are influenced by the primary social environment (Manturzewska, Miklaszewski &

Biatkowski, 1995; Parncutt, 2009; Tarufi, 2017) and secondary social exchanges in the school environment (Davidson, Howe & Slobada, 1997; Gaunt, 2011; Hallam, 2010; Lamont, 2017). During the period of school music education, instrumental & singing teachers are the main agents of the processes that influence the formation of students' musical self-concepts (Davidson et al., 1997; Habe & Smolnikar, 2016). During adolescence – from the onset of puberty (11–12 years) to the transition to adulthood (18–29 years) – identity processes orient the individual to face new physical, psychological and social challenges (Erikson, 1968). Consequently, musical self-concept is increasingly structured and stable in the individual's musical identity (Frith, 1996; Spychiger, 2017). Significant transformations, revisions and changes of identity can also be traced in adulthood when the phase of career exploration occurs in tertiary social settings (Kroger, 2007). The lifelong transformation of the music educator's identity (Chua & Welch, 2021; O'Neill, 2017) shapes different identity concepts as a result of the constant tension between the roles of performer and teacher (Kemp, 1996; Natale-Abramo, 2014; Pellegrino, 2009). Bernard (2005) suggests that the identity concept is shaped by the music teacher's individual, social, and cultural identifications.

The reciprocity of musical and identity development is strongly influenced by the level and quality of an individual's motivation to learn music which, according to self-determination theory, is generated by the psychological needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The neglect of the conditions of self-determination – and thus the correspondence of musical development with self-concepts – seems symptomatic of the field of institutional music education (Hargreaves, Marshall & North, 2003; Evans, 2015). Incoherence is experienced by both teachers and students in the areas of music literature (Jorgensen, 2003), functions of music learning (Hargreaves & North, 1999), and modes (both formal & informal) of music teaching (Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). More recently, individual instrumental & singing instruction has also been characterized by a series of adaptations necessitated by the pandemic that attempted to compensate for the lack of personal proximity (de Bruin, 2021).

Our study aimed to investigate the important factors in the formation of musical identity in the music education system in Slovenia, where primary school students who pass a musical ability test can also be educated in a parallel primary music school. In the interaction of teacher and student self-concepts, we wanted to explore areas of exchange, interplay, friction, complementarity and exclusion; from this, we aimed to identify areas of consistent musical identity development. Starting from the proposition that identity is a continuous process of finding a point of reference by accepting/rejecting certain identifications (Giddens, 2002), we used grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) to examine the processes of identity construction based on participants' past and present interactions with their social environments.

Research Methodology

Slovenian public music schools at the primary level provide students with regular instruction in the following modules: *individual instrument/singing lessons*, *chamber & orchestral playing*, and *theoretical music instruction*. However, despite the systematic changes towards social, technological and cultural modernization, research points to traditionalist teaching methods that neglect the student's self-initiative and, above all, emphasize the academic development of the student and his or her perfection as a performer (Kavčič Pucihar, 2019; Pucihar, 2016). In the present study, we have sought to shed light on the contexts that guide instrument/singing teachers in our institutional practices towards particular patterns which integrate concepts of self and musical learning. Starting from this, we derived the following research questions:

- How do Slovenian music teachers of individual (instrument/singing) lessons experience their own musical identity?
- Which factors did the music teachers of individual (instrument/singing) lessons find most influential in the construction of their own concepts of the musical self?
- How do music teachers of individual (instrument/singing) lessons see their role in shaping students' musical self-concept?

Methods

The qualitative analysis allowed us to develop a formal theory based on a review of the many details, features, key patterns and concepts that we identified and analyzed using the collected data. The biographical narrative method was used to obtain specific data related to the situation in the Slovenian music education system.

Participants

The teachers who participated in the study have been teaching clarinet (N=1), guitar (N=2), harp (N=1), piano (N=1), percussion (N=1), singing (N=2) and violin (N=2), for between 10–35 years in the Slovenian primary music education system. All of them were academically educated and also selected on the basis of the experience they have gained – and are gaining – as orchestral musicians, pop musicians, concert musicians, solo singers, choral singers, accompanists, members of amateur ensembles and as a music editor. These in-service instrument/singing teachers, comprising two men and eight women aged 33–78 (M=51.7, SD=11.32), are listed in the Tab. 1.

	Gender + age	Instrument	Years in primary teaching
Teacher 1	M 33	guitar	10
Teacher 2	F 45	singing	14
Teacher 3	F 54	guitar	24
Teacher 4	M 46	percussion	15
Teacher 5	F 47	singing	17
Teacher 6	F 58	violin	23
Teacher 7	F 56	Harp	25
Teacher 8	F 44	clarinet	26
Teacher 9	F 56	violin	35
Teacher 10	F 78	piano	35

Tab. 1: Participating instrument/singing teachers

Instruments

We used a semi-structured interview, based on deductive reasoning from a range of research (Hallam, 2010; Hargreaves et al., 2003; Manturzevska et al., 1995; Pellegrino, 2009) and knowledge of the music education system in Slovenia. In the first part of the interview, we encouraged the teachers to reflect on the early formation of their musical self-concept, as well as the structuring of their own musical identity in adolescence and adulthood. In the second part of the interview, open-ended questions were used to seek descriptions of their professional experiences and their beliefs and actions concerning the formation of their students' musical self-concepts.

Procedure

The interviews were mostly conducted by video call and lasted between 27 and 56 minutes. The thematic analysis started with *line-by-line* coding (Charmaz, 2006), which was used to label segments of data that emerged from subjective interpretations of the structuring of musical self-concept/identity. By considering recurring words, keywords and the contexts in which they appeared, we then generated focused and some *in vivo* codes that symbolically denoted certain meanings (Charmaz, 2006). In the next step, we compared them with the data and, given the ongoing comparisons between participants, we generated

a series of annotations to facilitate recognition and coherence between the theoretical codes. Their separation and superordinate grouping led to the formation of categories. The entire set of introspectively and extrospective collected data was combined and used to conceptualize common categories. In this way, we supported the emergence of themes that corresponded to the analysis of the observations of the teacher-biographical narrator and the teacher-reflective practitioner, as shown in Fig. 1.

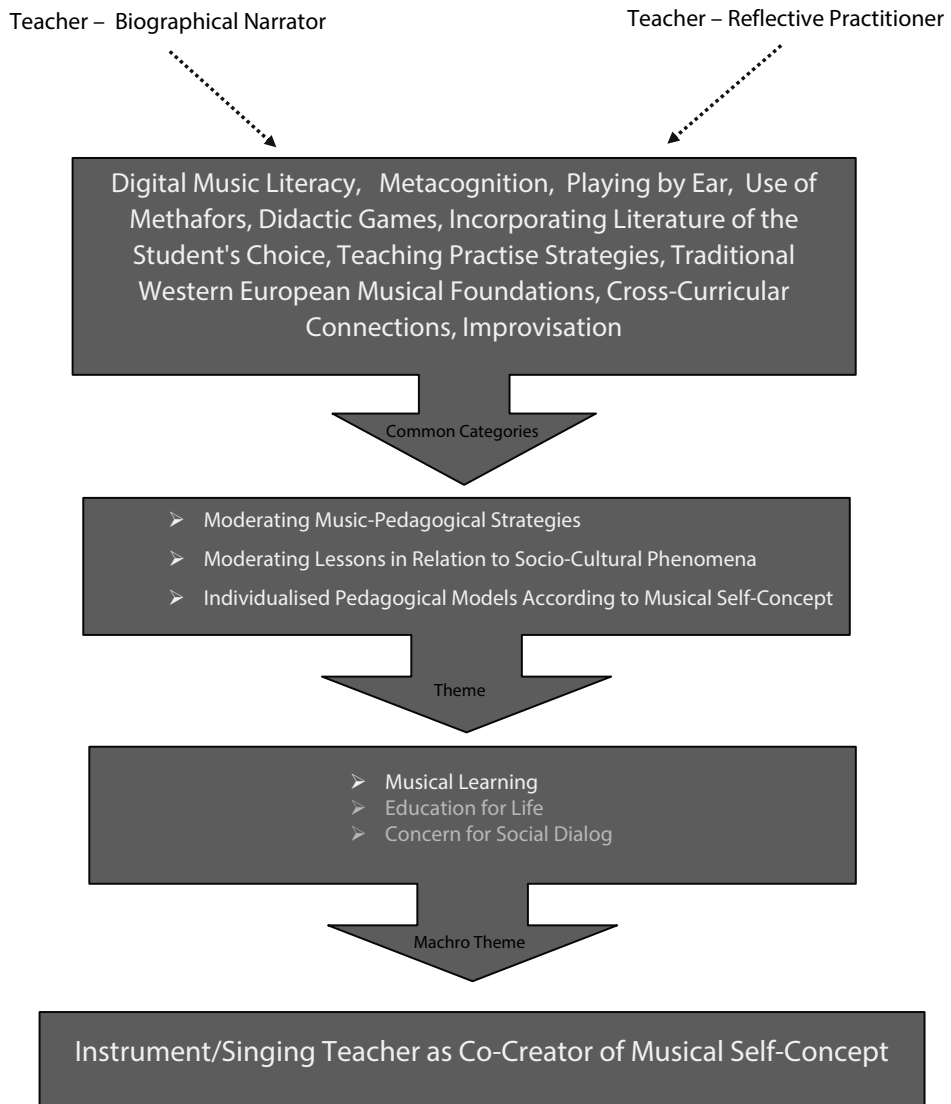


Fig. 1: Data analysis process

Results

Data analysis showed four macro-themes of musical self-concept formation, which are: 1. *choice of musical instrument*, 2. *practicing musical roles*, 3. *development of musical identity* and 4. *instrument/singing teacher – co-creator of musical self-concept*. They are characterized by the themes presented in Tab. 2.

Choosing a musical instrument	• Early identifications • Characteristics of the instrument • Belonging to the instrument
Practicing musical role	• Performer • Pedagogue • Creating mixed concepts
Development of musical self	• Family environment • Music education • Identity processes in adolescence • Adulthood
Instrument/singing teacher – co-creator of musical self-concept	• Musical learning • Education for life • Concern for social dialogue

Tab. 2: Macro-themes of musical self-concept/identity formation from the perspective of instrument/singing teachers

Choosing a Musical Instrument

In this study, experiencing a relationship with an instrument was a key factor in musical feelings, orientations, attitudes, decisions and activities throughout life. The scheme of states, circumstances, actions and interactions and their consequences related to the choice of instrument is shown in Tab. 3.

Early identifications	• Family suggestions • Media influences • Dominant self-presentation of unclear origin
Characteristic of the instrument	• <i>Male/female</i> instruments • <i>Socially open/self-sufficient</i> instruments • Inaccessibility/availability of the instrument • Core identity instrument • A genre-specific instrument
Belonging to the instrument	• An instrument as a friend • Attachment to the sound and characteristics of the instrument

Tab. 3: Choosing a musical instrument

Most of the participants' early identifications came from their primary social environment, in which they encountered a familiar instrument or an instrumentalist from among their relatives. As Teacher 5 stated: *"Because my older sisters played the piano and because there was a piano at home, they said: the youngest child should play the piano too ..."* Through her schooling and experience in the choir, she later became better identified and comfortable with singing. As a result, she devoted herself to the study of singing, in which she also obtained a university degree. However, in our research, we can confirm that most of the participants showed an identity commitment to the instrument that already appeared in their primary family.

In the selection of the instrument, the influence of the media is also taking on an increasingly important role, as can be seen from the statement of Teacher 4: *"When he came to the first lesson, he was already playing the drums, because he learned it himself from YouTube ... 'And what would you like to be?' I asked him: 'I'd like to be a drummer just like the one on this recording.'"*

Some of the participants felt a strong desire to play a certain instrument in their early childhood, but they now found it difficult to comprehensively define and analyze it. Teacher 6, who was also employed as a violinist in an opera orchestra said: *"Never did I think that I could do anything else in my life but play the violin!"* The fascination with their story can come from the word itself (harpist) as well as from fleeting auditory information or the appearance of a musical instrument in a cartoon or a short film clip of a symphony orchestra playing on the screen...

The characteristic of the instrument finally chosen by Teacher 8 linked her to preconceptions about the male or female status of the instrument: *"Actually, I struggled all through high school, trying to prove that a woman can also succeed on the clarinet ..."* The gender identification of the instrument strongly affected her studies, and also her work, in which – under her influence as a role model – she noticed mainly girls enrolling in the clarinet class.

Some participants, however, have experienced the choice of instruments depending on their solo or orchestral orientation, which has led to characteristic patterns of rehearsal, performance and socializing among musicians. In this way, the harpist (Teacher 7) felt that her identity was realized through the self-sufficient nature of her instrument, whereas the clarinetist (Teacher 8) achieved self-fulfillment through ensemble playing in the wind orchestra.

Participants who felt a sufficiently strong identity connection with a specific instrument did not even feel hindered in achieving their goals by factors such as limited access to the instrument, age limit, or waiting for a place with a teacher and distance from the school.

The exploration of different instruments was perceived by the participants as a process of crystallization, testing and finally choosing their “first” instrument, which was not necessarily the first they encountered. Teachers 1 and 4, while learning the second (even the third) instrument, realized the vastness and dominance of tacit knowledge that they possess in relation to their “first” instrument.

This provoked the decision to return to it. Conversely, the exploration of instruments with Teachers 5 and 8, led them to switch from their original instrument to a new one. The deficit they faced in the academic domain of mastering the instrument was bridged by stronger aspects of matching the instrument: most often on an emotional, physical, spiritual or social basis. Eventually, with intensive practice, they caught up with the skills of their peers, and thus, despite their lateness, they have since been able to present themselves more convincingly with the new – core instrument of their identity. The exploration of various instruments appears throughout the entire educational period and also marks the career of professional teaching.

In the decisions about the choice of instrument, the patterns of some educational and vocational identifications were also characterized by emphasized genre aspects. In their teaching practice, however, we detected open and broad genre frameworks with which they moderate the consistency of the student’s self-concept with musical learning.

The participants’ attachment to their instrument was described by emotional statements: *“I simply liked the clarinet more than the cello”*, said Teacher 8. The participants attribute to the instruments the role of a »friend« in their lives. Teacher 3 also sees this as one of his pedagogic identities: *“My goal is basically for the guitar to be a child’s friend.”*

In addition, in this research we also detected the attachment of the participants to the sound and the way of creating sound on their instrument, even to its shape, material, and maintenance methods.

Practicing Musical Roles

Practicing in musical roles brought the participants a series of musical experiences that contributed to the formation of musical self-concept and musical identity. Tab. 4 shows typical categories of the three main themes.

Performer (solo, chamber, orchestral and choral musician)	• Creative narrowness of the executor of musical ideas • Acquiring basic skills/references for teaching work • Musical performance anxiety • Competitive environment
Pedagogue	• Creative variety and autonomy of the executor of musical ideas • Existential working conditions
Creating mixed concepts	• Genre concepts • Professional concepts • Socio-cultural concepts • Random concepts

Tab. 4: Practising musical roles

A musical performer gets to know himself early on by performing or competing as a soloist, orchestra player, choral singer and chamber musician. Various roles in musical productions fundamentally marked his musical self-concept, which dictates the construction of a musical identity during adolescence: *"When I was 14 years old, my father took me to the opera for the first time, I played the tambourine in Carmen, it was my first performance ... it really drew me in."* This is how the percussion teacher, who used to be employed in the opera orchestra, remembers his first professional traineeship. However, all participants described playing in an orchestra as creatively limited while teaching work appeals to them with its creative autonomy.

Without exception, the experience that the pedagogues gained in the orchestra was assessed as an important contribution to their pedagogical competence. The life map acquired by practicing musical roles was also supplemented by teaching experience. Teacher 1 described the balancing of performance and teaching practice as follows: *"Then I started teaching, and at the beginning, I also gave concerts at the same time. In the end, it didn't work out... You have to practice a lot and, along with working as a teacher, it is difficult to perform professionally... then I really started to enjoy learning, because at the beginning I didn't think I would in reality."*

Performance practice was also characterized by various periods, situations and relationships that were burdened by performance anxiety. The participants believed that this represents a difficult and unavoidable test for every performer, who must consequently strive to acquire skills and strategies for dealing with anxiety when performing. Rarely, however, did they treat performance anxiety as an immutable and innate trait that they

cannot influence. As Teacher 6 pointed out: *"Let's say that if he has terrible nerves that bothers him while doing it, I don't go for it. Because then he is not [right] for a musician! I know there are ways to get rid of stage fright or I don't know what, but I haven't done it yet..."*

All participants perceived the performance as a central network of complex skills, towards which individual instrument/singing lessons are also aimed. In successful performances, they see confirmation of their work: *"I found my place in educating future musicians, teaching students to perform, teaching them to compete"*, said Teacher 3. For those students who demonstrate a desire to become a musician, teachers raise the standards: they increase the amount of technical practice, increase the difficulty level of literature and target musical competitions as well. Excessive competitiveness in the profiling of a concert musician discouraged some participants from this role. Concrete existential reasons, family obligations, work schedules, financial backgrounds, experience on stage, training dynamics and artistic interpretive self-confidence also played an important role in students choosing a musical profession.

The musical practice of those professionals who combined playing in an orchestra and teaching was characterized by a distinctive identity concept, which they themselves defined according to the level of their own creative passivity or activity in one of the roles. According to them, the teaching profession offers greater creative autonomy than they felt in the orchestra: *"In the orchestra, you are part of the machine ... You use your technical skills to serve the conductor ... But in school, it's the other way around: you're the one who imagines everything and has to use all the accessories to get it done ..."* Teacher 6, who made this statement has been combining her work commitment with both orchestral and teaching activities for over 20 years.

Confronting feelings of self when practicing different musical roles has resulted in diverse identity concepts: 1. teacher, 2. pedagogue/performer, 3. performer/pedagogue, 4. instrumentalist/singer (harpist, guitarist, opera soprano ...), 5. pedagogue/author, 6. pedagogue/editor, 7. pedagogue/pop musician, 8. pedagogue/researcher, 9. pedagogue/manager.

We have identified the influencing factors of such role formation as genre and vocational, socio-cultural & random concepts, which changed and were complemented by new experiences. The transformations of the musical self was also evident in the more mature professional periods of the participants. Teacher 2 expressed it in the following reflection: *"So my performance: I love doing it and I hope I will continue to do it. Here, I would also say that I think that when you reconcile yourself that maybe you don't have a career as a soloist, you become a better teacher."*

The Development of the Musical Self

The development of musical self-concepts was influenced by different environments and interactions that the individual experienced in different periods of life. The themes that we observed in this regard are highlighted in Tab. 5.

Family environment	• Genetic predispositions • Inspirations, role models and first musical experiences
Music Education (formal/non-formal/informal)	• Acquisition of knowledge and skills • Acquisition of behavioral patterns
Identity Processes in Adolescence	• Professional orientation • Autonomous pursuit of musical goals
Adulthood	• Identity adjustments in the work environment • New identity explorations

Tab. 5: The development of the musical self

The prevailing opinion among the participants was that genetic predisposition affects the formation of musical self-concept. This belief also marked their pedagogical work (Teacher 10): *"We all quickly find out how much talent there is so that we can somehow lead each child along their own path...."*

Individuals who find their first musical experiences and role models in their home environment have decided to learn music – which had a significant impact on the development of their musical identity. Teacher 4 repeatedly highlighted an influential family musical role model: *"My father had a band that played every weekend in the summer ... And when I was 6 years old, I was already climbing around the stage and I started banging on those drums a little during the sound rehearsal, and that pulled me in."* Teacher 9 also found a pedagogical role model in her home environment: *"On my father's side, (they are) all musicians, the whole family, more than ten people, are classical musicians. Now, from my mother's side, everyone is a teacher, and somehow I was always in these conversations about music...that's how I somehow appreciated this teaching profession from my home environment."*

In the music school environment, the participants mostly perceived two main influences on the development of the musical identity. The first was related to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, while the second was related to the acquisition of behavioral patterns (effort, dedication, acquiring work habits, and persistence). Both are most often associated with practicing the instrument/singing, which is continuous, long-term and often very extensive. In the formal school environment, it is often conducted rigidly, considering established practices, as reflected in the Teacher's (3) statement: *"If the student is diligent, he chooses the subject himself. Then I try even harder and make him special musical*

arrangements. The fact that he is diligent means that he practices scales, that he practices chords, he practices etudes. But if the student is not diligent, I just turn the next sheet in the etude and say – the next etude. I don't give in, not even a millimeter."

In the Slovenian school system, an individual formally decides at the age of 15 whether or not they wish to pursue a music career. During the period of adolescence, the participants' identity explorations are mostly related to the search for the right school and course of study. Until their sense of self has stabilized, some even attended two high schools or move between classical and jazz music programs.

An individual who has acquired training discipline at the basic level of music schooling under the auspices of a teacher and parents, experience a concrete challenge in adolescence in order for the autonomous activation of all available internal resources. As Teacher 8 stated: *"A good teacher is one thing, the other is that you practice a lot. To learn from your experiences, I think, no teacher can give you as much as you can learn yourself."*

We also studied the development of an adult music pedagogue's identity and identified the main factors such as: changed social and cultural conditions, creative pedagogical research and interaction between student and teacher, and exhaustion in the previous musical and cultural role. We observed the formation of an active, study-validated role of the researcher, as well as the expansion of the pedagogical framework with editorial insight gained in additional jobs. Identity processes were also expressed as transitions between the role of performer and pedagogue, which is often marked by the age limit conditions in the music business etc.

Throughout the teaching periods, the participants practiced various specializations (participation in competitions, focus on chamber music, focus on pop music). Teacher 1 even planned to acquire performance skills on a related musical instrument: *"Now the last thing that grabbed me was the banjo, which I bought by chance and now I'm practicing the banjo."* All identity transitions and adaptations were also reflected in their teaching style.

Instrument/Singing Teacher – Co-Creator of Musical Self-Concept

In the Slovenian music school system, the instrument/singing teacher accompanies the individual as a musical mentor from middle childhood through to the transition to adulthood. We presented the important interactions between them with themes that can be seen in Tab. 6.

Musical learning	Moderation of music pedagogical strategies Moderation of teaching according to socio-cultural phenomena A complex treatment of the components of musical self-concept in relation to the individual
Education for Life	Musical self-concept as a value potential of a holistic self-concept Amateur/professional orientations A lifelong musical orientation The importance of well-being in individual lessons
Concern for social dialogue	The dynamics of the <i>student, parent, teacher</i> triangle Encouraging peer relationships

Tab. 6: Instrument/singing teacher – co-creator of musical self-concept

In the research, the transfer of academic knowledge was identified as the main goal of learning an instrument/singing. For this purpose, lessons regularly included improvisation, didactic games, cross-curricular connections, metacognition, learning through parables, training methods, technical foundations and psychological preparation for the performance. When moderating music-pedagogical processes, participants helped with their own music-educational experiences, professional development courses, lifelong professional experiences and professional exchange.

All segments of music-pedagogical activity were strongly permeated with socio-cultural phenomena that require vigilance, adaptation and training almost daily. They often used informal learning methods (incorporation of literature, according to the student's musical preferences, improvisation, aural learning, pop and jazz music chamber groups) and digitization of sources and methods.

Participants experienced the components of musical self-concept as concrete presentations of self, which they can influence through musical learning:

The physical component: *"Through this theatre on stage – they know how to bow, they know how to stand up and so on ... So, the music students are not completely crouched and with their shoulders together and their heads down, because it's so impossible to get anything out of them. I think everybody in our profession understands this."*

The spiritual component: *"If she wants to sing the sacred repertoire and I see that it only stimulates her even more, then I bring this program closer to her and she likes to come ..."*

The emotional component: *"Some are more subdued, in that sense you give them more subdued compositions and in those subdued compositions, they look for some extensions ... As I say, the same composition doesn't suit everybody."*

The social component: *"Some children are not for going to competitions and then they go to the orchestra and feel good there, playing in various groups."*

The cognitive component: *"When we see in each one of them the way they perceive, the type of learner that they are: audio, visual, kinetic, whatever ... for me, each child writes his own curriculum!"*

Musical self-concept was considered a valuable force of holistic self-concept. This is the statement of the teacher who has been working for the longest time: *"This is now my direction, to give each student some value from this attendance at a music school and that he does not feel like a failure in any way."*

Such a perspective dictates a complex amateur/professional target orientation: *"... I still maintain that in a primary music school, we shape future listeners and music fans above all. But if we want to get those few from this set that we would take on a professional path, they all should be placed properly in the first lesson ..."*, said Teacher 7. Such orientation dictates adapted educational models (Teacher 4): *"I said to myself, I will adjust it [the curriculum] to each one individually and worked hard with him so that in the end he will be satisfied; that he will go home happy, that he will have learned something."*

Participants felt successful when the professional educational path becomes the vocational orientation of the student: *"Yes, I have students who are already teaching, very successfully, I also have students who are already in the orchestra..."* When their students find lifelong fulfilment in amateur making music, their satisfaction is no less: *"we must not forget that we also educate musical amateurs, and I will be the happiest person in the world if they sing in the village choirs, for communion, in the choir or the village festival ..."*

The most frequently spoken words in the context of the topic of Education for life were *conversation* and *praise*. A lack of positive and two-way communication was experienced by some as music students (Teacher 8): *"The clarinet teacher motivated me very poorly, he kept pushing me down: it won't work, you don't know anything ..."* All participants emphasized the importance of maintaining learning motivation and emotional well-being on the part of the teacher. According to them, these two factors create a good atmosphere during individual lessons, which can be defined as a predictor of a healthy development of musical self-concept.

Concern for social dialogue is best reflected in the dynamics of the *student-parent-teacher* triangle. Participants associated learning success with balance, connection, communication and consensus among the actors in the triangle. The violin teacher (Teacher 9) – who taught a first grader the basics of playing the violin during the Covid-19 quarantine – decided on intensive listening exercises, rather than deal with the posture and placement of the hands on the instrument. She countered the claim by saying that she cannot teach a child the correct handling of an instrument "at a distance", but she can effectively prepare him cognitively for aural tasks: *"This is one example that I can cite as successful. But maybe it wouldn't have ended like this if students' parents didn't have such insight into what we need to learn and supported me ..."*

The teachers defended the belief that, as co-creators of musical self-concept, they should support and encourage peer relationships. Teacher 1 described his vision of peer integration as follows: *"When some students go to summer school, they meet guitarists from all over Slovenia; for example, the guitarists somehow see and listen to each other at these performances, listen to each other in class, play together and suddenly music means a lot more to them."*

Discussion

The instrument/singing teachers in our study experienced their musical identity as a specific concept of their own exchange with the diverse environment of their musical activity. They have integrated the essence of their musical pursuits into various conglomerates of pedagogical practices, which provide them with a range of resources necessary for teaching. They have acquired them through musical performance and creation in primary, secondary and tertiary socialization. The researched tension between the musician and the pedagogue in the identity of the music teacher showed professional transformations, adaptation, upgrading or abandonment of musical identity roles – reactions, that we already know from the studies of other authors (Austin, 1988, 1991; Bernard, 2005; Pellegrino, 2009).

The participants in the research considered that, in addition to acquiring knowledge and skills in music education, it is also important to acquire characteristic behavioral patterns that significantly shape the musical self. In addition to formal education, the participants also emphasized the importance of non-formal and informal education, whose positive perspectives were presented by Wright and Kanellopoulos in their study (2010). With a wide spectrum of data from childhood, adolescence and even adulthood, we were able to pursue the construction and emergence of musical self-concept. From the perspective of possible musical selves (Schnare, MacIntyre & Doucette, 2012), we pursued networks of individual self-presentations, actions, reflections and self-realization, which crucially marked the identity of the participants. We also observed significant new perspectives and challenges for identity exploration in adulthood, which is in line with the assumption that the professional socialization of an instrument teacher is a lifelong process (Chua & Welch, 2021).

Following Kemp's (1996) findings, our study also confirms the specificity of musical expression, which develops concerning the instrument and, as such, significantly co-shapes musical self-concept. Already in early self-perceptions, participants in this study perceived a liking or a dislike for a particular instrument. They experienced a specific musical development according to the characteristics of their instrument: male/female, socially open/ self-sufficient, harder to access, genre-determined instrument. The academic capital

acquired by practicing and performing with a particular instrument further strengthened the attachment and affiliation to specific patterns of sound expression.

The importance of musical experiences, which significantly contribute to the structuring of musical identity (Spychiger et al., 2009), was confirmed in the study through a set of samples that we classified in the category of practicing musical roles. Through the practice of solo, orchestral, choral, and chamber performances and often competitions, participants developed and tested the limits of their creativity, performance anxiety and musical competence. Based on self-evaluation, and attunements with inner feelings of self and the environment they transformed, participants consolidated and refined the components of their musical self-concept.

We found that teachers – as co-creators of their students' musical self-concept are confronted with music-pedagogical issues that are permeated by sociocultural influences. Everyday music-pedagogical dilemmas concern the digitalization of sources and methods, the democratization of musical roles and genres, and the decentralization of the perfectionist performer's role in music education. Our research confirmed the great social impact of music education, as many authors have already noted (Hargreaves et al. 2003; Jorgensen 2003, Partti & Westeelund, 2012). Participants also perceived the need for an all-around connection with students and their parents, with whom they have to overcome the challenges of distance learning, as de Bruin (2021) already pointed out. They experienced their pandemic classroom model as a transparent leap into issues that have been previously implied in the music education reality. Teachers believed that instrumental instruction should be slowed down and motor skills should be placed on a firmer aural footing.

Participants in this study perceived students' musical self-concept as a spectrum of presentations of behavior, knowledge, well-being, desires, anxieties, abilities and weaknesses, which they can influence through their actions. They are convinced that they influence the entire self-concept because, according to them, the musical self-concept represents an important value potential of the overall self-concept. The importance of well-being in individual tuition is emphasized especially by participants with many years of teaching experience. The data analysis highlighted the importance of teacher evaluations and judgements, which also have a decisive influence on students' conceptions of self-reflection, as hypothesized by Sychiger (2017). All participants confirm the need for harmony in the *parent-student-teacher* triangle, which significantly impacts emotional well-being and effective learning of the instrument/singing, as repeatedly emphasized by music pedagogy researchers (Gaunt, 2011; Manturszewska et al., 1995).

Peer collaboration and integration – which Austin (1991), Davidson (et al., 1997) and Evans (2015) already highlighted as important factors in musical development, are nurtured and encouraged by our participants both inside and outside the classroom.

Instrument/singing teachers in our study viewed their pedagogue role as an important factor in shaping students' musical self-concept. On the other hand, given the

participants' studied patterns of developmental transformations, we can assume that the teacher's identity changes are partially conditioned by interactions with the students. The dialogue of the musical selves in music lessons thus takes place in two directions, despite the dominant position of the teacher.

Conclusions and Implications

Our research sheds light on the developing musical self of both the student and the teacher in primary music schools in Slovenia. The research gave insights into the cause-effect relationship between music pedagogical processes and psychological principles of musical identity construction. The area of self-concept in music education needs to be identified and defined in future research through the intersection of the student's musical self-concept and the musical identity of his/her teacher.

Considering the concepts of self, and thereby reviving the dialogue between teacher and student, is much more accessible and feasible in individual lessons than in group lessons. From this point of view, the preservation and nurturing of individual lessons in elementary music schools in Slovenia are further supported. Perhaps it is the task of future educators to implement the idea of musical identity as a developmental task in the form of group lessons also at the general elementary school level, where the entire population is educated in music. Perhaps future implementation would be feasible with hours of practical instrument tuition.

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