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Russian Violin Method

Methodical Teaching Project in Children's Culture Center
"Musikantit".

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<p>This thesis investigates the Russian violin school and how the related methods have been applied in Finland. I found that the Russian method became most beneficial to my violin playing during my studies in the last six years. There are two primary aims of this study: 1. To investigate and clarify what the Russian violin school is, and 2. To report a teaching project held in Children's Culture Center "Musikantit" based on the Russian violin method. An objective of the teaching project was to investigate the interest in the Russian/Finnish population for providing a goal-oriented musical coaching based on the Russian violin method.</p> <p>The teaching project in Children's Culture Center "Musikantit" was held by violin professor Seppo Reinikainen the teaching year of 2017/2018. Lessons were formed as master classes followed by me and the violin teacher of "Musikantit" Olesya Skorbilina. The children were pupils of Olesya. During the teaching year several meetings were held with the headmaster of "Musikantit" Suvi Svetlana Nyström discussing the pedagogical method of the project.</p> <p>The idea of additional pedagogical boost to the pupils of "Musikantit" was positively received. The question of economical finance was the main obstacle. Children's Cultural Center "Musikantit" expressed their reluctance of charging more from the parents as the institution is private and the market is difficult and competitive. It also occurs that the field of culture and art is underestimated by the society. The government is constantly cutting down the resources. This manifests the idea amongst the parents as well that the cultural activity is less worthy of investment. Not only economical investment, but also the investment of time, effort and support.</p> <p>The next step in this process is to seek for economical support to open a collaboration with Russian music institutions in Moscow. Opening a cultural collaboration with Russian music institutions will benefit both the Russian and the Finnish music schools in way of exchanging knowledge and professional experience. In the same time it will work as a cultural bridge builder between the neighbouring countries in this politically separating times.</p>	
Keywords	Russian violin method, music pedagogy, violin

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Russian violin school	4
2.1	Auer	4
2.2	Stolyarsky	5
2.3	Development of the Russian/Soviet violin school	7
2.4	Russian music educational system	9
2.5	The principles of education	10
2.6	Russian violin school in Finland	11
2.6.1	Seppo Reinikainen	14
2.6.2	Children's Culture Center "Musikantit"	15
3	The Project	17
3.1	Background	17
3.1.1	Future development possibilities	18
3.1.2	Metropolia's interest to open a Russian collaboration	18
3.2	The Metropolia 20 hour package	19
3.3	Realization of the project	21
3.3.1	Meeting with the "Musikantit"	22
3.3.2	The pedagogical ideological foundation	22
3.3.3	The practical execution of the scheme	23
3.4	The outcomes of the project	24
3.5	Further development	25
4	Conclusion	27
	References	29

1 Introduction

This thesis is about the Russian violin school and the application of it in Finland. The Russian violin method has been the underlying fundament in my violin studies the last five years. My studies in Finland have been under the guidance of violin lecturer Seppo Reinikainen at Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (further referred to as Metropolia UAS). I particularly applied to Metropolia UAS in order to be able to study under lecturer Reinikainen. We met at a master course where I was previously studying at the University of Tromsø, Norway. Having the privilege to study in peace with mr. Reinikainen for such a long period allowed me to change my way of thinking about violin playing and music activity in general. Already after the master course in Tromsø I understood that working with Seppo Reinikainen had great impact on and immediate results on my learning outcome. Not only was his method different from others I have worked with, but also the philosophical approach and teaching attitude were atypical for a violin professor.

What made the biggest impact on me personally and made my decision to move abroad was how Seppo's teaching was simply constructive and supportive. The most important in his teaching was the atmosphere which was free of fright and anxiety. There were no talk about whether I had it in me to either hear or play. Mr. Reinikainen just worked the different elements and most important - he had the tools to work them. The act of playing violin was no longer made into something mystical or occult. No longer something one just had to feel and expect to happen by itself. Not something one either had or didn't have or something supernatural one could never predict or control. The act of violin playing could actually be explained and analyzed. It was a matter of working it accordingly, a matter of understanding what one was doing and a matter of having the freedom to try and fail. Later I understood that his violin method originated from the Russian violin school and I decided to investigate the method closer.

During the last five years I have learned a lot about the Russian violin method through following Seppo's violin lessons and pedagogical classes. Through this thesis I wish to systematize and formulate my knowledge about the subject. The purpose is to investigate the historical background and development of the method and try to

understand how and why the method has managed to produce the results it has. Through this work I would like to answer the question “why was the Russian violinist so superior on the world stage during the last century, especially concerning the technical mastering, and how did they achieve that accomplishment. What was the advantage of their musical training”.

In addition to formulating the Russian violin school the purpose of this thesis is to report a teaching project which is the start of a hopefully longer collaboration between Seppo Reinikainen and myself. The intention of the teaching project is to launch and provide a supplementary teaching course for existing music institutions based on the Russian violin method the way we are applying it in our teaching. The way we apply it means the way it is philosophically and psychologically adjusted to fit and serve the Finnish society in the most positive and beneficial manner.

Autumn 2017 some of the teaching staff of the music department at the Metropolia UAS got the opportunity to visit outside music institutions to promote music in general and the education of Metropolia UAS in particular. This was the foundation of this particular teaching project which I will follow and report for this thesis. The project took place in the Children’s Culture Center “Musikantit” in East-Helsinki during the teaching year of 2017/2018 arranged and held by Seppo Reinikainen and myself. That project will also function as an indicator for possible interest on the market for our business concept. Hopefully it will lead to establishing a future collaboration between “Musikantit”, Metropolia UAS and myself as a violin pedagogue.

The choice to participate and cover especially the project at “Musikantit” for my thesis was made because of the high participation of the Russian/Finnish population at the institution. This fact makes it mostly relevant for the market investigation and future action planning of the business idea. The intention was to inspect particularly the interest amongst the Russian speaking population to offer their children a boosting music educational package in addition to their ongoing studies. The future development of the project will also be to open up a friendship collaboration between Russia and Finland. A collaboration which will make it possible to invite violin professors from music academies in Russia to visit and give music courses for children in Finland. Finnish teachers are also to visit Russia and contribute to the pedagogical field and opening up a pedagogical/philosophical discussion. The Finnish music school would benefit from this collaboration a lot in the in the sense of getting the systematic method

to train musicians professionally. The Russian school on the other hand would benefit by bringing skills of interaction and joy into their teaching helping them to educate not only professional musicians, but also enjoying amateurs and music lovers.

In the second chapter I investigate the Russian school and it's origin. In the third chapter I report the teaching project in Children's Culture Center "Musikantit". Here I also present possible future plans and action.

2 Russian violin school

What is it that makes the Russian violin school Russian? To try to define what the Russian school actually is is quite intricate as there is nothing specific under that name, still the expression and term are quite widely known. Most people have heard about it or refer to it when speaking about violinists springing out from the Eastern bloc or the Eastern Europe nowadays. One may have associations of high quality and virtuosity, when speaking about the violinist, strict and disciplined, when speaking about the tutoring. But there are no institutions called Russian violin school, neither will you find any buildings carrying that name if you go to the eastern Europe, nor is there any specific book under that title. Unlike the Suzuki method you can not find booklets of instructions of how to teach by the Russian violin method. So when speaking about the Russian violin school one is not referring to one specific school or to one specific way of teaching or a specific teacher, but actually to the tradition of teaching violin that springs out from Russia and the Eastern Europe.

2.1 Auer

The beginning of the Russian violin school is considered having taken place with the import of the Hungarian violinist Leopold Auer (1845-1930) to the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1868 who taught there for 49 years until his migration to America in 1917. From his classrooms emerged some of the most eminent names of the violin mastery of the last century. Although there had been outstanding Russian violinists before, like Khandoshkin (1744-1804) and Lvov (1789-1870), the highest musical posts in Russia and Russian musical life were dominated by foreign musicians until late 1800. The foundation of the Conservatories in St. Petersburg in 1862 and Moscow in 1866 provided the opportunity of musical training in Russia equal to the West-European academic standards. Henryk Wieniawski (1835-1880) who was acting as a musician and teaching in St. Petersburg between 1860 and 1872 left definite impact on the Russian violin tradition and musical development. (Schwarz 1983, 408--412.)

Although there is almost an emphasis on Auer being the personification of the Russian violin school it is difficult to find out what his method actually was like. In fact he only admitted talented children who already possessed the instrument to his class. It is said that he never bothered helping his students with any technical difficulties or executions

or demonstrate any technical applications. But he demanded flawless performance and technique which left his students to turn to each other for help. It seems that his main focus was the music and the student's commitment and dedication to the art as well as the individual and personal interpretation of each student. It is reported that he was highly authoritative and exercised supervision over his students' lives - from what they were wearing, reading, speaking to how they acted and held themselves in the society.

If we now think that the authoritative and dominative method of exerting fear on the students in order to motivate them and to reach the goal is a bit outdated and has perhaps brought bad reputation over and is actually burdening the Russian violin School more than benefitting. Could there be something in the method that could actually be useful concerning the goal oriented coaching of the violin? What was the secret behind Auer's method for instance that brought up the greatest violin performers of that generation? His class was most prestigious and made students come from everywhere to try to get admittance and once admitted they were pushed to their limits of endurance to achieve results. Every violinist that had any ambitions of getting anywhere with violin wanted to go to Auer. Once he had talent that he really believed in Auer would execute his power in favour of that student as in acquiring scholarships, writing letters of recommendation, follow up and support his career even after graduating. In that way he really made the conditions beneficial for the growth and development of his students' careers. According to Fedorovich (2014, 101) the pedagogical method of Auer didn't actually produce any world class violinist during his work in the 19th century and only from the start of the 20th century some of his students started reaching the world class level Auer is remembered for this day. During his 49 years of teaching in St. Petersburg approximately 270 students in total were registered to his class (Schwarz 1983).

2.2 Stolyarsky

Another significant personage in the Russian violinistic history is Piotr Solomonovich Stolyarsky (1871-1944) who started his teaching activity in Odessa in 1898 and established his own private music school there in 1911. Stolyarsky had an immense intuition of finding talented children for his school. He could spend hours of his leisure time wandering around Odessa's working-class districts, visiting kindergartens and schools, observing children and picking out those he sensed to be most perceptive to

music. In discovering the musical talents he would approach the child on it's own premises making the child sing, dance and most of all talk about it's favourite things to open up the child's own personal world and look for features such as emotionality, playfulness, courage and activity level amongst other. (Mordkovich 1981; Fedorovich 2014.) When starting to train the children he was the first to establish a daily tutoring system with the beginners in order for them to perfectly acquire the fundamental principles and mastering of the instrument (Mordkovich 1981, 43).

Stolyarsky was also the first to introduce and demand high level of training and practising of the technical material as scales and etudes beside the studying of the musical repertoire. Piotr Solomonovich was very devoted to his work and in constant search of development, he was familiar with all modern Russian and foreign repertoire at his time and using it in his practise. It is claimed that he would treat his students with respect and consider their personal and individual preferences in the matter of repertoire and musical and technical application. Stolyarsky encouraged his students to search for their own solutions and strive to constant search and development. He also made his students adopt naturally to the performing situation from the very early stage as all the lessons were followed by fellow students as well as parents, colleagues and guests. (Mordkovich 1981.)

This practise of students following each other also increased every student's repertoire knowledge. His views on the young performers were contradicting with the dominating views of his time that the young musician should not be exposed to public performance. He proved the opposite by his practise with his young talents with impressive results which drove the Soviet government to realize the importance of thorough musical training from the very early childhood. From 1933 the Soviet government decided to invest seriously into the musical training program of children, which led to the foundings of musical specialization schools, making musical education possible for gifted children all over the great country. (Mordkovich 1981.) This was a part of the Soviet propaganda program led by the Soviet government and paid of by placing five winners amongst the highest six at the Ysaÿe Contest in Brussels in 1937. Four of them had been students of Piotr Stolyarsky. (Schwarz 1983, 456.)

Table 1. Winners of the Ysaÿe Contest in Brussels in 1937 (Schwarz 1983, 456).

Name	Teacher
1. David Oistrakh	Stolyarsky
2. Ricardo Odnoposoff	Flesch
3. Elizabeth Gilels	Stolyarsky, Yampolsky
4. Boris Goldstein	Stolyarsky, Yampolsky
5. Marina Kozolupova	Mostras and Poliakin
6. Mikhail Fikhtengolts	Stolyarsky, Yampolsky

According to Mordkovich (1981) the music teachers of Odessa have continued Stolyarsky's practise by visiting schools and kindergartens in the city and in the provinces in search for young talents and exhibiting the school. The school also keeps "open days" once a semester allowing all wanting visitors to enter the school and take part of organized activities.

2.3 Development of the Russian/Soviet violin school

As already mentioned the Soviet government recognized the importance of profound musical training of children as a crucial link in the development of musical talents. The production of talent was to become another means in the Soviet propaganda program to show superiority of the communist state in the western world. Musical contest winners became the embodiment of talent and would prove the rightness of system. While other governments gave their music contest candidates good wishes, the Soviet contestants were sent to the contests as olympic teams: they were surrounded by a solicitous committee of experts, they were provided with superb instruments, they had trial runs and their resilience and confidence were built up (Schwarz 1983, 461; Flesch quoted *ibid.*). The government began financing and establishing music schools for children all over the country to provide the possibility for talents all over to be discovered and developed. The students should be prepared not only to become musicians and performers, but also have in mind their task as propagandists of the great Soviet musical culture (Yampolsky 1968, 21).

The task of developing the musical training system was approached in the same way as for instance the Space program or the Missile program: scientifically. As T. Pogozeva is quoting professor of the Moscow Conservatory Abram Yampolsky (1890-1956) in her methodical teaching book for the 7-year music school *Questions in the methodical pedagogy in teaching of violin playing* (1968, 8):

The Soviet violin school has shown remarkable achievements in the pedagogical and methodical aspect in the sense of direct artistic results as well as the collection of knowledge and perfecting the skills of teaching. The achievements are grounded on scientific research, particularly the working out of questions concerning violin pedagogics in the light of Pavlov's theory of the higher nervous activity. (Pogozeva 1968, 8.)¹

With the slogan “anything can be analyzed and explained” in mind they attacked the problem of violin playing. They broke it down into fragments: what is it to be a musician, what is music, what is violin playing, what is the purpose of the left hand, what is the purpose of the right hand. And by answering the questions one at a time they tried to extract the substance of the activity. Nothing was to be left to the mysterious and mystic or the coincidental. By doing all this research they developed an educational system consisting of and describing all the specific fragments and skills needed to be acquired, the systematic order in acquiring them and the material through which to do so. The teachers working with beginners would approach and work with their pupils with all these plans in mind. From the very first lessons they were to work with the children having in mind their musical future. When they built their basic hand positions they were already having the technical tasks of the big concertos in mind. (Reinikainen.) Although most teachers of the beginning classes don't get many opportunities to work with advanced pupils they need to know not only how to hold and move the bow on the early stage of violin training, but also how it must be used in the performing of for example the concerto of Brahms (Yankelevich 1968, 36). The violin teachers on all levels of the education had to be highly qualified instrumentalists in addition to possessing high pedagogical knowledge of the methods of passing their knowledge to children (Yankelevich 1968, 36; Pogozeva 1966, 7).

¹ В области педагогики и методики советская скрипичная школа показала замечательные достижения как в смысле непосредственных творческих результатов, так и в смысле накопления знаний и совершенствования методов преподавания. Подведение под эти достижения подлинно научной базы, в частности разработка вопросов скрипичной педагогики в свете учения И. П. Павлова о высшей нервной деятельности (Pogozeva 1968, 8. Eng. Anastasia Ch. Diseth).

2.4 Russian music educational system

Children of school age in Russia can attend regional music schools, lasting 8-9 years, outside of their elementary schooling. Children are admitted to these schools at the age of 7-8 after passing a required entrance exam, and graduate from them at the same time as they graduate their elementary schooling in the 9th grade. To pass the required entrance exam children often attend private music lesson for one year before attempting admittance to a music school. The costs of these schools are relatively low and such schools are to be found in every region of Russia. In 2015 there were 3089 children's music schools in Russia. (Wikipedia 2016.)

After completing the music school the youngsters aiming for a professional musical future might apply to a musical college or musical high school. Musical colleges or musical high schools provide elementary upper secondary degree education combined with musical training, preparing their students to either; graduate as musical pedagogues able to teach singing in middle schools or accompanists for preschooling institutions as kindergartens; or to attempt admittance to one of Conservatories providing the highest professional degrees in music in Russia. To get admittance to Conservatory after completing only the music school is practically impossible. (Wikipedia 2016.)

Another way to get inpass to a Conservatory avoiding the children's music school and musical college or high school is to attend a specializing music school belonging to a Conservatory for specially gifted and talented children providing elementary and upper second degree education in one institution. The duration of studies is 11 years (earlier 10 from which the schools got their nickname "shkola desyatiletka" ("ten-year school")) and combines elementary schooling with musical training providing their graduates with specialized upper secondary degree able to apply straight to the Conservatories. The schooling is completely free of charge for the pupils and is considered to be of one of the highest standards in the world. In 2016 there were 9 such institutions in Russia. (Wikipedia 2016.)

The negative aspect of the music educational system in Russia is that they aim only to train future professionals aiming for Conservatories and neglect their task of educating future music lovers and concert listeners. The educational system is being criticized for forcing all their pupils through the same technical and theoretical program material

regardless of whether the pupils are potential future musicians or not. This results in that those who graduate forcingly their music education or abandon their studies leave the school with aversion towards music instead of developing love and interest for the musical culture. (Fedorovich 2014.)

2.5 The principles of education

The goal set before the teacher working with pupils is to upbringing profound musicians, widely educated, combining perfect mastering of the instrument with highly cultivated musicality, fully prepared for independent artistic activity (Yampolsky 1968, 7). In addition to passing on flawless technique and exemplary musical interpretation the task of the teacher is also to preserve and develop the pupil's individuality and independence. The neglect of developing the student's ability of independent working is suggested to be the reason behind the phenomenon of successfully graduated students being unable to continue their development and carry on professionally after their studies. (Kurdyumov 1968, 69.) The educational system was already in the 60's being criticized for producing virtuosos with too much attention to the technical and mechanical aspect lacking a deeper understanding and personal relationship to the music in their interpretation and performance. Many teachers started underlining the importance of developing the student's musicality and individuality alongside with the technical development. Nevertheless, the acquiring and building of the technical skills has always had a central role in the Russian violin method.

The whole function of the technical preparation of pupils is to accustom their bodies gradually to the movements that are functional and have purpose in playing the violin (Reinikainen). The practise of a violinist is constantly centered around choosing out the most functional movements and leaving those without purpose out. That be the muscular tensions occuring during playing; like lifting the shoulders, pressing the chin, squeezing the arms and fingers; or superfluous and exaggerated muscle movements, from excessive lifting of the fingers to swinging the whole body. (Kurdyumov 1968, 70.) The goal is to adapt the most natural and comfortable playing position and style enabling the full range of the technical possibilities of the future development. Whether the pupil chooses the professional path or not the pedagogical training preconditions are the same. (Reinikainen.) The question of what makes the position and posture in the violin playing of purpose has to be evaluated only with concern of what kind of

movements the posture enables and the freedom of those movements it is providing. Above all this the only criteria for the rightness of the movements must be evaluated by the quality of the sound produced by them. (Yankelevich 1968, 36.) This means that the sound was in the highlight of the violin practise and the technique had to be adjusted to this. The establishing of the common rules behind the posture and movements in the violin playing are based on anatomical, physiological and mechanical principles and violin pedagogues feel the constant urge to seek to the fields of physiology and psychology for further development of their methods (Yankelevich 1968, 34; Pogozeva 1966, 8).

One of the most significant and underlined aspects of the Russian violin pedagogical system has always been the development and training of the musical hearing. Children have to go through preparatory courses of solfege before they could start they instrumental training. It is considered essential to develop the pupil's hearing by solfege and as far it is possible always sing the material one is working with (Kurdyumov 1968, 71). The hearing, rhythmical sense, musical taste and musical experience had all to undergo a continuous perfecting. The subject of solfege is considered as an essential component in the pedagogical process throughout the education. (Mordkovich 1981.) For developing own initiative, musicality and independent activity it is highly recommended to work any musical material without the instrument by conducting the score. For this reason all children going through solfege were also learning to read music by conducting: reading while beating the beats by hand gestures (Pogozeva 1966, 66-67). By the act of conducting and working the musical material without the instrument the technical difficulty aspect is removed and the musician is enabled to discover the music and develop the musicality, phrasing and the musical texture without the hindrance and obstacles that the instrument adds (Kurdyumov 1968, 76). Studying material through conducting the scores helps the musician to easier adapt the musical idea and later on express it through the instrument (Mordkovich, 1981).

2.6 Russian violin school in Finland

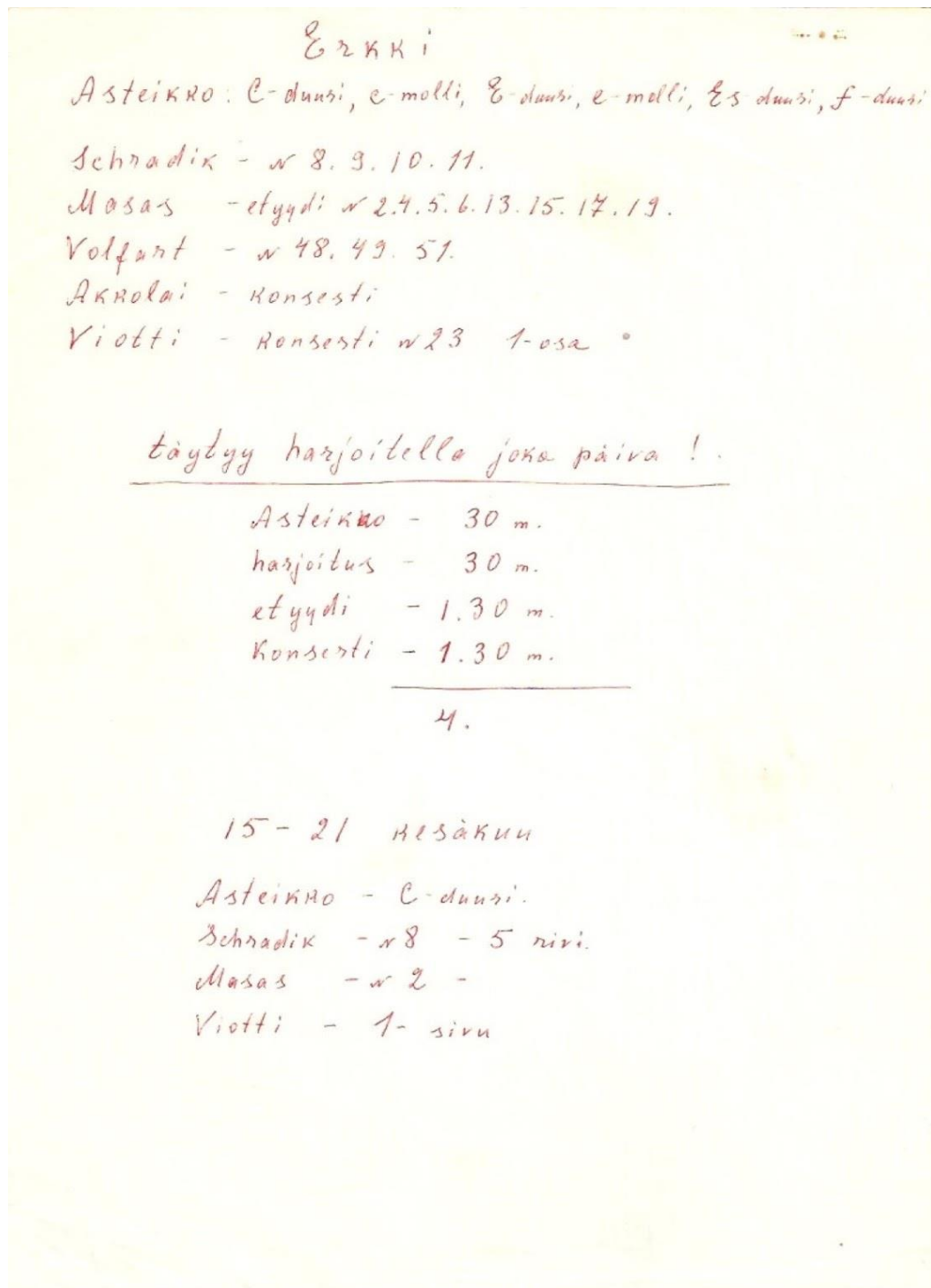
According to Åström-Tiula (2015) the Russian violin school appeared in Finland with the arrival of the Moscow violin pedagogue Tatjana Pogozeva (1912-1980) in 1967. Tatjana Pogozeva worked as a violin teacher in Oulu music school years 1967-1969 in addition to teaching at several music camps years 1969-1974. Tatjana Pogozeva's

book *Questions in the methodical pedagogy in teaching of violin playing* (1966)² is a methodical book for violin students preparing to teach violin at the 7-year music school (now the 9-year music school) providing a detailed methodical and pedagogical manual together with the listed order of demanded learning achievements for each class and the programmed repertoire. This was the systematized method of teaching she brought to Finland and it changed the Finnish elementary music education immensely (Åström-Tiula 2015, 11).

The Finnish violinist, composer and conductor Erkki Palola started playing the violin at the age of 10 in Oulu with Tatjana Pogozeva. He recalls his first teacher of being demanding concerning the quality of performance - whatever one was performing had to first of all sound good. Another feature of the lessons was that she, the teacher, always made sure the pupil had understood what exactly was expected from him on that particular lesson before she could let him go home to practise on his own. She had to make sure that he understood and knew what was expected of him and how to practise the specific technique or task. What was to be learned was also very organized and one did not progress to the next task before the previous was accomplished. Picture 1 shows Erkki's plan where he had specific etudes and scales to practise for that semester and how to dispose his practising time. During the semester he had to learn 6 different scales, a number of exercises and etudes by Schradieck, Mazas and Wohlfahrt in addition to concerts by Accolay and Viotti (1 movement). The practising time was set to 4 hours a day: ½ h scales, ½ h exercises, 1½ h etudes and 1½ h concert. The plan also includes the program to be practised for a music camp in June. (Palola 2017)

Erkki tells that when Pogozeva eventually started teaching violin pedagogics to violin students at the Conservatory in Oulu she made the 10-12 year old Erkki come to the pedagogical classes and explain to the students all the different aspects of violin playing, how exactly they were executed and how to teach them. She did this in order to make sure that her pupil had understood what she had been teaching him and made the knowledge his own. (Palola 2017.)

² Погожева Т. В. *Вопросы методики обучения игре на скрипке*, М.: Музыка, 1966.



Picture 1 Erkki's semester practising plan made by Tatjana Pogozeva (Palola 2017)

Another important aspect in Pogozeva's pedagogical work was to make her pupils to constantly perform in order for them to get used to the act of performing in front of an audience and to make it a natural part of the violin playing. Palola remembers that they also practised on how to perform and adapt a certain attitude which built up their confidence. He recalls that even though Pogozeva was very demanding in the lessons

she would always be positive and supportive after any performance. Even if the child himself felt it didn't go that well she would say that they just had to continue practising on it. (Palola 2017.)

After Pogozeva's return to Russia the Russian violin method in Finland has been practised by Päivyt Meller and Maarit Rajamäki, Alexander Vinnitski, Seppo Reinikainen, Grazyna Gebert, Pertti Sutinen and Tapio Myöhänen amongst others (Åström-Tiula 2015, 12).

2.6.1 Seppo Reinikainen

To explain how it all started we might have to go all the way back to when present time violin lecturer of Metropolia University of Applied Sciences Seppo Reinikainen at the age of 18 got the opportunity to study abroad in Sofia, Bulgaria, which was a part of the so-called eastern bloc under the influence of the Soviet Union. Seppo Reinikainen claims himself that this experience was a mind-opening and a complete turn-over of his musical and violinistic mentality. To explain this turn-over he tells that when he went to the Eastern bloc he was considered a young violin talent in Finland, but he didn't really understand anything of what he was doing. His former teacher had been a direct descendant of student of Sevcik (Boris Sirpo, former Sirob) and Reinikainen himself describes the training as "outside-dominant"³. Reinikainen often refers to the two first questions his professor (Leon Surujoun) in Sofia asked him on his first lesson with him, "Was spielen Sie eigentlich? Hören Sie nicht was Sie spielen?"⁴, as the exact point when he understood that his suspicion was right - he was playing difficult things and doing a lot with the instrument and his hands, but he had no musical connection or understanding of his actions. He was simply executing physical exercises without own awareness of what or why he was doing so. (Reinikainen.)

This was the start of his 5 year lasting studies in Sofia with professor Leon Surujoun (1913-2007), and re-education without which he could not have been an active musician at this day (Reinikainen). During this education Seppo was voluntarily

³ Outside-dominant is explained by Reinikainen as tradition based mentality ruling the violin practise and teaching. The student is to obey the teacher and execute the given tasks the exact way he is being told. This concerns everything from fingerings, bowings to musical interpretation. Outside-dominant is literal expression for learning dominated by an outside party without necessary own, inside understanding of the matter or cognitive action.

⁴ "What are you playing? Do you not hear what you are playing?"

following the teaching at the local “shkola spezialnaya” (ten-year specialization music school) by the name of Lyobomir Pipkov to observe and learn the pedagogical violin method applied on children. After starting his teaching career in Päijät-Hämeen Konservatorio in Lahti Seppo got a scholarship from Lahti City to go on with his pedagogical studies and visit the Gnessin School in Moscow (ten-year specialization music school under the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music) to observe their method of teaching. Seppo was traveling to Russia during a period of two years and following professor Mikhail Fikhtengolts’ teaching as well as having private lessons with him. (Reinikainen.) Mikhail Fikhtengolts (1920-1985) was a student of Piotr Stolyarsky in Odessa.

Getting his education and all this experience from the Eastern bloc gave Seppo insight and profound understanding of the Russian violin method which he has been applying in his teaching in Finland during his four decades long teaching activity. (Reinikainen.) Taking lessons with professor Fikhtengolts makes him a direct descendant of Piotr Stolyarsky in Odessa. It is interesting to think that taking lessons with Seppo has made also me a part of this historical line and passed on the tradition from Odessa’s golden age with Stolyarsky.

2.6.2 Children’s Culture Center “Musikantit”

In 2004 Suvi Svetlana Nyström, an Early Childhood Music Education student of Russian background founded her own private music play school in Helsinki to become the first Russian speaking music play school in town. Her motivation was to provide a Russian speaking play school for her son and as she was not content with the options already available she decided to open a play school of her own where she hoped to give children with Russian background a possibility to receive professional music play school in their mother language to preserve the Russian language and to pass on the Russian culture. (Nyström 2011, 10-15.)

Later on the play school developed to become a Children’s Culture Center due to the school’s expanding courses and fields of study and the growing popularity and interest towards the school. Today the Children’s Culture Center carrying the name “Musikantit” provides music play school in addition to courses in music and instrumental training, theatre, dance, art and language courses. All teaching is available in both Finnish and Russian languages. The institution is also very active in the cultural life of the region

and has become a cultural and social meeting place for Russian as well as Finnish families. (Nyström 2011, 16-31; Musikantit's homepage 2018.)

The violin teacher of "Musikantit" Olesya Skorbilina is a violinist with Russian background and education. She provides teaching in both Russian and Finnish and has about 16 music play school groups from where she also recruits many of her violin pupils. Her teaching method is based on the Russian violin school as her familiar approach and her philosophy of and main goal with teaching is to develop and pass on love and enjoyment for music that the pupils will carry with them throughout their lives regardless whether they decide to pursue a professional musical career in the future or an amateur musical preoccupation.

3 The Project

3.1 Background

The background of this project is the start of a collaboration between Seppo Reinikainen and the maker of this thesis. As we have been speaking a lot about violin playing, violin pedagogy and philosophy during the last five years the foundation for mutual understanding and common interest of the field has evolved. As the topic has been concerning goal oriented violin training and hence the Russian violin school as the familiar methodical approach and foundation - the underlying intention or motive of this collaboration has been to launch an supplementary training possibility to the violin pedagogical market in Finland.

The hypothesis is as following: say that the cultural picture has in the last decade developed in the spirit of “music belongs to everybody” and the musical training and enjoyment has been made possible and available for more people through music schools and through projects as Tempo-orchestras in Helsinki (concept of which builds on the ideas of “El Sistema” music program in Venezuela) and so on. As the field of music enthusiasm and action is broadened to include and reach a bigger group of the population the resources for individual intensive music training are constantly reduced. What about those who are interested and want to go deeper - are they provided with the possibilities and opportunities to get the training and support they need to realize their goals?

I would like to bring up a metaphor of the field of sport that mr. Reinikainen is fond of. When children sign up for for instance soccer they get to choose between group A, group B and group C, where group C is for those who want to enjoy soccer on a hobby level with once a week practise and a match every third weekend or so while the group A is for those who are aiming higher and practise four times per week with matches every weekend. The consequences are that the price tags for the different groups differ according to the amount of practise and offer parents and children a wider range of choice and level of ambition and dedication. Families make their priorities and arrange their lives and schedules accordingly.

So what about the field of culture and in this case music? Can this concept be transmitted to the field of music training, is it already, and most important, is there any interest of this offer on the market? With these questions in mind we started to investigate the possibility of realizing this pedagogical product idea. The main question of investigation would narrow down to whether there is a need for yet another violin pedagogical offer on the Finnish market. Is there something in the Russian violin system that brings advantage for those who occupy themselves with musical activity?

The decision to address the Russian population in Finland was based on several reasons. We assumed them to be more interested in the approach springing out of their own culture as well as we counted on the tendency for the Russian parents to be more dedicated and active in their children's schooling thus welcome an educational system based on goal orientated musical training.

3.1.1 Future development possibilities

An underlying long term purpose for the future development of this idea would be to open up a collaboration with Russia and start inviting Russian violin pedagogues for shorter periods to give master-courses in Finland. Since Seppo Reinikainen has studied at the Gnessin Specialization School in the 80's and has good contacts there this is the most natural choice for a starting point. One of the intentions of opening a cooperation with the Children's Culture Center Musikantit was to suggest for the institution a future association with a Russian music institution and investigate the possible interest for this idea from their perspective.

3.1.2 Metropolia's interest to open a Russian collaboration

According to Metropolia's website the institution has several international cooperations with partner institutions all over the world involving student and staff exchange through the Erasmus, Nordplus and some bilateral agreements programs (Metropolia UAS' homepage 2018). Yet in the field of Music there are no collaborations with any musical institution in Russia. Having studied at the Gnessin Specialization School in Moscow, lector Seppo Reinikainen has promoted the idea for Metropolia to expand their international horizon to open a collaboration with the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music (further referred to as Gnessin RAM). Getting the green flag from the

administration of Metropolia to start developing a connection to Gnessin RAM Reinikainen started exploring the possibilities of creating exchange between the two institutions. The biggest challenge in establishing such a collaboration providing staff and student exchange is finding financial support. Metropolia's statement is that there are no resources inside the institution. In the pursuit of financial support Metropolia UAS applied for a grant the spring 2017 to; 1) allow lector Reinikainen to travel to Moscow together with the author of this thesis as a student representative basing her graduating thesis on establishment of the given collaboration and providing translating assistance if necessary; 2) make a similar invitation possible for representatives of the Gnessin RAM to visit Metropolia UAS in Helsinki.

After getting the decline on the first application Metropolia applied together with Musikantit for a different grant in the autumn 2017 expanding the application to also take into consideration the possibilities for the representatives of Musikantit to participate. Having got the decline on the second application leaves us now wondering where and how to proceed with this idea.

3.2 The Metropolia 20 hour package

In the autumn 2017 opened an opportunity for some of the teachers of Metropolia UAS to spend 20 of their working hours visiting a different music institution. The purpose of this was to promote Metropolia UAS' pedagogical philosophy at those chosen institutions. The hours were to be used to give musical training for the pupils at those institution to boost the children's musical training and also to convey the possibilities of further pedagogical studies at Metropolia UAS for the teachers already working at those institutions.

The package of 20 hours was to be carried out as following: approximately one third of the resourced time was counted into planning. A part of the remaining time was to be put into informing the staff of the visited institution (in this case the Children's Culture Center Musikantit) about their possibilities of further in-depth pedagogical studies provided by Metropolia UAS. Then the part containing the aspect of musical boosting of the pupil's of the visited institution could be freely distributed based on the desires and requests of the institution.



Picture 2. From a "20-hour" project at Lapland music institute, Rovaniemi, March 2018, photo by Diseth.

For example in similar "20-hour" projects at other institutions the violin faculties desired specific technical conventions with varying themes for the different sessions (such as scales, various bow-techniques, intonation) and some preferred spending parts of their time at group lessons. Nevertheless, all the institutions tended to prefer spending the biggest part of the time on the traditional master-class teaching.



Picture 3. From a "20-hour" project at Hyvinkää music institute, February 2018. The institution requested Seppo Reinikainen to keep "theme-evenings" on different violin techniques. Reinikainen on the left. Photo by Diseth.

3.3 Realization of the project

The first step in this project was to take contact with the headmaster of the children's cultural center Musikantit Suvi Nyström and present to her the project idea. The first meeting took place on the 29th of September 2017 in the facility of Musikantit. Here the dialog was centered around the possibilities and opportunities this project gave space to. The main intention was to boost the pupil's of Musikantit along with the possible enlightenment of the pedagogical boost available for the staff of Musikantit as well as the possibility of initiating a pedagogical collaboration between the two institutions Musikantit and Metropolia. Last but not least, the first discussion of establishing a Russian collaboration between Metropolia, Musikantit, the Russian/Finnish population in Helsinki and Gnessin institute in Moscow took place with positive response. In this collaboration the Metropolia UAS is the institution with intentions of opening an exchange program to Russia with the Gnessin institution as target institution and Musikantit as the pedagogical connection and arena for the Russian/Finnish population in Helsinki.

3.3.1 Meeting with the "Musikantit"

Starting from September 2017 several meetings between Metropolia's lector Seppo Reinikainen, Musikantit's headmaster Suvi Nyström, Musikantit's violin teacher Olesya Skorbilina and the author have taken place. The meetings have been an arena for discussion and sharing of own visions, hopes and points of view concerning this particular project as well as planning the actual realization of it, the practical pedagogical work and the discussion of the practical application of the Russian violin school in Finnish surroundings and conditions. The bringing up of difficulties and challenges of such an intended activity has been discussed and as time went on the parties participating felt more confident with each other to bring up their own concerns. The challenge of financing was the one that has been outlined as clearest from the very beginning as Musikantit is a private institution, thus slightly more expensive for the parents than the public alternative. As one of the principles of the Russian violin method is to have more frequent lessons per week most of the parents would just not be able or agree to the expenses following that sort of attendance. This adds to the pressure on the teachers to deliver and perform according to the expectations from the paying parents especially as the Russian parents seem to be more demanding concerning the obvious results and benefits of their children's musical training. The experienced feeling is that the goal oriented teaching is challenging to follow up because of the low frequency between the lessons and the progression may seem to be pushed with the expense of building the fundamental base.

3.3.2 The pedagogical ideological foundation

After the first meetings between Seppo, Suvi, Olesya and me and getting to know each other the dialog has been based on the most positive conditions. All parts in this project have been of a very positive attitude and the collaboration was to be based on equality and respect. The discussion was open and free and all parties hoped to gain a positive, meaningful and enriching experience and learning outcome. All parties approached this collaboration work with curiosity and eagerness to learn from each-other.

The practical realization of the project was intended to be collaborated teaching of both the teacher of Musikantit Olesya and lector Reinikainen. The pupils in this project were going to be pupils that were already pupils (or had been) of the teacher of Musikantit. The pupils were chosen based on their own interest and motivation in their musical

activity. The project was at first planned to carry out in 4 sequences in the period between November 2017 and February 2018. The aim of the project from the perspective of the pupils was to offer the pupils an additional pedagogical boost to their ongoing studies. The pupil was hoped to be engaged in the teaching activity on the same base and level as the other parties of the event, the pupil was hoped to take an active role in his/her own learning and to be encouraged to enter the pedagogical discussion on an equal platform for all the parties engaged.

As the topic of the Russian method is to be goal-oriented from the very first lesson and from the very start of the education have the possible future musical activity in mind, whether the pupil decides to continue as a professional or keep the activity as a hobby, the aim of the project was to provide a meaningful and goal-oriented pedagogical boost for the pupil as an addition to his/her own studies. The intention was to interfere as little as possible with the ongoing studies and avoid to confuse the pupil with unfamiliar approach, and hopefully to enrich the pupil's musical activity by perhaps providing a new point of view.

3.3.3 The practical execution of the scheme

The project was planned to carry out in four sessions divided into two sequences, one in the autumn of 2017 and one in the spring of 2018. The suitable days for all the parties involved were agreed to Fridays. The timetable covered four pupils each session with 30 minutes lesson each and a five minute break in between. The dates were the 3rd and the 10th of November 2017 and the 2nd and the 9th of March 2018. The selection of the pupils was performed by Olesya Skorbilina, the violin teacher of "Musikantit" and was based on the pupils own interest and availability. As Musikantit is a private school and the whole fee of the lessons is paid by the parents and as the lessons we had were the pupils' own lessons and the time frame of the lessons was 30 minutes it was difficult to realize the ideal plan of having a more experimental lesson with teaching interaction of all the parties including the pupils themselves. The practical realization of the teaching sessions turned out to be in the form of violin lessons taught by Seppo Reinikainen leaving Olesya Skorbilina and myself as more observing participants. During the lessons some remarks and questions about the teaching method were exchanged between Seppo and Olesya and the atmosphere carried a sense of agreement and consensus of the method.



Picture 4. Seppo Reinikainen holding master class at Children’s Culture Center “Musikantit”, photo by Diseth.

In the autumn the group of four children consisted of the same children on both of the sessions, while in the spring the groups varied and included other children due to the Musikantit’s many out of institution activities for their pupils causing challenges concerning scheduling lessons. As a result, one of the boys was a constant participant attending all the four sessions while the other pupils were more shifting.

3.4 The outcomes of the project

The violin teacher of the “Musikantit” reported that the outcomes and feedbacks of this project were positive for the pupils. She reported that her pupils started being more attentive to her after having their first master course experience, which means their first

experience with another violin teacher. As the method of the Olesya and Seppo are related the original teaching gained credibility since the course was a confirmation of their ongoing studies. On the course Seppo was focusing very much on the inner musicality and creativity in addition to the basic technique and natural posture. Picture 2 (page 20) and Picture 4 (page 24) illustrate very well the method of Seppo Reinikainen. In these pictures Seppo is guiding the hands and movements of the pupils while he is explaining the purpose of what they are doing at the moment or singing along with them to guide their intonation and ear. The atmosphere on the lessons has been easy and enjoyable and the pupils ended up feeling comfortable and relaxed with the lector Reinikainen teaching their lessons.

The discussion with the staff, here represented by violin teacher Olesya and the headmaster Suvi has also been eager and open from all the parties. The challenge of being a private institution founding the schooling on the parents' expenses has been emphasized. The illustration of this challenge could be the competing private violin teachers "around the corner" offering lessons for almost nothing, but at the same time unable to provide a proper method. These factors lead to inconsequent practise and the pupil's final abandoning of the music education in total. The stress has been heavy on the parents' unawareness of the importance of proper musical training and the general evaluation of the culture field as less valuable for their children. The general impression is that parents are not willing to pay even more for their children's musical activities. Another factor is that the children's timetables are already full of all sorts of activities that it makes is difficult for the families to invest more time and effort in the musical training. One illustration of this is the incident with one of the boys from this course: as the teacher of Musikantit counted the second sequence of this course (spring 2018) as additional to the pupils training (and not as their actual lesson that week) she was very eager to see the progression of the pupil as he would have two successive lessons during two following weeks making it four lessons in two weeks. The reaction from the parents was that as he was already going to the master course he could then be dismissed from his original lessons that week.

3.5 Further development

The plan of developing this work further is to open a collaboration between Finland and Russia and to bring the best and most positive features of Russian violin school to

Finland. The further collaboration with the “Musikantit” is to bring the institution onto this field of cultural cooperation. The idea is to establish an alliance between the Metropolia UAS and the Gnessin RAM and launch an exchange program to enable development and growth of pedagogical and musical knowledge and experience. The “Musikantit” would participate in this collaboration by organizing courses for their pupils held by visiting professors and students from Gnessin RAM and act as a pedagogical practise arena.

The next step on the path of realization this plan is to find the economical sources to launch the idea and to enable further activity. What we have learned from the last year and the constant search for economical support to launch our idea is that there is no money anywhere. Metropolia UAS has reported that even though they are interested in opening up a collaboration with Russia they have absolutely no resources to spare. The situation of Metropolia UAS has the past five years been announcing their shortening and closing of their departments due to the economical difficulties and almost every year announcing new sacking notices of the teaching staff. The economical picture in Finland seems to be that there is no money in the governmental sector to develop international educational relationships, but we have hope and trust in our idea to be beneficial for the society and trust that the realization will happen at some point. The next step will be to seek to the private sector for support.

4 Conclusion

Investigating the Russian violin school has cleared my impression of what the school stands for, how teachers have worked and what kind of philosophy lead the development. The cultural-historical knowledge I have discovered has deepened my understanding of what the legendary Russian violin school actually is. The Russian violin method provides a thorough research-based method, with consequent progression program. The training method, if applied with positive psychological support and encouragement, equips it's students with tools to act independently as musicians. It also provides pedagogues and music couches with the knowledge of the how and why in violin playing.

The project at Children's Culture Center "Musikantit" functioned as a positive boost to the pupils of the institution. The sequences of the teaching project of the teaching year 2017/2018 were intentionally hoped to function as an arena for equal interaction and discussion between all the participants, pupils as well as teachers. In reality however, the sequences turned out to be so-called master classes held by Seppo Reinikainen followed by me and Olesya. The short time frame of the lessons combined with the expectation of showing for immediate results was the reason for turning sessions into master classes. However, as most of the pupils experienced a master class situation for the first time the project seemingly increased the pupils' motivation in their ongoing studies. Furthermore, the working method already applied by Olesya was strengthened and acknowledged in the eyes of her pupils since the teaching methods of the two teachers related to each other.

The teaching project opened up the dialogue between the two institutions, Metropolia UAS and "Musikantit" about possible future collaboration. Furthermore, it opened up the discussion of the proposition of inviting guest professors from Moscow for holding courses at both institutions. The reactions to the future plans were positive and eager. But the question of economical support was inevitable as "Musikantit" expressed their reluctance of charging their clients additionally. "Musikantit" articulated further their doubt in their clients' willingness and readiness to increase the expenses for their children's activities even though the intentional courses would be highly beneficial for them. Metropolia UAS on the other hand, has expressed from the very beginning that there is no economical support to be found springing from them. If the intended future

plans and activities are to be realized it is necessary to seek for support and investment elsewhere.

During the process of making this thesis the discovery of how strongly everything is attached to economical resources was especially significant. Everything seems to be measured in economical expenses and worth. Particularly in the field of culture, there seems to reign an attitude that investing in culture “does not pay off”, is not of any value. The governments are constantly cutting down their support in cultural education and creates an illusion that the field is not valuable to invest in. It is therefore important to promote and change the mindset of the parents that appears to be dominated by the belief that the present cultural education provided public is sufficient. It is of importance to raise the value of the cultural field not only in the economical aspect, but also in the investment of time, effort and support.

Last but not least, the political picture of international relationships between Russia and the West has again worsened over the past years, especially by the latest political events. It is now of most importance to develop and build positive collaboration and friendly relationship towards the East in order to avoid division between peoples, spreading fear of differences and closing borders. The field of culture and arts suits to target these goals being apolitical in its pure beauty and international human language.

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