

EAR SAY - LISTENING TO WHAT THE EAR HAS TO SAY**I. Myrtenbaum**

Department of Music, Levinsky College of Education

Acquiring basic music skills in the western musical world underwent great changes throughout the history and therefore it is not easy to define. Traditionally, auditory skills were part of the theory lesson, detached from the practice of playing an instrument, in spite of it being a very practical ability in music. The term used nowadays for the auditory skills is “ear training” and it usually means developing the ability to recognize a musical event and repeat it specifying its correct pitches and rhythmic shape. It is a required step for becoming a musician but usually composers get to learn it more extensively than the performers.

The 20th century brought a few modern methods like Dalcroze’s Eurhythmics, Kodály’s Method, the Suzuki method and Orff’s Schulwerk method for teaching children the basic musical skills. Destined to young musicians these methods emphasize different phases in the process of becoming a musician, rhythmical, corporal and even social.

The current action research aims at studying a new innovative method where students learn music skills by participating in a process of creating music, guided by the theoretical issues that are at the focus of learning. This method emphasizes experiential learning while creating live music. In this way theory is tied to this live authentic experience and becomes more relevant.

I have developed this method at the Levinsky School of Music and studied its use in teaching 3 different courses in groups of 7-9 students each, documenting some of the sessions and my reflections on their course. I further interviewed some of my students learning about their perceptions of the method’s effects.

A content analysis of the data that I’ve collected showed that students far bettered their music skills while feeling connected to the main process of creating music. They also felt that theory became clearer while being tied to the live experience. As a part of my method, as my courses progress I pass the responsibility of leading the live sessions to my students, thus they gradually gain a better ownership of their knowledge. The major benefit of this method is the meaningful correspondence between theory and practice and the creation of a genuine understanding of music teaching and learning through ‘hands on’ experience.