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## STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF THE INITIATION METHODS TO THE VIOLA MORE USED BY TEACHERS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION OF THE PROVINCE OF VALENCIA

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### ABSTRACT:

This article studies the most commonly used methods of initiation to viola among teachers in the elementary teaching of Valencia. In the study, 26 teachers from 21 public conservatories were involved. The instrument of information collection the questionnaire has been a questionnaire designed according to criteria based on simplicity, precision and being to the point of the 32 items that compose it and the discretion and preservation of anonymity in the handling of the information collected. The research methodology has been mixed. We used a complementary strategy that combines both orientations methods, quantitative and qualitative, dealing with the different perspectives of a different part of the reality to be investigated. It is observed how the teacher knows a variety of methods and books for initiation, but on the contrary, they make use of exercises previous to the book of initiation. Moreover, teachers show that the most known and used method of initiation is that of Suzuki even though most of them are not trained in that method.

**KEY WORDS:** Viola – Basic teaching – Conservatory – Educational Research – Teachers – Methods of initiation – Valencia.

### RESUMEN:

El presente artículo estudia los métodos de iniciación a la viola más utilizados entre el profesorado de las Enseñanzas Elementales de la provincia de Valencia. Participan en el estudio 26 profesores de 21 conservatorios públicos. El instrumento de recogida de la información ha sido el cuestionario diseñado según criterios basados en la sencillez, precisión y concreción de los 32 ítems que lo componen y la discreción y

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preservación del anonimato en el manejo de la información recabada. La metodología de la investigación ha sido mixta. Se ha utilizado una estrategia de complementación que combina métodos de ambas orientaciones: cuantitativa y cualitativa, ocupándose las distintas perspectivas de una parcela diferente de la realidad que se quiere investigar. Se observa cómo el profesorado conoce gran variedad de métodos y libros de iniciación a la viola, pero contrariamente realizan ejercicios previos al uso del libro de iniciación. Por otra parte, los docentes reflejan que el método de iniciación a la viola más conocido y utilizado es el de Suzuki a pesar de que la mayoría de ellos no están formados en dicho método.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Viola – Enseñanzas elementales – Conservatorio – Investigación educativa – Profesorado – Métodos de iniciación – Valencia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research deals with a little studied subject of music teaching and teaching practice. It is based on the study of methods of initiation to using the viola that is used by the professors of the conservatories of elementary teaching in the province of Valencia. The research reflects the teaching practice at this stage and address other issues which refer to the general objective that the teachers seek to achieve with their students and the methodology used to initiate them on the viola. Aspects that are relevant, such as the preference of contents of an initiation book and the most elaborate objectives in the first year of elementary teaching are also discussed.

Viola, today, it is still a little-known instrument by society in general. Perhaps it is for this reason that its study does not have as much demand as the violin or the clarinet, for example. The viola is an essential link in the violin family. Throughout history, it has passed to be from a secondary role to being a soloist and important instrument within groups: "*The viola is an exceptional instrument for its distinctive sound, timbre and color, and has developed as a soloist instrument in works of great solidity from a technical point of view*" (Vdovina, 2006, p. 4).

The initiation stage to a musical instrument is a very important and sensitive period; and even more if you consider that, generally, are children between 8 and 11 years old who undertake the adventure of entering the world of music. It is in the first four years where the most rapid and marked evolution in the entire career of a musician occurs. Thus, students start by getting familiar with the instrument and ends up taking a few basic contents that ensure a sufficient basis to deal with the professional training, if they so decide. During this stage, students are constantly changing with respect to their physical, intellectual and

emotional development and due to this fact, they need a special grading of all concepts and as well as their methodology.

While we know of the importance of the four courses of elementary teaching, it should be emphasized even more the first of them, as it is where the foundation for the further development of an instrumental technique is forged. Therefore, teachers have to be very careful and aware of their role in initiating to a musical instrument. In these early days, it is when teachers play a decisive role when marking guidelines that will be imprinted throughout the musical path of the pupil:

The epistemology of the practice for mastering a musical instrument is focused on the practice of supervised learning in the classroom, but the teacher's practice has not necessarily been based on the reflection. What has prevailed is a technical rationality in which the teacher simply presses the student to apply a theoretical knowledge in his instrumental practice (Matos, 2006, p. 69).

In most cases, teachers have clear objectives to be achieved and the contents to be developed, but often neglects the reflection on classroom practice. That is, the technical concepts are well known but a reflection on how to transmit the knowledge to the student is not made. According to Matos (2006, p. 65), *"it is necessary to change the design and modus operandi of those engaged in teaching a musical instrument."*

Moreover, it is necessary to contribute to increase the literature on the teaching of the Viola given the gap that exists in this field. To Muñiz (2013, p. 343): *"Historically the viola, as an instrumental specialty, has been treated secondarily."* Also, from a pedagogical point of view, the viola has been for many years in the shadow of the violin. Over time, this instrument has gained independence *"through formal studies, a specific methodology, the interest of composers in the creation of a new repertoire and the emergence of the great soloists, among other factors"* (Muniz , 2012, p. 10). However, the existing literature on the viola in terms of literature or research remains scarce.

## **1.2. Considerations introduction to a musical instrument**

The initiation to a musical instrument is part of the Musical Education. For Frega this concept can be defined as:

In its dual aspect of music education and music, music education is a teaching-learning process which, starting from the auditory sensory possibilities of the students and their expressive possibilities by the voice and instrumental performance, creates broad spectrum learning situations, helping the subject in the process of cognition, exercise and appreciation of this artistic language, even promoting their vocational choice in cases of obvious specific capabilities (1997, p. 7).

According to Willems (2001, p. 31): *"Today, it is still common to confuse the musical education with the study of instrumental technique."* And, at this point, it is essential to establish the differences between induction and instrumental musical initiation:

The music education proper lies beyond all instrumental application and concerns with the fundamental elements of music: rhythmic sense, musical ear, melodic sense, note names, degrees of the scale, improvisation, harmonic knowledge (Willems, 2011, p. 188).

As Carrascosa explains in his thesis (2006), the musical initiation aims to introduce to those who wish to understand and manage the musical language, in the receptive and expressive way. Willems (2011) states that the introduction to music does not belong to the field of music education, but is related to the general education of children. That is, are the people of the family environment that through lullabies and popular, rattles, rhythmic games and movement, introduce the children into the music. Even from the womb. And on the other hand:

True instrumental initiation constitutes rather a specific goal of a certain type of musical initiation. One that aims to introduce the students to the knowledge and management of the basic structures of musical language through a particular instrument (Hemsey of Gainza, 1993, p. 10).

When speaking of instrumental teaching process, it is didactics applied to teaching a musical instrument. At first, didactics was defined as the art of teaching. This definition implied that the action of teachers was given by an innate gift. Long after that the scientific basis of teaching was recognized. In the past century, the interest focused on the student rather than the teacher. According Palacios (1998, p. 1), *"teaching is the action that the teacher has on the direction of the student, so that it reaches achieve the educational goals."* This learning process requires a series of technical means and resources.

As Swanwick (. 1991, p 83) says, "*we are all potentially musical, as we are all potentially being able to acquire a language; but that does not mean that the musical development can occur without stimulation.*" Thus, musical abilities need to be prompted, as it happens with language acquisition. If a quality education is intended, didactic learning principles or laws proposed by Palacios (1998) must be respected:

1. Proximity: The teaching starts from the closest possible point to the student's life. Using familiar elements, such as folk songs previously known by students, or entertaining exercises related to their environment.
2. Planning, causality and spatial and temporal contiguity: For learning to be effective, it must follow a logical sequence when selecting the tasks and knowledge to be learned, so that ideas are easy to associate and assimilate. Teaching methods should be organized from simple to complex, in this way, what is learned in a lesson or a piece is consolidated and widened in the next.
3. Adaptation: The material must be adapted to the needs and possibilities of each student, as well as of the society.
4. Participation: The best way of learning is one that involves the student's experience. All instrumental learning is already a process in which the student is still active, but student participation can be increased, for example, previously forcing him to sing what he will play.
5. Spontaneity: This section refers to creativity. Many existing methods leave little room for encouraging creativity in students. If a method is followed, it is likely that the main objectives are that the students first listen to what they are going to play and then execute it adhering the maximum possible to the score.
6. Activity and frequency: As Schumann expressed (. 1955, p 28) "*Diligence and perseverance are the most important factors of progress.*" An effort must be made to learn, based on repetition and consistency of the work at home.
7. AutoCorrect: Over time, students should be able to recognize the technical and interpretive problems they encounter, and acquire the ability to solve them without help.
8. Efficiency: To try to get the best result with minimal effort. This concept is related to a correct body position relative to the instrument, and performing the movements according to the natural laws of motion, investing study time intelligently.
9. Effect: Setting small goals that can be gradually overcome in a short term student motivation is achieved.

10. Motivation: A subject itself is not capable of generating its learning, it is the method used by the teacher who makes it rich and interesting. "*The method alone is no guarantee of effective teaching, as to be, it needs to be vitalized and dynamized by the personality of the teacher*" (Serna, 1985, p. 46). A teacher who does not care and put in constant renewal his method can get to achieve that his students hate the subject. According to Neuman's words (2004, p. 9): "*teachers need to update their models of action and, in many cases, redirect and even regain the necessary illusion and the enthusiasm to carry on his professional activity*" (...). "*The figure of the teacher is of fundamental importance for the wealth of interchange established with the student.*" That is why that the motivation to students must accompany each teacher's method as well as the enthusiasm for teaching and learning.
11. Emotion: In the study of music, as it happens in the study of the arts, the student gets to master a series of concepts and skills; but also they show their own feelings and discover those of the others means of interpretation.

A difference should be made about the instrumental education for beginning children and instrumental instruction for students with previous training as performers (Palacios, 1998). In the case of the initiation, it is the first time the child comes into contact with the instrument. While in the second, the child already comes with a more or less developed instrumental base. Teachers can find both cases, but this work focuses on aspects related to students experiencing their first instrumental experience. Methods like the ones of Suzuki or Paul Rolland, are based on didactic principles or laws of learning outlined above. Both methods aim to make learning an instrument accessible to children, considering their psychic and physiological age.

Willems (1981, p. 47) states that "*in music education, generally the first steps have been neglected*". For a long time the belief that there was an innate gift for music and learning became widespread. And non-gifted children were doomed to failure. In education proposed by Willems and other authors of the XX century (Kodaly, Orff, Dalcroze), much importance is given to the first steps, that is, to the initiation, and no students are distinguished by their abilities or talents. In the musical and instrumental initiation is vital the contact with children. At this stage, from three to six years old, the little ones are in the "*period of development of sensory and emotional affectivities*" (Willems, 1981, p. 65). That is why the affectivity plays an important role both at this time and throughout the whole musical education.

The problem comes when "*the majority of instrument teachers have never been trained in the area of pedagogy*" (Palacios, 1998, p. 3). As indicated by the *Forum delle Associazioni disciplinari della Scuola* (1999, pp 11-15), the teachers must acquire knowledge and skills in the following records: "*the expert knowledge and*

*the-taught knowledge, the student, the relationship and the communication, the evaluation, the colleagues, the parents, external resources about school.*" Also, Willems (1981, p. 47) argues further that "*it is demanded from the Professor the possession of the psychological foundations of music education*" and "*being able to address an education from the beginning.*" Therefore, it is no longer enough that the teacher knows how to play an instrument to perfection but, it is increasingly intended to be a true educator (Jorquera, 2002).

### **1.3. Approach to the didactics of the Viola**

Muñiz (2013) explains that the viola, as an instrumental specialty, has been treated secondarily. The absence of a proper curriculum as a specialty within conservatories, is one of the main reasons why this situation has occurred throughout history. The study of the viola gained recognition and autonomy since the nineteenth century, when the Chair of the Conservatory of Brussels hired, as a pioneer, a professor of viola in 1877 (Lainé, 2010). In Spain, this differentiation was not well established until the mid-twentieth century. It was the *Decree of September 10, 1966*, which deals with the general regulations of the Conservatories of Music, which led to a major reorganization of musical studies in Spain and directly affected the teaching of the viola (Agüeria, 2011). The teaching of this instrument is separated from the violin, both in professional as well as higher conservatories:

This circumstance prevents us from talking about an old violistic pedagogical school with its own developed methodology, which takes into account the sound characteristics of the instrument, its role within the family of strings and the specific technical features that differentiate it from the violin (Muniz, 2013, p. 344).

However, there are several methods and study books for viola published previously to the implementation of the specialty of viola in European conservatories. Referring to the Spanish production of methods for the instrument the following stand out: *Elemental method of viola and general notions of the viola d'amore* (1870), *Studies of Viola : Seven difficult exercises* (1874) and the *Method for the seven string Viola d'amore* (1894), written by Thomas Lestan. Later, José María Beltrán made the *Twelve studies or capriccios of medium difficulty* (1881). And guitarist Graciano Tarragó, published in 1954 his *Graduated method for the study of the viola*. And also highlights the work for viola of Francisco Fleta Polo (1931), great teacher who wrote several studies and works tailored to their students. Already in the 1980s and 1990s, the violist and teacher Emilio Mateu made several publications such as: *The Viola, Initiation* (1986) which won the MEC award of Edition; *Viola: scales and arpeggios, with preparatory and complementary exercises* (1988) and *The Viola: Introduction to Music, Volume 1 and 2* (2006).

As Palacios pointed (1998, p. 7), "*there is not a general musical didactic, but that will depend on the teacher, and also on the student. This shows the great importance of*

*the teacher preparation in the area of the instrumental performance.* "And not only in the playing of the instrument, but he must possess an adequate training in the field of music education. Because also, you can *"disapprove the goal of teacher if he consciously tends toward virtuosity and not to musicality"* Willems (2001, p. 32). This author understands as musicality the adjustment and the succession of musical culture, the auditory development, the music theory and the instrument. And by virtuosity the development of a skills on mastering the instrumental technique that dazzle the audience is conceived. According to the tradition, the teaching - learning music has focused on the content and not on the student. That is, it has sought to instill in the students the basic techniques needed to execute with great mastery a musical instrument. But *"a change is required in the teaching that directs, guides and create conditions for the student to achieve his goals, that will generate meaningful learning and enable him to construct his own knowledge"* (Matos, 2006, p. 67). For that change to occur, teachers need to reflect about their educational practices. *"In practice, the reflection is of great value because it allows the teacher to improve his performance and visualize the relationship between theory and practice. The reflective educator is not born, he is made"*(Matos, 2006, p. 77).

Therefore, a teacher must have clear a series of concepts before beginning his work. That is, he has to reflect and develop its own methodology. For this, he has to define his educational intentions, to have knowledge of educational psychology bases and to be aware of the educational context in which he is.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

In the present investigation it arises as main objective to know what methods of initiation to violata most used among teachers of the conservatories managed by the Department of Education in the province of Valencia are. From this the following specific objectives are derived:

1. To discover methodologies of initiation to viola used by the teachers.
2. To invite the professionals in the field to teaching reflection.
3. To contribute to increase the didactic literature about Viola.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

To achieve the proposed objectives the following methodological procedures have been used:

1. A literature review done by analyzing primary and secondary sources on what so far has been written concerning the initiation to a musical instrument. and more specifically, that concerning the introduction to the viola.
2. A study that refers to the practice of the viola in the classrooms of elementary schools of music of Valencia. By means of the *"Questionnaire to know the methods of Initiation to Viola most used by teachers of the conservatories of Elementary Teaching in Valencia"* the attitude of teachers has been known, and allowed teachers to express their point of view about the best way to



teach this instrument and what are the pillars on which they base the initiation that hat they give to their students.

### **3.1 Populations and samples.**

The reference population is composed by all the teachers of viola of the conservatories of basic teaching of the province of Valencia. Public schools under study were 22 with a total of 26 teachers (24 women and 2 men).

### **3.2 Method of collecting information.**

Starting from the methodological design of this research, which combines the need for obtaining quantitative and qualitative information regarding the objectives stated, the collection of information was carried out through the following procedures:

1. Review, dumping and analysis of magazines, legal documents, dissertations and research publications.
2. Review, dumping and analysis of the main methods of initiation into a string instrument, such as Suzuki and Rolland.
3. Review, dumping and analysis of key aspects to consider both in the musical initiation and instrumental initiation, as well as issues concerning the didactics of the viola and selection and adaptation of the method to follow.
4. The questionnaire is the document that has provided more information. It consists of 32 items and a set of open and closed questions. It is divided in 3 dimensions.

The first category corresponds to the characterization of the sample, in it, classification variables such as sex, age, nationality and center and post in the center (5 items) are addressed. The second dimension emphasizes the profile of the teacher, surveying the teaching experience, his education and pedagogical training (15 items). The third section is intended to find out what methods of initiation to viola they know, what kind of exercises they do or what methods they use in their classes, what aspects they consider most important when choosing a book of initiation for students and remarks (12 items). The questionnaire has been validated through a contrast of opinions with experts that have verified that the proposed items are consistent with the objectives of the research, according to the criterion of triangulation. It has also been subject to different criteria of validity of content, of construct and criterion. In its development the following points have taken into account:

- The definition of the construct to be measured.
- The purpose of the scale.
- The composition of the items (number, content, definition and ordination).
- The prevention of bias in its completion and coding of the responses.

### **3.3 Data analysis techniques.**

The following categories classified analyzes conducted with information obtained from the different sources:

1. Documentary analysis of information: journals, books, statutes, through the review, dumping and subsequent analysis.
2. Descriptive analysis of data obtained on the variables of information and classification included in the questionnaire (frequencies, percentages and averages). To perform this analysis the statistical program SPSS 18.0 was used.
3. Relational Analysis to assess the degree of association between significant variables.
4. Content analysis of qualitative data obtained through open questions in the questionnaire.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The fact that the majority of subjects were female and only two of them are male is emphasized. As far as age is concerned, it should be noted that most teachers are between 40 and 49 years. It results that all teachers are of Spanish nationality and that none of them occupies a leading position in the center where they teach.

It is observed that 50% of teachers have from 15 to 20 years dedicated to teaching viola. Another significant fact is that 88.89% of the subjects performed their studies in the Valencia Community, in the provinces of Valencia and Castellon, against a teacher who realized them in Madrid. This data suggests that teacher mobility is almost nonexistent, that is, who studied in Valencia and then work there too. Another thing to mention is that only 37.5% of teachers have pedagogical training obtained with string instruments and their didactics. The other teachers did not answer, did not get training or obtained it indirectly. Regarding the variable where it asks if you are dedicated to research in the field of teaching, 37.5% answered yes. This contrasts with the fact that none of the subjects have sufficient research, or did not answer this question. On the other hand, 75% of teachers said they attended courses or seminars for teachers. In contrast, 75% of teachers say they did not teach courses or seminars.

As for the general objectives to achieve in students, teachers have led to two positions: the domain of technical aspects of the viola and the development of interest to music through the viola.

It is confirmed that the teacher is aware of several books that serve to start learning this instrument. However, the most used is the Suzuki (35.71%). It should be explained that this book does not start from a zero level, that is, that in order to address the first parts of the first volume, the knowledge of certain theoretical aspects and, above all, technical is necessary. This is because the Suzuki philosophy considers a series of previous exercises that are not included in the pages. *String Builder* and *Sapmannhaus* were scored by 2 subjects, and obtained a percentage of

14.29% each. *Rolland*, *Sheila Nelson*, *The Viola*, *My friend the Viola* and *Wagon Wheels* were used by a teacher, and each of these methods get 7.14%.

The professionals say that they use and follow the contents of a book from the beginning with students who start at 75%. However, they also say they do exercises prior to using this book. The teachers named a total of 9 exercises they perform with their students prior to the use of the book. The most common were the holding of the viola and the bow (21.43%). Next, the postural exercises, hose of pre-reading, teaching the key of C, and the training of the left hand obtained a percentage of 14.29% each. The CDs, the ladders, the exercises of passing the bow with open strings, *pizzicato* exercises and the lectures for parents were named by 7.14% of teachers.

These two issues, to follow the contents of a book from the beginning and perform exercises are in contradiction, because if they arguethat they do previous exercises is because the book does not consider them. Generally, a series of exercises, practices and explanations are needed before they can successfully execute any piece. It does not seem that the origin is relevant when a teacher choose a book, but the Spanish, Japanese and German origin got the most votes with 18.75%. The teachers said their choice was based primarily on sequencing of content and knowledge of its application. Some of them explained that they use more than one depending on what each student needs.

When asked what Spanish methods they would recommend to guide beginners, *My friend the viola* (26.67%) by Luis Roig and *The Viola* (20%) of Pablo Garcia were the most marked. Both publications are made by teachers in the province of Valencia. There were some that cited some subjects who were not of Spanish origin, although the issue was specified in this question. With 13.33%, *Stradivari* was mentioned by 2 teachers. The other recommended books, as *The Viola* of Francisco Serra *Nicolo*, Susy Sentamans, Emilio Molina and Emilio *Scales and arpeggios* of Emilio Mateu, were named only by 1 teacher each, representing 6.67%. Another answer was the impossibility of recommending a book or method for providing no kind of innovation.

The two goals of the first year of elementary teaching that teachers considered most important were the proper body position relative to the instrument (15.28%) and knowledge of the parts of the viola (13.54%). These two items are essential in a first contact with the instrument because, from the beginning the postural aspects that allow the proper development of the violistic technique must be taken into account. Otherwise, the wrong position may result in technical problems and even muscular injuries. Moreover, knowledge of the parts of the instrument is a basic issue, considering important that the student knows what is in his hands to be able to teach him its handling. To a lesser extent the teachers considered the following objectives: the mechanism of the left hand, coordination between both hands, the development of interest in music and the instrument care, with 12.85% respectively. Acquiring a habit of daily study (12.50%), work in the four strings (11.46%) and the correct operation of the bow (8.68%). It is logical to think that the latter is the least voted as dexterity in both hands is not expected until later courses.

Regarding the characteristics that are taken into account when choosing a book, the contents of melodies and folk songs known to the student is the most appreciated by professionals. It is a way to bring learning to the students, since knowing the parts that they are going to work they can easily distinguish aspects of tuning and metric as well as being a form of motivation the fact of playing themselves songs they know. One of the teachers made an interesting contribution, indicating that compelling stories and ways of self-assessment by the student could be included.

Relational analysis, one of the results to be highlighted is that the higher teaching experience, tend to be valued more aspects that contribute musically to a comprehensive development of students. The interest in music and instrument care is one of the points most appreciated, regardless of the overall objective of each teacher. The same happens with the acquisition of a habit of daily study.

Another point to note is that teachers using a greater variety of exercises and training material is the one that has received pedagogical training. This fact seems reasonable as when receiving specific training methodologies and resources to use in the classroom are known.

Finally, two major trends among teachers regarding the overall goal to achieve with their students were perceived. On one side are those who seek to arouse interest in music through the viola. And on the other, those seeking that the technical aspects of the instrument are mastered. The two views are interesting and complementary. It is true that at the stage of initiation it seeks to arouse interest and love for music, and that the best vehicle for this is learning an instrument. But technical aspects that allow to play it naturally and with skill should also be taken into account. While not intending to be virtuous of the viola, it is trying to form musicians who are comfortable playing pieces that are presented in the repertoire, and for that it is essential the mastery of technique. Otherwise, a student who has many technical difficulties could not get to enjoy and even eventually lose interest in music.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

In the process of musical education, the stage of instrumental initiation is one of the most complex and important for several factors. The first one is related to the young age of the students and, therefore, one must consider their physical, motor and cognitive abilities. To get started managing a musical instrument some aspects must be taken into account that are related to body awareness, as the position of the instrument relative to the body itself, the holding of the instrument in both hands or the body effort being exerted . As well, they have to know and then apply a series of theoretical and practical knowledge on the functioning of the instrument is learning and, in turn, relate them to previously acquired knowledge of musical language. This significant learning can be complex when students do not totally dominate the concepts of musical language needed to start the reading of the scores. At this early stage, patience and dedication by teachers, parents and students themselves is needed. However, it is important to emphasize the principle that many educators

have advocated throughout the history of music education and stresses that all human beings are potentially musical. That is, they are born with the necessary skills to learn music, and that the right incentives and appropriate guidance are needed.

Therefore, the teacher should be backed by a pedagogical formation that will enable them to perform their work effectively and with skill. The teacher has to make accessible and enjoyable the learning the instrument. To do this, teachers need to design and follow a method that allows the students to approach the content, keeping him motivated. At this point, the professor is fundamental that the teaching-learning process is carried out successfully, as it becomes a model figure for the student. The attitude of the teacher largely influence the musical future of the apprentice, as depending on the approach to be given to the initiation arousal of the interest in music can be achieved or the opposite. If the aim is to stimulate a love of music by learning a musica instrument, creativity, imagination, affection and training will be required to enable to face this task consciously. In these first steps it must be attempted to generate an attraction for music and, of course, for the chosen instrument. It is also true that the basics on which to base a correct technique cannot be neglected for the future command of the instrument.

There are methods such as Suzuki (1969, 1981, 1993 and 2004) and Rolland (1991), who contribute their philosophical view of the introduction to violin and viola, and which in turn establish guidelines for their performance. Both philosophies support that every child, properly encouraged and guided, can attain to play skillfully the instrument. They are designed to bring the learning of the violin, in this case, to any student who wants it.

For its part, the method designed by Suzuki intends to use the teaching of the instrument as a means of educating children in people with values and noble heart. It uses what he called the "*mother tongue method*", which introduces the learning of the viola in the same way that speech is acquired (Suzuki, 1969). Its most important features are: the importance of early period, the environment in which the child develops, the parental involvement in music education, the figure of an expert teacher, the practice and the perseverance, the respect for personal differences and affection.

On the other hand, Rolland (1991) designed a project that was intended to create instrumentalists able to play using coordinated movements without an excess of muscle tension. This teacher tried to solve various technical problems in the playing of the violin that result from an improper management of the stress-relaxation of muscles. His method focuses on student's position, in the movement, and the happiness of the student when he deals with a repertoire in which he feels like in the operation of the instrument.

Regarding the objectives posed at the beginning, note that the first one, where it was pretended to know what methods of initiation to the viola most used among

teachers of viola of the Conservatories managed by the Department in Valencia have been met. The information received has been very useful to know a part of the current reality in the field. It was possible to find out that the teachers know a great variety of methods and books for initiation to the viola, and which proved to be the most prominent were the Suzuki method, the method of Rolland and *My friend the viola* of Luis Roig Cerveró. However, in practice, the most commonly used methods are Suzuki, *String Builder* and *Sapmannhaus*.

The second objective proposed, was focused on discovering methodologies of introduction to viola used by teachers. Most said that, from the outset, they used a book as a guide for the student, and the reasons were based on that in this way it is easier to monitor and sequence the content for the students, and the comfort of the book compared to bringing other material or loose sheets. Conversely, they also confirmed that perform exercises previous to the use of the book of initiation, such as postural exercises, lectures for parents, exercises for holding the viola and the bow, pre-reading exercises to teach the key of C, *pizzicato* exercises, exercises of passing the bow with open strings, training exercises of the left hand, use of CDs, and scales.

Regarding the last two objectives presented, it could be said that they have already served, as this research invites professionals of the art in teaching reflection and continuous search of resources and strategies to help improve the work of teachers.

Finally, the most important conclusions drawn from this work are as follows: First, we can say that the faculty has, in general, enough teaching experience. The analyses seem to suggest that teachers who have been trained have greater variety of resources and strategies than those that did not. Only three have received pedagogical training on the teaching of string instruments. This may be due to several reasons: that in his student days they were not required to have teacher training teachers to practice as teachers or that they did not consider it important. One thing to note is that two of those who do have pedagogical training, were specialized in the Suzuki Method, and it may be because there is at present a trend to carry out this type of training because the schools based on this method are booming. A fact that contrasts with that the majority of teachers received no pedagogical training is that they point out that they attend seminars or teacher's courses.

The method of introduction to viola known and used by teachers is that of Suzuki. This may seem paradoxical, as most of them are not formed in this method. It should be noted that, for a Suzuki teacher, specific training is needed and go getting certified levels. As it should also be noted that public conservatories do not offer this

method as such. It could be said that the Suzuki method is used in classrooms conservatories, separated from its philosophy and its essence. That is, the teacher follows the sequencing and the repertoire but does not follow the steps in this method or his philosophy. The Suzuki method was published in 1978. The version that is sold in Spain is written in English. Therefore, the final annex, in which the proper way to execute each part is explained, is difficult to understand by the young student. It features piano accompaniment, but is not included in same student book, but must be purchased separately. Currently, it is accompanied with a CD. The repertoire is graduated progressively in their level of difficulty. It incorporates popular tunes from other countries, as well as classical pieces, such as J. S. Bach minuets, etc. Short exercises that work technical aspects prior to each lesson, and some scales as D Major, G Major and C Major are contemplated.

The professionals were decanted into books of Spanish, German and Japanese origin. Among the reasons for their preferences, the most important was the sequence of contents. Suggesting that the books of Spanish, German and Japanese initiation are probably better sequenced, in the opinion of teachers. When asked what Spanish methods of introduction to viola they would recommend, *My friend the viola* Luis Roig and *The viola* of Pablo Garcia were the most frequently mentioned by teachers. On one hand, *My friend the viola*, published in 2003, is a book of popular tunes adapted to the initiation of the viola. It also has the score of piano accompaniment for each of the pieces. Note that it points out the objectives of each lesson. It has the words to all the songs and with a little drawing that references the contents. Except the covers, it is printed in black and white.

Moreover, *The viola* of Pablo Garcia is a more recent book, published in 2012. The interior is printed in grayscale and the covers in color. This book also includes folk songs accompanied by piano, viola duos and a CD. It is organized by units and in each one a series of preparatory exercises that facilitate subsequent execution of the pieces are contemplated. To make this method attractive, Violet, who is the mascot, offers advice, motivational phrases, reminders and brief notions of musical language.

The features most appreciated by teachers in a book of initiation are, first, that it contains songs and popular tunes known by the student. And then, that they have an accompaniment by a piano or a duo with the teacher. They also appreciate the inclusion of a CD, so that the students have the opportunity to hear the pieces that they will play, and even those that he can play together with the CD, as it facilitates the learning of them and is more enjoyable. By contrast, the aspect they prefer least for when choosing a book is that it makes brief notes of musical language. One of the professionals made a point and noted that he would like to include stories that resulted attractive and ways of self-assessment for the student to be included. This

contribution was interesting because the methods usually do not include self-assessments and may be useful for the student. Thus, he would realize its evolution, the things that he should improve and, in turn, it would be a tool for personal motivation.

One of the questions included in the questionnaire asked for an overview of what each teacher sought to achieve with their students are outlining, and other options were considered: arouse interest in music through the viola and master the technical aspects of viola. These two aspects are quite logical since in this first stage is to bring the student to the music, using as a vehicle the viola. On the other hand, it is necessary to have some mastery of the technique of the instrument if it is to successfully implement the proposed repertoire. The future career prospects in this field were also considered, but less so. This could be because the student is still in a very early stage and the proposed goals should be short term.

Some of the professionals made substantial observations at the end of the questionnaire, and showed their involvement and interest in this subject. First, one of them wanted to understand the difference between a global approach and philosophy to address the initiation of an instrument, and the method or book that is used to track the contents and repertory that the student has mastered

Another teacher, stressed the importance of parental involvement in the initiation to the instrument and the musical development of the child. He explained that, where appropriate, he invites parents to attend the classes, to take note of the explanations and to even take pictures or record videos for better working of certain concepts when practicing at home. He also clarified that, apart from the book, he encourages his students to take a notebook and write down everything that they have worked and the exercises they have to study for the next session. This observation is very beneficial, because at present many children attend extracurricular activities, such as sports or languages, in addition to attending music classes. In some cases, attendance to these activities is to keep the little ones busy while parents comply with their working hours. This results that really not much interest is put in the true musical progress. For there to be a truly breakthrough and development, parental involvement is necessary, since the child is committed to a greater extent when they see that their parents are too.

Today, there are many young people who prefer studying the viola. And year after year, the number of beginners gradually increases. This research contributes to increase the educational repertoire of this instrument and invites all teachers of the subject to reflect on their teaching practice. The data extracted in this study are interesting for those who are interested in the didactics of the viola, as precedent similar works are not known.



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