PhD in Music Education

TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF MUSICALITY AND ITS CONTEXTS: A STUDY OF PIANO PEDAGOGY IN ATHENIAN CONSERVATORIES

By

Georgia G. Markea

University of London – Institute of Education

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ways in which a number of prominent Greek piano teachers and performers perceive and define 'musicality' and how they regard contextual issues that impinge upon their work. Seven influential piano teachers in Greece, explain their teaching strategies and reveal their hidden 'theories' of musicality in detailed semi-structured interviews. The interviews were based on a number of teaching episodes in Athenian conservatories and were selected from 200 hours of videotaped piano lessons with the interviewees and their piano students. Among the themes that emerge from the interviews are (a) the impact of students’ family background as regards their musicianship, (b) the complex interpersonal relationships which are developed in the conservatory between the piano teacher and the learner, (c) the ‘politics’ of the conservatory as regards the balance between making a profit and pursuing musicianship, (d) the notion of the ‘talented’ and ‘untalented’ piano student, (e) the relation between piano students’ musical dexterity and their musical expressiveness, and (f) the difficulties of studying western music in a societal and musical context which historically has not been influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. At a further level of analysis, the mosaic of ideas on musicality expressed by the interviewees is approached and interpreted with the help of Swanwick’s framework of musical knowledge development. This comprises four layers of musical development: the layer of ‘materials’, of ‘expressive character’, of ‘form’, and of ‘values’. In each layer there is also an ‘individual’, and a ‘social’ dimension. This framework is not purely psychological but has philosophical and educational dimensions. The main contribution of the current thesis is the identification of the major elements of Swanwick’ theory in otherwise fragmented ‘theories’ of seven Greek piano teachers. Although the ideas expressed by the interviewees cannot be generalised to a wider population of piano teachers within the positivistic meaning of the term ‘generalisation’, they do connect through their relationship with the work of Swanwick and others into a coherent perspective. These findings are also valuable in that they give us insights into the world of contemporary Greek piano education and the otherwise closely guarded secrets of piano pedagogy.
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To the memory of my piano teacher, Phoebe Vallinda
You must go on and on – with a divine discontent and a divine aspiration. You will spend your life unceasingly, but happily, working, never being actually satisfied; you will die knowing that you have done your best; but that it wasn’t quite good enough.

‘To the New Piano Student’
From Sir Malcolm Sargent
INTRODUCTION

It was in a small café by the sea that the current author first had the idea to write an in-depth description of how the piano is being taught and learnt in Greece. When the sun touched the sea, the researcher wrote down on a small piece of paper that the thesis should include ‘everything’: from piano technique and teaching methods to social and psychological determinants of piano learning. The sentences and the paragraphs of the thesis were intended to be written ‘from the heart’ and to make the author’s views known to a ‘large academic community’. She imagined that Phoebe Vallinda, her late piano teacher, ‘would have felt proud’. As in composing a musical piece, the writing of the thesis was supposed to be something ‘liberating’ and ‘natural’ like catharsis in the theatre of ancient Greece. It was later apparent that the beautiful colours of the evening were probably to blame for the author’s inflated ambition. The resulting process of writing a PhD dissertation at the London Institute of Education turned out to differ greatly from the calm and serene beauties of the sunset as viewed from a small Greek seaside café. There were many heavy books to be carried from the library to the upper floor of Number 13, Woburn Square, and many waste bags of litter full of unused ideas to be carried downstairs. The life in Greece also became that of a dusty researcher. This included negotiations, the recording of 200 hours of film, evaluation and selection of the most promising scenes, interviews with the teachers, transcription of the interviews, evaluation of teachers’ opinions, writing, writing and more writing. She learned her lesson: Real research has little in common with romantic sunsets. Real research can be frustrating. Real research can be exhausting. A researcher must try hard not to lose that initial enthusiasm.

Now that everything is finished, the theme of the thesis could be summed up in the phrase ‘piano pedagogy in Greece’. These words also reflect the initial ideas in the mind of the current researcher some years ago. She chose to write a doctorate thesis on piano pedagogy as a result of her experiences as a piano performer and teacher and her studies for a combined degree in Philosophy, Psychology and Education (PPE) at the University of Athens. As a pianist, she wanted to investigate issues like piano technique, practice, sight-reading, and performance. As a holder of a PPE degree, she realised that teaching led unavoidably to a number of practical problems. In addition, she
questions that needed to be answered from the personal musical experience and knowledge acquired during the PPE course. Several other more practical questions were also on the current author’s mind. For example, she wondered why music was not really being taught in Greek primary and secondary schools, and why the few ‘special’ music schools existing in Greece today did not offer degrees in music. Soon, however, interest focused on issues of a more musical nature.

In the first stages of the study, after grasping the main idea, the current researcher had to decide how this thesis should be developed from an epistemological point of view. In practical terms should it be based on quantitative or qualitative data? Should the ideas in the thesis be from a third person’s ‘objective’ perspective or should other people’s ‘voices’ be used? How should the depth and breadth of the thesis be balanced? These are of course interrelated. By ‘depth’ I mean the degree to which this thesis focuses on specific issues within the field of piano pedagogy. By ‘breadth’ I mean the degree to which the current researcher projects her core interests onto a number of peripheral interrelated problems and seeks for plausible explanations from different disciplines. The author finally used a combination of perspectives for the flow of the ideas. In the first chapters of the thesis, the literature review, the ‘voice’ of an omniscient writer can be heard. In the second part of the thesis, the research, the omniscient writer allows the participants’ narration to enter the text. A combination of perspectives was also used for striking a balance between depth and breadth. In the places where either the omniscient writer or the acting participants describe the macro-level (e.g. the contextual variables that influence piano teaching and learning) the narration is comparatively broader. On the other hand, the narration is comparatively deeper when it focuses on the specific characteristics of piano performance, the theories of personal musical development or the notion of ‘musicality’.

To sum up, the fieldwork of this study was conducted on the premises of the Athenian conservatories in Greece. Through the views of seven experienced teachers, it aimed to shed light on piano pedagogy and to understand how teachers perceive the meaning of ‘musicality’ and its contexts. It was found that teachers perceive ‘musicality’ in ways that correspond closely with Swanwick’s four layers of musical knowledge development, that is to say as diffused in relationships between materials, expressive character, form, and value. The participants identified important aspects of piano pedagogy in the Greek context. They also explained how five variables (teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society) influence the quality of piano pedagogy.
thesis has been constructed in seven chapters (excluding the introduction). In the first chapter the author presents the main characteristics of piano teaching and learning in Greece: the conservatories, the piano courses, the teachers and their rankings, the career opportunities, and the like. This information will familiarise the reader with the context of music education and piano playing in Greece. The second chapter deals with the psychological perspectives of piano playing. This information will help the readers to understand what it means to practise and perform on the piano. Issues discussed in this chapter include models of piano playing, practice techniques, and sight-reading. This thesis is about a special field in music education. Readers who have no experience in piano learning must be given adequate information from the literature. Within the third chapter of the thesis lies the key for integrating all the information presented in the previous chapters. Specifically, the author attempts a definition of ‘musicality’ and argues that in order to understand this term we must understand musical development. A number of developmental theories are presented and evaluated. The author concludes that Swanwick’s theory of musical development is the most appropriate framework for approaching piano teachers’ ideas of musicality.

In the fourth chapter of the study the research methodology is developed and the entire procedure of the study is described. This study is qualitative, but unlike many other qualitative works, it does not abandon the idea of truth and reality that some philosophers argue exists independently of the world of the teachers and the researcher. In this study observations and interviews have been used to understand in depth the views of the teachers. The teachers selected were experienced in teaching, and also committee members for piano examinations in more than one conservatory of one kind or another. They were chosen so that they would be influential in actually defining ‘musicality’, and consequently their views would have special significance within the music community. The main criterion for the selection of participants was their recognised high status in the world of piano teaching in Greece. Their students were of different ages, levels of attainment, and progress, while the pieces they played were at varying stages of preparation, from different periods, and of different types. The teachers were interviewed in depth after having been observed and videotaped for 200 hours in three to five consecutive lessons. In these lessons each teacher had between five and seven students over a period of at least five weeks, while the researcher remained an observer. The interviews were tape-recorded. The questions in the interviews were semi-structured, and triggered by the seven selected excerpts which
each teacher watched on the videos from the observed lessons. Prompted by these excerpts, questions were put to the teachers, not only about what they were trying to achieve, but also about their teaching and piano learning, and variables which might influence it. The fifth chapter is also crucial for the development of the thesis. In this chapter the author investigates how the ideas of one of the seven participating piano teacher-performers (teacher ‘A’) fit into the framework of Swanwick’s theory of musical knowledge development. This interview is developed into categories and presented in such a way as to explain how the subsequent interviews, including ‘A’'s, are analysed. In this way ten categories which appear to concern the teachers emerged. They were as follows: technique, ‘musicality’, appreciation, comprehension and projection of a music piece, and awareness of the interrelations between the above-mentioned, and five variables which influence piano learning, such as teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society. It was established that these categories could be included in Swanwick’s four layers and explained by his theory. In the sixth chapter therefore the six remaining interviews, including the first, were analysed under the headings of the four layers, the interrelations between them, and five context variables which, according to the teachers, influence the quality of the lesson.

Finally, in the seventh chapter, there is an interpretation of the views of the teachers concerning the main issues arising from the study, and a number of propositions. The main findings could be included under the more general title of the significance for the teachers of reproducing the music ‘musically’. ‘Musicality’ for them is the alpha and omega of the development of musical knowledge and appears to be present in the lessons of every teacher, whoever the students are or whatever pieces are taught. This study does not have a prescriptive character, but chiefly aims to get the piano teachers to describe their views about ‘musicality’ and piano pedagogy.
In Greece, the study of music is a mainly private affair. Music is given little attention in Greek primary and secondary schools with the exception of a number of mousika gymnasia and musica lyceia (secondary schools which specialise in music). Even these schools, however, do not issue certificates for studies in music. There are also a number of departments of musicology in three Greek universities (Athens, Thessaloniki, and Corfu). These departments do not offer studies in music itself but in literary studies about music (Musicology, Psychology of Music, and Sociology of Music). Thus, only in private conservatories can Greek children study music and get a performer's 'degree' or a soloist's 'diploma'. A music degree or diploma from a Greek conservatory is categorised by the Greek State as 'unclassified', i.e. not having any official status. In this chaotic context of musical studies, anybody can start a conservatory and issue 'certificates', 'degrees' and 'diplomas'. The purpose of this first chapter is, therefore, to present some external characteristics of piano teaching in Greece. The presentation will start from the conservatories and private music schools because empirical research (see Kingsbury, 1988) has shown that these units are very important in any analysis of teachers' and learners' musical ideas.

In Greece the institutions offering studies in music, most of which are private, can take two forms: Conservatories (οδεία, odeons) or Music Schools (μουσικές σχολές, mousikes sholes). The difference between these two types of institution is in their size and status. Conservatories are larger and offer tuition in all instruments. Music schools are privately owned and focus on fewer musical instruments, mainly the piano and the guitar. Different categories of Greek conservatory include (a) conservatories functioning as non-profit-making institutions, (b) private profit-making ones or music schools, which form the majority, and (c) those associated with the municipal authorities of a
town or a city. In the following sections, examples of such conservatories will be presented.

1.1. NON-PROFIT-MAKING INSTITUTIONS: THE CASE OF THE CONSERVATORY OF ATHENS

Non-profit-making conservatories in Greece are partially funded either by cultural organisations or by the Greek State and they mainly offer good-quality music studies. The most characteristic non-profit-making conservatory is the Conservatory of Athens. It was established in 1871 and since then has been subsidised by the Greek State. It is also the only conservatory that does not have any branches. It just has one main building in the centre of Athens. Throughout the long history of the Conservatory of Athens, its directors never seem to have liked the idea of expansion. It offers not only classical, but also sacred and military music. In the Conservatory of Athens, only the instruments of a symphonic orchestra are taught.

The students in the ‘Conservatory of Athens’ (hereafter referred to as COA) have to work hard. They realise at a very early stage, that music requires endless hours of practice that unfortunately do not always bring much reward. Students at some point in their studies may be considered too lacking in talent or learning ability to continue. This means that they will have to leave the conservatory. Thus the young pianists who study at the COA have to spend some considerable time, mornings and evenings, studying, practising, and performing. In addition, as soon as COA students take the entrance examinations, their parents become aware that their children must study hard in order to succeed. Moreover, the programme of examinations at the COA is never adjusted to accommodate the state school examination programme. If COA students wish to be excused from state school examinations, they have to get from the COA a paper confirming that they will be taking part in its examinations. Then it is the state schools, not the COA, which adjust their examination programmes. It should be noted that the COA does not accept just anybody who wishes to enrol. Special selection examinations take place every year (see Odeon Athinon, 1998). These COA examinations are used to select only ‘talented’ students.

The teachers at the COA are regarded as musicians of the highest calibre. Many of them pursue an international career as performers. For decades important teachers at the COA have also been prominent piano performers. Although students at the COA may choose
to practise any instrument of the symphony orchestra, the piano studies in this
conservatory are the ones that are known to be of a remarkably high standard. Some of
the best known Greek piano teachers have taught at the COA. They include Aris
Garoufalis (the current director and director of the Athens Symphony Orchestra), Maria
Herosgeorgou-Sigara, Dora Bakopoulou, Aliki Vatikioti, and Phoebe Vallinda. The
driving force behind the COA is Menelaos Pallantios, an internationally recognised
Greek composer and member of the Greek Academy, the highest cultural institution in
Greece.

1.2. PRIVATE AND MUNICIPAL CONSERVATORIES

In the previous section the COA was presented as an extraordinary case. The majority
of the conservatories in Greece are profit-making enterprises. The current section
describes the municipal and the most characteristic private conservatories, as well as the
main points about their policies. The private conservatories to be described are the
Skalkottas’. The similarities between these conservatories are greater than their
differences. The first similarity is that they all have branches in Athens and the
provinces (except for the ‘Athenaeum’ conservatory). Every variety of music is taught:
classical, popular, sacred, folk, modern, and jazz (see the prospectuses of Skalkottas
Conservatory, 1996; Hellenicon Conservatory, 1997; National Conservatory, Odigos
Spoudon, 1997; Athenaeum Conservatory, 1998; and Philippos Nakas Conservatory,
1998).

The Hellenicon was founded in 1919 by the famous Greek classical composer Manolis
Kalomiris. It has 14 branches in the metropolitan area of Athens, 25 branches in the rest
of the country, and 15 branches in Cyprus. Since 1979 the general director of the
Hellinicon has been Alkiviadis Tritsimpidis. Since 1980 the famous Greek musician,
Kostis Gaitanos, has held the chair of Director of Studies at the Hellenicon. According
to the Hellenicon’s prospectus (1997), many of the conservatory’s piano graduates have
become distinguished performers, conductors, teachers, and musicologists, such as the
musicologist Yannis Papaioannou. The Hellenicon offers a wide-ranging repertoire,
including classical, modern, Byzantine and Greek traditional folklore music. Special
training courses are offered to those who want to study the Orff method and to those
who are preparing for the university matriculation examinations (the Music
Departments).
Another well-known private conservatory is the ‘Ethniko’, or ‘National’ Conservatory. The Ethniko was founded in 1926 by the famous Greek composer Manolis Kalomiris. There are 32 branches in metropolitan Athens, 11 in the rest of the country and five in Cyprus. Hara Kalomiri, the founder’s sister, holds the chair of director. As at the Hellenicon, a varied repertoire is offered in the Ethniko including classical, modern, traditional folklore, and Byzantine music. The Ethniko offers courses for children aged from three and a half to six. Like the Hellenikon, the Ethniko offers courses that aim to prepare students for university matriculation examinations in music departments. There is also a strong partnership between the Ethniko and the University of Indianapolis in the United States. The Ethniko is regarded by Greek music students as a good conservatory, since many well-known Greek performers have studied there. The famous Greek piano soloists Maria Herogeorgou-Sigara and Aris Garoufalis, the current director of the COA, were among the students of the Ethniko (see National Conservatory, Deltio Ethnikou Odeou, 1997: 16).

The ‘Philippos Nakas’ conservatory was founded recently in 1989, and took the name of its founder: Philippos Nakas. There are six branches in Athens and four under its auspices in the surrounding country. Its relatively small number of branches, compared with the other private conservatories presented so far, does not mean that its directors are less competitive in the market. ‘Philippos Nakas’ is associated with the Royal Academy of Music in the United Kingdom, the Berklee College of Music in the United States, and the Yamaha Music Foundation in Japan. As is to be expected therefore, the ‘Philippos Nakas’ employs innovative teaching methods. According to its prospectus (1998), the ‘Philippos Nakas’ offers studies in classical, Byzantine, Greek traditional folklore, and modern (Greek pop) music. In general, the policy of the conservatory is to offer new approaches to piano learning, and experimentation seems to be constant. For example, there are courses for ‘juniors’ (four to six-year olds) and group piano courses for pianists over the age of ten. According to the conservatory prospectus (1998), there are also courses for ‘modern’ and ‘easy piano keyboard’.

Two other well-known private conservatories in Greece are the ‘Athenaeum’ and the ‘Nikos Skalkottas’. The former was founded in 1973 by Anna Koukouraki and Louli Psychouli. The ‘Athenaeum’ is well-known internationally because of the ‘Maria Callas Grand Prix’, an international piano and oratorio competition held here. The competition takes place once every year under the aegis of the ‘Athenaeum’. In this conservatory there are classes for classical, jazz, Greek traditional folklore, Byzantine, and church
music. Distinguished pianists and piano teachers, such as Haris Kladaki and Nelli Semitecolo, teach at the ‘Athenaeum’. Kladaki is also a teacher at the COA. The ‘Nikos Skalkottas’ conservatory was founded in 1981. Nowadays a guitarist called George Pazaitis is its Director of Studies. It has three branches in Athens. In the ‘Nikos Skalkottas’ there are two kinds of courses: ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’. This conservatory offers studies in classical, Byzantine, and modern music. It employs the Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze methods (see Jacques-Dalcroze, 1915; and Orff, 1964; 1980). Practical ‘quick’ guitar-learning methods are offered by its director. Piano teachers in the ‘Nikos Skalkottas’ are rather lenient compared to those at the COA. However, according to the ‘Nikos Skalkottas’ prospectus (1996), they are both ‘distinguished’ and ‘talented’.

The ‘municipal’ is another type of conservatory. Each one is connected to its local municipal authority. Most of them were established in the 1980’s in order to offer studies in music to students without sufficient financial means to study in the private sector. The teachers’ fees are paid in part by the local authorities. The European Community through special funding programmes has provided some support for these enterprises. In these conservatories there are teachers who may work simultaneously at other conservatories of a different type. These include piano teachers working in private conservatories, or even in the COA, but not those appointed to the state sector. Although in the municipal conservatories, as well as in the non-profit-making institutions, student fees are lower than in the private conservatories, piano studies in Greece are considered expensive. Profit is a very important factor in piano teaching and learning in Greece, since there are many students who, unable to afford them, drop out in the course of their music studies. Piano learners’ fees vary from level to level and according to the teacher’s rank (Hellenicon Conservatory, 1997: 173; and Odeon Athinon, 1998: 8). The Compulsory Courses are paid for as a lump sum yearly (Hellenicon Conservatory, 1997: 173, 176; and Odeon Athinon, 1998: 24).

1.3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE MAINSTREAM PIANO COURSES

The first organised piano course in Greece took place at the Conservatory of Athens in 1891. After many years of controversy, the State in 1957 specified content and regulations for these piano courses (official Government gazette 229/A/57, 1957).
regulations were common to all the conservatories in Greece and were issued by the Ministry of Education. They have not been changed since then.

In the context of the regulations described in the previous paragraph, private conservatories offer a number of piano courses for different target groups. As a rule, all the conservatories offer the common piano course, with the well-known student-teacher form of tuition. In addition, they have ‘compulsory’ piano courses for those who study music theory or another instrument. These compulsory courses are normally spread over a six-year period. However, the students of fugue have to attend compulsory piano courses for nine years (National Conservatory, Odigos Spoudon, 1997: 8; and Odeon Athinon, 1998: 2, 5).

Another kind of piano course is an ‘innovative’ one, usually targeted at special categories of students. These courses are not so common in conservatories, especially the small, private ones. Such ‘experimental’ forms of piano teaching are not adopted in traditional conservatories such as the COA. Something like them is being offered at the Ethniko, where there are special curricula for adult learners (National Conservatory, Odigos Spoudon, 1997: 1). Another innovative form of piano tuition is the ‘magical’ piano courses and courses for groups offered at the ‘Philippos Nakas’ conservatory (see Philippos Nakas, 1998). One such ‘magical’ method in the ‘Philippos Nakas’ is the ‘modern and easy piano keyboard’, chiefly aimed at beginners.

The first step for a student who wants to learn the piano in the traditional way is to gain acceptance at a conservatory. The Ministry of Education has defined the regulations for the special entrance examinations in the official Government gazette 229/A/57 (1957). These entrance examinations are taken by the newly registered students, not the beginners. The students who take these examinations are placed at a level appropriate to their performance. At the Conservatory of Athens there is a special age limit (Odeon Athinon, 1998: 5). In the COA the beginners also take special placement tests. They must be younger than 12 years of age to be registered in the beginners’ classes, and younger than 18 years of age for the higher classes. In all the other conservatories the beginners are registered for a pre-selected teacher (for a description of these placement tests, see National Conservatory, Odigos Spoudon, 1997: 4).

The minimum duration of a full course in the piano is 12 years of studies. These years are divided into four stages: (a) preliminary stage (prokatarktiki), duration: 2 years; (b) lower stage (katotera), duration: 3 years; (c) intermediate stage (messi), duration: 3
years; and (d) higher stage (*anotera*), duration: 3 to 4 years. Students qualify to enter for the piano degree examinations at the end of the higher stage (*anotera*). A piano degree entitles students to be called qualified pianists and enables them to teach the piano. Two years after the piano degree, students can perform in front of an examination committee for the ‘piano soloist diploma’ or simply the ‘diploma’ (*δίπλωμα* in Greek). There is a limit to the total number of years allowed after taking the degree to sitting for the examination for the diploma. The number of years cannot be extended for more than twice the time of the total duration of the four stages presented above, i.e. 24 years. Two years after the degree the learner is permitted to take piano diploma examinations. In addition to their studies on the instrument, the budding pianists have to attend a number of other academic courses. These include music theory (3 years), rudiments of music (5 years), harmony (3 years), chamber music (2 years), choir singing (2 years), piano teaching (2 years), piano pedagogy (1 year), sight-reading (2 years), musical structure (1 year), and history of music (2 years).

Rudiments and music theory start from the first year of piano tuition. Studies in harmony are taken up after the students have acquired a substantial theoretical basis. Usually students find it difficult to grasp the main points of harmony if they are younger than 12 years of age. The other compulsory courses may start only at the ‘higher’ piano class. Attendance for these courses is compulsory for piano learners and they must have completed them six months before their piano degree or diploma examinations (official Government gazette, 229/A/57; National Conservatory, Odigos Spoudon, 1997: 5; and Odeon Athinon, 1998: 5).

### 1.4. MUSIC DEGREES AND CAREERS

The role of the conservatory is to prepare piano students for examinations for a piano degree or diploma before a special board of examiners from the State. After at least twelve years of study, students have the right to be examined for such a degree or diploma. If, however, they have obtained a degree, only after two more years of study can they be examined for a diploma. If piano students happen to change teacher or conservatory when close to completing their studies, they have to study for at least one year under the new conditions (National Conservatory, Odigos Spoudon, 1997: 3). The Conservatory of Athens, however, does not allow graduates of a different conservatory to continue their studies for a diploma without taking entrance examinations. In addition, in the COA, even their own students are only allowed to continue their studies
there if the grades in their degrees are ‘excellent unanimously’. The Ministry issues the rules and the content of the examinations and appoints the committee for the piano degrees and diplomas. They are therefore of the same value for every conservatory and these examinations are taken only once in a lifetime (official Government gazette, 229/A/57). A degree or diploma from the Conservatory of Athens, however, has more prestige, even if its grade is lower than that of another conservatory.

After receiving a piano degree or diploma, graduates go on to take up a very wide range of careers. These include:

(a) **Private teaching**: There are many opportunities, as most parents would like their child to have a music education. Private lessons are usually preferred by parents and students since they facilitate attendance at other courses, such as those for ballet, or foreign languages. Furthermore, private lessons can be flexible and thus avoid clashes with school hours or increased amounts of homework. Since they are held in students’ own homes for one hour per week, these lessons are less demanding than attendance at a conservatory. Moreover, students who attend private lessons are not examined at the end of a learning period. Should students who take private lessons need an official certification of their attainment, they can always register with a conservatory and obtain the desired music degree.

(b) **Career as a soloist**: In Greece there are fewer opportunities for such a career as there are fewer concert halls. The main, and perhaps the only, suitable venue for concerts is the ‘Athens’ Megaron’. The waiting list to play at the ‘Athens’ Megaron’ is long and, according to regulations, musicians cannot perform within two years of a previous performance. In addition, the Greek classical music audience is relatively small and therefore only a few concerts are organised in the few places available. Even in these venues classical concerts have to compete with performances of popular music.

(c) **Teacher of Music at a state school**: From the age of 21, anyone with a School Leaving Certificate and a music degree, or a degree in musicology, may take examinations for appointment as a teacher of music at a state school. Subjects for these examinations include Music Structure, History of Music, Rudiments (4th year studies), Harmony, Sight-Reading, Piano (‘Intermediate Level’), Piano Accompaniment, Dictation, Singing, Auditory Music Ability, and Music Pedagogy.
(d) **Entrance examinations to the music departments of the University:** To take these examinations a music degree is not necessary. The candidate must have received a Secondary School (Lyceum) Certificate and have adequate knowledge of the subjects in which she or he will be examined. These include Dictation, Harmony (two years’ study), and the other four compulsory subjects for university matriculation examinations. Graduates of the music departments of the Greek University may proceed to a Master’s degree or a PhD in Greece or abroad, or work as musicologists or teachers of music at state schools. For teaching at state schools, they must also take the same entrance examinations required of graduates of the conservatories.

(e) **Teacher of the piano at a conservatory:** Every pianist is qualified to work at a conservatory. There is, however, a limit to the number of music teachers allowed in state schools, since they are public servants. The Ministry of Education has issued a rule that permits them to work at a conservatory only for eight hours a week if their school director confirms that that time does not interfere with their school duties. The number of hours teachers work at a conservatory depends on the levels of the students. For example, the minimum teaching time for piano lessons in the conservatories is forty minutes a week in the preliminary ('prokatarktiki') and lower ('katotera') levels, one hour a week in the intermediate ('messi') level and one hour and thirty minutes a week in the higher ('anotera'). According to the Ministry rules there are three ranks of piano teacher at the conservatories in Greece. Depending on his/her rank, the teacher may teach the equivalent level of student. The ranks of teachers in relation to levels of students are: (a) Attendant ('Epimelitis'): (This is the lowest rank. The Attendant can only teach at the preliminary or lower levels), (b) Elementary Teacher A and B ('Daskalos A and B'): (An Elementary Teacher teaches at preliminary, lower or intermediate levels), and (c) Advanced Teacher A and B ('Kathigitis A and B'): (An Advanced Teacher teaches at the higher level). Finally, a teacher can be promoted to a higher rank if the Board of Directors deems it fit (Hellenicon Conservatory, 1997: 30; and National Conservatory, Odigos Spoudon, 1997: 4). A teacher's salary in the conservatories is determined by the number of students the teacher 'brings' with him or her. This, however, is not the case for the Conservatory of Athens, which is subsidised by the Government. At the COA every teacher may have between one and sixteen students and earn the same salary. In the 'Municipal' conservatories the teachers' salaries are the highest but the learners' fees are the lowest, since both are paid for in part by the European Community.
1.5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this chapter focuses on some important characteristics of teaching and learning the piano in Greece. A number of important issues in music education in Greece are looked into. An attempt is made to present the differences in type and status among the Greek conservatories, the piano courses, the roles and ranks of teachers, as well as the regulations of some of the most important conservatories in Athens. It has been shown that the Greek State does not play an important role in the process of piano teaching and learning in Greece. In the past the Ministry of Education has set rules regarding the quality of the conservatories, but the people who run the conservatories have hardly ever complied with them. Therefore, the conservatories present great differences. Not all of them are subsidised, and the teaching content, including repertoire, types of instrument, and types of music, vary from one to another. The difference is most marked between the COA and the other Greek conservatories, since the COA observes the Ministry’s regulations more strictly. Thus, although the conservatories offer certificates officially of equal value, since they come under the same regulations defined by the Ministry, the quality of Greek music degrees and soloist diplomas is essentially uncontrolled. In Greece anybody can start a private institution (either a conservatory or a music school) and issue music degrees. This prerogative, however, is denied to the special music schools run by the Greek State. In addition, the Greek university departments offer studies in music literature but not in the production of music. In the next chapter, in order to deal with the issue of ‘musicality’ and facilitate subsequent understanding of the Greek piano teachers’ views, a number of psychological studies of musical performance will be reviewed.
As has been already stated, this thesis discusses some pianists’ opinions about what constitutes a musically ‘legitimate’ piano performance and musically ‘legitimate’ ways of teaching young piano students. This review therefore takes account of a number of studies on piano performance and piano practice. Both performance and practice are described by Sloboda in his book *The Musical Mind* (1986), as the two most important modes of involvement with the musical score. In *The Musical Mind*, the music score is important because Sloboda focuses on the production of music – excluding improvisation and composition – by musically literate cultures (in the western tradition). According to Sloboda (op. cit.), sight-reading is an important mode of involvement with the music score. This ability is also discussed in the current chapter. Finally, this chapter addresses the notion of the musically ‘talented’ person. Musical talent is discussed here in order to further understanding of the ideas that will be expressed by piano teachers in later chapters.

2.1. THE MENTAL CONSTRUCTION OF PERFORMANCE

There are strong suggestions in the literature that before performing a music piece, whether playing it from memory, sight-reading, or improvising, the performer generates a mental representation of what he or she wants to play. This mental representation has been known to musicians and music teachers from very early times. Matthay (1913), for example, wrote about the importance of imagination and ‘pre-hearing’ in music performance. Bolton (1954: 57) suggested that ‘we must clearly imagine the kinds of sounds we wish to make, before we start thinking about the way to make them. This
mental pre-hearing in itself helps us a long way towards the right muscular response, and this muscular response can be imagined too’. In order to show the mental construction of a piece before its performance, Palmer & van de Sande (1993) analysed the error patterns of a number of pianists when they performed either homophonic or polyphonic music pieces. The researchers found more chord-related errors in homophonic music and more single-note-related errors in polyphonic performances. According to the researchers, this finding shows that in the minds of the performers there is one main musical narration, this narration being either a sequence of single notes or chords.

The way a performer generates a mental representation of the piece probably differs according to the type of music, the instrument used, the performer’s personality, and the demands of the specific situation. Gabrielsson (1999) mentions a very characteristic study by Shaffer (1992), who tried to show that a music score provides an abstract narrative. Shaffer (1992) gave the notation of an unknown piano piece by Beethoven to four pianists and asked them to perform their preferred version of it, or any other musically valid version. The three pianists were given the full score. The fourth pianist took the score with all the expressive markings deleted. It was found that the performances of the three pianists who received the full score were consistent with each other but not with the performance of the fourth pianist.

The differences in structural representation when music is performed from memory, sight-reading, or improvisation have been discussed by Clarke in his paper ‘Generative principles in music performance’ (1988). The researcher (op. cit.) concluded that, taking into account the length and complexity of the performed piece, only a memorised performance can be reasonably ‘complete’. This is, because in the case of a memorised performance the performer has time to construct the piece in his or her mind and then simply to ‘unpack’ it before the audience.
2.2. MEASURING PIANO PERFORMANCE

The first studies of piano performance took place in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th century. These early studies were based on developments in the technical equipment for measuring various things like timing, dynamics, and intonation. Binet and Courtier (1895) in Gabrielsson (1999: 525) used a small rubber tube beneath the keys in a grand piano to record the depressions of the keys. When a key was depressed, the tube was compressed and generated a puff of air which moved a stylus writing on moving paper. Binet and Courtier (1895) studied the performance of trills, scales, accents, and crescendo-decrescendo and observed clear differences between amateur and professional pianists. Hartmann (1932) in Gabrielsson (1999: 526) focused on the differences between two pianists playing Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata*. In the early studies the data was usually presented using the musical score as a source of reference together with various values (for instance, duration) for each unit like note, beat, bar, or phrase. A number of theoretical problems also had to be solved. A common problem, for example, was the diversity of measurement techniques and definitions as well as the large amounts of gathered data.

Around 1930 the measurement of aspects of music performance flourished at the University of Iowa in the United States. Under the guidance of Professor Seashore, researchers studied many other different aspects of music performance: violin performance (Tiffin, 1932a; Small, 1937), singing (Schoen, 1922; and H. G. Seashore, 1937), and vibrato (Metfessel, 1932; Tiffin, 1932b; and A. H. Wagner, 1932). The researchers also stressed the complexities involved in music performance. Metfessel (in H. G. Seashore, 1937: 155) stated that ‘the unlimited resources for vocal and instrumental art lie in artistic deviation from the pure, the exact, the perfect, the rigid, the even, and the precise’.

The most revealing research of Professor C. E. Seashore was his writing on vibrato (1932) and other aspects of what he called the ‘objective analysis of musical performance’ (1937), both classics in the literature of musical performance. Piano performance was investigated by filming the movements of the hammers (Henderson et al., 1937; and Seashore, 1938: 233 in Gabrielsson, 1999: 527). Henderson (1937) found
that in the choral section of Chopin’s Nocturne Opus 15, No. 3 the measures consisted of a half note plus a quarter note, the latter played with *ritardando*. It was hypothesised that the lengthening was made ‘in order to achieve more melodic equality between the written long and short notes’ (op. cit: 291). Another issue studied at Iowa University with regard to piano performance was asynchronisation of the chords. The performances of four famous pianists (Bauer, Backhaus, Hofmann, and Paderewski) were recorded on paper rolls. It was found that all four pianists used asynchronisation but each one to a different extent. Asynchrony was more common in melody chords than in non-melody chords, indicating that asynchrony was used to mark off melody notes from the accompaniment (Gabrielsson, 1999: 528). In an independent study, Heinlein (1929; 1930 cited in Gabrielsson, 1999: 526) investigated the use of the pedal in piano performance. He analysed the pedal action of famous pianists on a Duo Art performing piano and conducted experiments with four pianists performing Schumann’s *Träumerei*. The use of the pedal differed between the pianists as well as under the different conditions, which included performing from the score, performing by heart, using the pedal while imagining playing the piece, or while singing the melody, and others. Heinlein (1929; 1930) also found that the use of the pedal depended on finger pattern, phrasing, speed of rendition, variation in intensity and timbre, extent of tonal anticipation, and type of imagery in recalling a phrase.

More recent studies of piano performance have focused on a number of specific issues like timing, dynamics, structure, and tempo. A methodological approach for investigating timing in music was proposed by Ingmar Bengtsson in the 1960s and was later followed by much other research such as that by C. Wagner (1974), and Bengtsson and Gabrielsson (1977; 1983). Bengtsson’s hypothesis was that music performance is usually characterised by systematic variations of duration and intensity. He also described these variations in terms of deviations from a norm. Concerning duration, Bengtsson proposed that a norm could be provided by chronometric correspondence to the simple integer relations in musical notation. There are three fundamental relations in Bengtsson’s system: ‘equality’, ‘long-short’, and ‘short-long’. In pilot studies made by oscillogram filming, Bengtsson (1974) verified these systematic variations in Viennese waltzes. Bengtsson’s systematic timing variations were also found in many examples of Swedish folk music (Bengtsson and Gabrielsson, 1977).

Bengtsson and Gabrielsson (1980), and Gabrielsson, Bengtsson and Gabriellson (1983) investigated systematic variations and concluded that performance from memory was
usually the freest and varied most from the norm. They factor-analysed the systematic
variations in the performances of five renowned pianists of a Mozart theme. The
analysis showed that a certain number of performance features were common to all
pianists. Repp (1990b) compared the performances of 19 famous pianists of a
Beethoven minuet. The pianists showed a large degree of internal individual
consistency in terms of tempo (repetitions of the same piece) but they also showed
marked inconsistency between each other. In the same study, a Factor Analysis of beat
duration showed three factors. The same statistical technique (Factor Analysis) was
used by Repp (1992) in another study in which he analysed timing microstructure of 24
outstanding pianists' performances of Schumann's *Träumerei*. The researcher found
one factor common to most of the pianists and two other special factors for Vladimir
Horowitz and Alfred Cortot respectively. The differences between the factors concerned
the performances of up-beats and tempo. Namba, Nakamura, and Kuwano (1977)
investigated the dynamics of five pianists' performances of two Chopin pieces. They
found differences between pianists but internal consistency between individuals. More
specifically, a part notated 'piano' (p) was played louder when followed by the notation
'pianissimo' (pp) than when preceeded by a 'forte' (f) notation. Geringer (1992) also
studied a number of piano performances and found that changes from 'piano' (p) to
'forte' (f) were performed with a wider dynamic range than changes from 'forte' (f) to
'piano' (p).

With regard to the structure of music, a number of researchers have experimented by
changing the positions of the barlines in the score and assessing the performed piece. In
two studies conducted by Sloboda (1983; 1985) a number of short tones were presented
to six pianists. The tones were notated in two different but musically acceptable ways.
In order to convey the correct metre, the pianists were found to use certain principles in
timing and dynamics. In conclusion, the loudness factor was regarded as more
important than duration. A similar study was conducted by Clarke (1988). He too
identified the use of timing and dynamics as a means of conveying the proper structure.
Edlund (1985) had three pianists perform 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' in 35
differently notated versions with different metres, different positions of barlines,
different rhythmic patterns and different slurring and stress marks. Timing and
dynamics were used in combination to achieve compound emphasis. Drake and Palmer
(1993) studied how pianists realised various types of accents in the performance of
constructed examples. Metric accents were achieved by increased loudness or timing
variations. The performance of melodic accents included (a) increased loudness at special points in the melody or (b) timing variations.

With regard to tempo, it has been found that in different music phrases there are differences in terms of *accelerando* – *ritardando* patterns. In most cases there is considerable variation of tempo in larger sections such as in a movement of a Beethoven symphony. Bengtsson and Gabrielsson (1983) distinguished three kinds of tempo in a music piece: (a) the *mean tempo* – the average number of beats per minute across the whole piece, (b) the *main tempo* – the prevailing tempo when passages with momentary variations such as final ritardando are deleted, and (c) *local tempo*, which is maintained only for a short time. Much research into tempo has focused on the relation between tempo and the microstructure of the piece, i.e. whether the performance of a piece is the same in different tempi. Clarke (1982; 1985) analysed performances of Satie’s *Vexations* and a Clementi sonata. He found that versions played at a slower tempo showed more groups than versions played at a faster tempo. In the case of the Clementi sonata he found that at a faster tempo the absolute duration of the eighth note and the sixteenth became so close that they could not be distinguished as separate categories. They were assimilated into one category with an intermediate duration, that is, shorter than an eighth note but longer than a sixteenth (Gabrielsson, 1999: 541). Repp (1994) analysed two pianists’ performances of Schumann’s *Träumerei* in three different (musically acceptable) tempi in order to investigate the relation of tempo to the microstructure of the performance. He found that tempo did not vary with the relative duration of the notes and the dynamics (the relative intensity) of the performance. The results concerning chord asynchrony, tone overlap, and pedal timing were complex, showing more variation between pianists than between different tempi.

In conclusion, recent studies in piano performance have taken advantage of more modern analytical techniques than the earlier ones and have focused on various performance factors like tempo, dynamics, and the performance characteristics of individual pianists. The later studies are qualitatively different from the earlier ones in that they visualise piano performance holistically. With the use of modern statistical techniques of the computer era – like Factor Analysis – later studies investigate variables like tempo and dynamics concurrently. The next logical step – the construction of specific models of piano performance – will be discussed in the next section.
2.3. MODELLING PIANO PERFORMANCE

Models of piano performance have been constructed by both a quantitative and a qualitative logic. In the first case, there are a number of models based on the measurement of music performance. Gabrielsson (1999), for example, refers to Clarke (1988) who proposed nine generative rules to account for a great deal of expressive deviation in piano performance. According to Clarke (op. cit.), graduated changes in timing and dynamics, describable as a quadratic function with variable minimum, can be used to indicate the group structure of the music. In another study, also referred to by Gabrielsson (1999), Todd (1985; 1989) explored the use of *ritardando* in phrase endings and focused on how the hierarchical structure of a piece altered according to the degree of this showing. In 1992 Todd extended his performance model and proposed a computational model of musical dynamics. This model was based on the observation that a musical phrase often shows a crescendo-decrescendo profile and also assumed that tempo and dynamics are linked – the faster, the louder and *vice versa*.

‘Qualitative’ models of music performance are usually based on the intuition of expert musicians. For such a model, Sundberg and his colleagues relied on the intuition of expert musicians, like the famous violinist Lars Frydén, and described a set of twenty performance ‘rules’ (see Sundberg et al., 1991; and Friberg, 1991; 1995). The rules affect duration, sound level, vibrato frequency and depth, and fine-tuning. They may be divided into differentiation rules, which may help the listener to identify pitch and duration categories, grouping rules which facilitate the perception of melodic gestalts of various lengths, and ensemble rules. The rules are additive and applied in a prescribed order. The quantity of a rule effect is varied by means of a multiplication factor (Gabrielsson, 1999: 552). Some of the rules relate to facts in music acoustics, like an increment in the sound level. Others, however, are recognised from performance measurements, like the ‘double duration contrast reduction’ rule, in which a nominal 2:1 ratio, such as that of a half and a quarter note, is transformed into a lower ratio. Another rule prescribes increased difference between short and long notes by shortening and softening short notes and lengthening long notes. The ‘faster uphill’ rule shortens each note initiating an ascending interval by two msec, thus increasing the tempo in sequences of ascending intervals. The most original rules make use of the concepts of melodic and harmonic change to indicate how remarkable tones or chords are (Gabrielsson, 1999: 553). The validity of rules was investigated by Sundberg et al. (1991). Battel and Bresin (1994) suggested some modifications to the rules for piano
performance. The theory of rules was criticised on the grounds that musical conventions have varied throughout the history of music with regard to styles and composers (Friberg, 1995). Moreover, Shaffer (1992; 1995) noted that the same score might be performed in different ways by different performers.

An interesting idea for constructing models of piano performance is Clynes’s view that each composer is associated with a unique ‘pulse’. This view has also generated a number of models based on the intuition of expert performers. Clynes’s approach is based on the idea that composers are associated with an inner ‘pulse’, which is a personal characteristic like a way of walking or writing. The pulse refers to a repetitive phenomenon that provides patterns of deviations from nominal note duration, as well as patterns of amplitude within a group of notes forming the pulse group. This phenomenon can take place on several hierarchic levels (Gabrielsson, 1999: 555). Clynes synthesised sound examples with works of many composers in order to illustrate his approach (Clynes, 1983; 1985; 1987). Empirical evidence was also selected by Thompson (1989), and Repp (1990a b). Thompson had experienced listeners evaluate different versions of pieces written by different composers. The pieces were played with the correct pulse for each composer but also with the wrong pulse. For example, a Beethoven piece was played according to the Mozart pulse. The work of Thompson supported Clynes’ ideas. This, however, was not the case with the work of Repp (op. cit.), who found only very limited evidence of a pulse in his extensive measurements of performances by 19 famous pianists of a Beethoven minuet. Repp concluded that the pulse was more closely related to the characteristics of the individual piece than to the composer. Clynes (1995), however, claimed that good recognition of composers’ pulses required intimate experience of their music. The more experienced the listeners, the more likely it would be that they would recognise and prefer the specific pulse of each composer.

Sloboda (1986) has presented a structural theory for music performance and a number of principles which, according to him, underlie expert performance. First is the existence of knowledge of large-scale groupings or patterns within the music which control performance. Second is that hierarchical control is supported by highly flexible procedures for solving local problems. The last is that the expert player has the means to monitor his or her own performance adequately and take corrective action before he or she deviates too grossly from the plan. Sloboda and Davidson (1996) in their study of the virtuoso performer recognise five characteristics of expressive performance. Firstly,
expressive performance is *systematic*, which means that it presents a clear relationship between the use of particular expressive devices like slowing and accenting and particular structural features of the music, such as metrical or phrase boundaries. Secondly, expert performance displays *communicability*, in that listeners are better able to infer structural features of the music when expression is present than when it is absent. Thirdly, it shows *stability*. This means that a performer is able to reproduce closely the same expressive performance. Fourthly, expressive performance displays *flexibility*, meaning that a performer can attenuate, exaggerate, or change the expressive contour to highlight different aspects of the music. Finally, an expressive performance shows *automaticity*. This means that the performer has learnt the piece thoroughly and during his or her performance does not need to think about how to translate expressive intention into action.

For Sloboda and Davidson (1996), *stability* in performance can be achieved by re-applying a small set of rules to a structurally marked representation, rather than by remembering a very large amount of analogue information about minute timing and other deviations. *Flexibility* can be achieved by re-setting parameters on some of the rules, rather than by changing the representation of the piece. This theory also explains errors in performance. Errors in a performance are ‘structure-preserving’, that is they preserve the musical ‘sense’ by deleting or adding ornamentation, substituting different notes of the same chord. Also structural theory explains the development of *automaticity*, that is the ability of a skilled performer to play without being aware of any cognitive effort in performing. Sloboda and Davidson (1996) argued that performing expertise requires analytic listening powers on the part of the piano performer. He or she may thus ‘latch’ onto the timing and intensity of variations in a music performance and imitate them (op. cit.).

In conclusion, it could be argued that a number of researchers have recently proposed integrated models for analysing and understanding the performance of music. These models are realised either by mathematical equations or by conceptual maps, which usually deal with the microstructure of the performance, the idiosynecrasy of the performer, and the ‘pulse’ of a certain composer or a certain music piece. These models may be sufficient for analysing and evaluating the technical characteristics of a performance, but are not adequate for someone who would like to conceptualise performance as an aesthetic phenomenon. The description of how a music piece has been performed is the first step. The most interesting question, however, is to discuss
why a specific performance or a specific performer should be preferred or – for the needs of the current study – why piano performance should be taught in one or other direction. The models presented in the current section cannot deal with this type of aesthetic and ‘metaphysical’ question. Therefore, a wider framework for conceptualising ‘musicality’ and, consequently, performance is needed. The quest for such a framework is the theme of the next chapter. For the time being, the current author will discuss another important topic in music performance: sight-reading. This topic is important because it is the most striking example of the link between the mind and the hand of the performer.

2.4. SIGHT-READING

Sight-reading, performing from a score without previous practice either mentally or on the instrument, is regarded as so important among some music educators that Last (1980) characterises ability in *prima vista* as a ‘divine gift’. Early psychological research showed that the good sight-readers employ their experience in identifying regularities in the score (Bean, 1938). This finding can be seen also in more recent studies. Sloboda (1986), for example, recognises that ability in sight-reading can be affected by similarities in many melodies like familiar recurrent configurations of pitch and rhythm. In a very interesting study, Wolf (1976) presented pianists with one line of a score at a time in such a way that they were forced to play the line they had just seen while reading the next line. It was found that good sight-readers were those with a good feel for the keyboard. This is because they do not need to look at their instruments when playing. Wolf (op. cit.) also studied the so-called ‘proofreader’s error’ in sight-reading i.e. where sight-readers tend to play what they believe is musically ‘correct’ or predictable and not what is written in the score.

An important field of psychological research into sight-reading concerns eye movements. Sloboda (1986) in *The Musical Mind* discusses the psychological dimensions of eye movement in music reading. This includes the ‘area of clear vision’ (a circle of approximately one inch in diameter on the page) and the mechanisms that operate to give the reader a series of brief ‘snapshots’ of the score. These ‘snapshots’ are known as ‘fixations’. Each fixation lasts for about 250 milliseconds. Sloboda (1986) examined how the reader controls the sequence and location of these fixations. He (op. cit.) argues that eye movements in sight-reading are under immediate cognitive control. In music reading, sequence of fixations is determined by the nature of the music.
Especially on the piano, where the music is written on two staves, the reader fixates first upon one stave and then upon the next. This, however, happens only when music is homophonic and choral in nature (Sloboda, 1986). When music is homophonic, readers first move their eyes vertically, then shift them to the right, and then move them vertically again. When, however, the music is contrapuntal, fixation sequences are grouped in horizontal sweeps along a single line, with a return to another line afterwards. Thus, the strategy in sight-reading is to identify significant structural units in successive fixations. In homophonic music such units are chords and therefore it is necessary to sample both staves in successive fixations. In contrapuntal music the significant units are melodic fragments which extend horizontally along a single stave (op. cit.). Sloboda (1974; 1977) had instrumentalists read single-line melodies on sight. When the score was removed proficient readers could produce up to seven correct notes. However, this span was dependent on the structure of the piece, for example, the degree to which the melodies progressed harmonically.

Moore (1959) suggests that students should practise sight-reading continually. They should do it not only by themselves, but also accompanied by a musician (instrumentalist or singer) who knows the piece better than they do themselves. In this way, even if the pianist misses some notes, s/he will have to continue playing to keep up with the other person. According to him, it is very important for the improvement of sight-reading for a student to learn on no account to lose the tempo. S/he should keep the harmonic progression and project the meaning of the piece in a musical way, even if a great number of notes or the composer's markings are missed out when a piece is first played.

2.5. PRACTISING

Both professional musicians and amateur performers spend many hours practising their instruments or their voices and psychologists and teachers have become interested in finding possible patterns of effective practice. Much research has been conducted by observing expert musicians during practice or by just interviewing them. As we shall see in the literature, there is also a great deal of prescription about practising that is based on individual experience rather than systematic research as such.

A general finding from research is that good practice is a matter of both quality and quantity. Bastian (1989) interviewed 62 young (14-22 old) prizewinners in German
music competitions (‘Jugend musiziert’), who represented all the common orchestral instruments. The participants reported practising between one and seven hours a day. String players practised for a longer time than wind players. Most of the participants played one or two instruments other than their main instrument.

The importance of the time a person dedicates to practice has been epitomised by Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993), who compared the practising patterns of a group of expert musicians with the practising patterns of non-experts. In this study Ericsson et al. (op. cit.) gathered retrospective data from professional German violinists and found that they had accumulated approximately 10,000 hours of practice by the age of 20. In the same study, the practising patterns of a group of professional pianists were compared with the practising patterns of a group of amateur pianists (average age of 24 in both groups). Music lessons started at an average age of 5.8 years for the expert pianists and at an average age of 9.9 years for the amateurs. Estimated accumulated practice at the age of 18 was about 7,600 hours for the experts and about 1,600 hours for the amateurs. Ericsson et al. (op. cit.) concluded that the main factor behind expert performance is the amount of extended and ‘optimally distributed deliberate practice’.

The researchers explain that by ‘deliberate practice’ they mean carefully structured activities designed to improve performance and presupposing high motivation and extended effort. It also includes full attention during practice, explicit instructions and individualised supervision by a teacher, knowledge of results, favourable environmental conditions, and parental or other support.

Hallam (1997) investigated the literature and proposed an integrated theoretical model for practising in music (see Figure 1, p. 38). Hallam’s model recalls the models of educational or school effectiveness, in which a number of educational ‘inputs’ within a number of ‘contextual’ conditions are transformed with the help of some ‘processes’ in order to give a number of educational ‘outcomes’. In Hallam’s (1997) model a number of factors thought to affect practice have been arranged in three distinct fields: ‘presage’, ‘process’, and ‘outcomes’. The author (op. cit.) discusses possible relations between the factors.
Gruson (1981) studied the practising behaviour of 40 piano students who took individual lessons and three professional concert pianists. Gruson found that uninterrupted playing accounted for about one quarter of the total practising time. Moreover, the author found that the more skilled pianists used more conventionally advocated rehearsal techniques. The most effective study technique was repeating sections of the pieces. Sloboda (1986) distinguishes between ‘formal’ practice (i.e. scales, pieces, and technical exercises set by the teacher), and ‘informal’ practice (i.e. playing other than as specific tasks set by teachers). The author (op. cit.) found that high achievers undertake moderate levels of informal practice and very high levels of formal practice. Sloboda (1986) comments that the breaking down of the music into appropriate units becomes an aid to memorisation and the construction of a fluent performance.
Figure 1 A model of practising (from Hallam, 1997: 183)
Music teachers and pedagogues, who do not normally read psychological research, often find that they need to advise their students about how to practise more effectively. Music teachers base their advice on experience. Some authors have given different views and key-directions for studying a new piece, enabling it to be learnt as quickly and as well as possible. D’ Abreu (1964), for example, suggests that before starting to learn a new piece of music, a pianist should play it through a few times in order to get to know it musically. His view agrees with that of Hallam (1995) who points out that ‘professional musicians, when learning a new work, tend initially to look at or play through the music in its entirety, to gain an overview of the whole work’. Immediately afterwards D’ Abreu (1964) advises a pianist to repeat whole sections, and then to pay attention to learning firstly the right notes, secondly the right fingering, and thirdly the correct rhythms.

The next stage is for pianists to isolate the more difficult passages and play them at a slow tempo, or with the hands separated, in order to gain a clearer conception of the musical structure. According to D’ Abreu (1964), student pianists should thus improve their technique. Only then will they reduce mental preoccupation with difficulties and free their minds to attend to the interpretation. It is worth-mentioning that D’ Abreu (op. cit.: 105) insists on slow practice throughout the whole study of a new piano piece. It gives a person time to examine in detail everything written in the score, and helps in developing ‘reliable mental and muscular co-ordination’. In addition, even when pianists have already reached a good standard in their learning of a piece, D’ Abreu advises them to revise pieces continually. Thus they will ‘re-learn’ what they may have forgotten, and ‘strengthen’ what they already know.

A more systematic approach to learning a new piece has been described by Newman (1974: 166, 167), who outlines nine steps for this purpose. Newman’s nine steps are in three phases: (a) laying the groundwork, (b) learning the notes, and (c) playing the music. In the first phase the student has to take three steps: to choose the piece, to understand it, and to plan the ways and means of approaching it. In the second phase the student has to develop habits and co-ordination, to count with the metronome at a slow tempo, and to memorise patterns and relationships. In the third phase s/he has to keep up with the metronome to reach the right tempo, to polish up section by section exercises, to improve use of pedal and production of tone, as well as to interpret the piece as a whole, paying attention to matters such as phrasing, markings, climaxes, continuity, and rhythm.
Foldes (1950) suggests that students should always include amongst the pieces they study two kinds of pieces: (a) those which they can master and play in the most musical way, and (b) those which are somewhat beyond their current level of accomplishment. According to him, a ‘healthy balance’ between easy and difficult material will keep every student ‘happy’ at the piano and contribute towards progress. Bolton (1954) thinks students should be introduced to a variety of pieces of different levels of difficulty and of different periods. Teachers are advised to have quite a broad repertoire themselves and to urge their pupils to listen to each other’s lessons from time to time. This will create greater interest, since they will get to know more music than they could have learnt by themselves.

A special topic in music practice is the development of ‘aural skills’ or ‘ear training’. These skills have been associated by the music psychologists with issues like the perception of music, absolute pitch, and the understanding of tempo (Deutsch, 1999). The psychology of music perception is not within the scope of the current study. However, some researchers’ views will be presented here from an educational point of view. Hallam (1998: 13) has listed a number of necessary aural skills: (a) the importance of knowing how music will sound before playing it, (b) the development of rhythmic accuracy and a sense of pulse, (c) the development of good intonation, and (d) improvisation. On the same theme Seashore (1967: 157) pinpoints four fundamental elements to be learnt in musical listening: (a) the ability to hear pitch, (b) intensity, (c) time, and (d) timbre. He also advises music teachers to keep the student constantly on the alert. Students should listen out for these four factors in all training, and be shown how important they are in the perception of beauty in music (op. cit.: 158). According to him, these four elements combine in a ‘complex’ process of hearing, rhythm, melody, consonance, and harmony. Finally, Seashore (1967) analyses each one of the elements presented above into its component elements, and considers the musical mind responsible for discriminating and identification. Geiseking and Leimer (1972) also emphasise the need for a piano performer to train the ear, and they stress the importance of ‘critical self-hearing’ and of listening out for ‘the exact tone quality, tone duration, and tone strength’.

Many pedagogues like Matthay (1913), Foldes (1950), Seashore (1967), Newman (1974), Taylor (1981), Kendall (1988), and Hallam (1998), have referred to the seriousness of a pianist’s work on aural skills, as a part of the curriculum for playing an instrument. They suggest exercises to improve these skills when they are not among the
natural endowments of a student. Newman (1974: 6) also claims that aural skills help especially in memorising, and consequently in all matters in piano playing that are assisted by memorising. Because of the importance of such skills in piano learning, Last (1980: 52) stresses that a pianist should start aural training as an essential part of piano lessons even in the early stages of studies.

2.6. ‘TALENT’ AND MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

So far, the current author has discussed a number of ‘technical’ aspects of piano performance. In this section the discussion will focus on the musical development of the performer and the notion of ‘talent’. In the literature, a number of interesting questions have been explored concerning the development of music performers. Their musical development has been studied by means of extensive interviews with both the performers themselves and their parents. For example, there is discussion about whether ‘talent’ is innate or can be developed. Kingsbury (1988) states that ‘talent’ could be defined as differential of potential for certain kinds of socially valued behaviour; differentials that are believed to be ordained not in social order but rather by the inherent nature of people. Kingsbury (1988) also found that in most conservatories it is believed that a student either possesses ‘talent’ or does not. ‘Talent’, therefore, is innate (op. cit.: 67). The notion of musical talent is ingrained in Western thinking about ‘musicality’. In the world of music teaching and learning, the validity of a person’s musical ‘talent’ is a direct function of the relative esteem of the people who have attributed the talent to the person in question (op. cit.: 68). In the conservatories, according to Kingsbury (op. cit.), a person will be judged ‘musically talented’, as distinct from ‘accomplished’ insofar as his or her performance is not, or could not have been, determined by self-conscious preparation, such as systematic rehearsing, formal lessons, or technical drills (op. cit.: 71). ‘Talent’ is thus a gift to be envied or coveted (op. cit.: 76). Finally, according to Kingsbury (1988), the conservatory teachers consider ‘talent’ to be a cultural symbol that is both polysemous (having multiple meanings) and polymorphic (having multiple manifestations) (op. cit.: 80).

Sloboda and Davidson (1996) note that ‘talent’ in the literature is said to be an innate genetically programmed superiority. In a first phase of their study Sloboda and Davidson (1996) interviewed young people in schools specialising in music and obtained information about their childhood experiences. In a second phase, the authors obtained corroborating data from the participants’ parents, where possible. In a third
phase, all the participants were asked the same questions in a more focused form. In a fourth phase, the participants were arranged into groups for comparison according to their level of musical achievement, and the researchers studied the factors distinguishing high achievers from those who were not so successful musically. In a fifth and final stage, the authors focused on the characteristics of a larger sample of 119 high achievers. The authors (op. cit.) commented that 'there is nothing in the nature of either technical or expressive skill that forces this interpretation' (op. cit.: 80). Instead, Sloboda and Davidson (1996) found that parents and music teachers are the adults with the most direct involvement in the child's musical development. Once children begin learning musical instruments, parental involvement is crucial. The parents of high achievers are usually not music performers themselves but 'committed supporters' of their children's musical activities. Music teachers are usually viewed as models by their students, if they have built up a personal and professional relationship with the young performers. Overall, both teachers and parents play a vital role in generating and sustaining children's interest in and commitment to music.

Pruett (1991) in his paper about the 'Psychological aspects of the development of exceptional young performers and prodigies' concluded that 'talented' children feel a need to make music and experience an inner drive to develop their talent. They also demonstrate a capacity to hear and feel something in music that cannot be described verbally. However, two other studies cast doubt on the idea of musical precocity. Sosniak (1985a, in Gabrielsson, 1999) in his paper 'Learning to be a concert pianist', investigated whether high levels of skill are predicated on unusual early musical attributes or capacities. The author interviewed 24 young American concert pianists and their parents and found that there were very few signs to indicate that they would eventually have more success in their music careers than hundreds of other young pianists. Similarly, Sloboda and Howe (1991) investigated the early backgrounds of 42 notably successful young musicians and discovered that very few of them were reported to have displayed any overt signs of musical precocity.

Two further questions concerning the life of performers are whether musicians are raised within a specific socio-economic and cultural status and whether there are certain life patterns for those who take up a career in music. Manturzewska (1990) studied the life-span development of 165 professional classical musicians in Poland. Most of them had come from families with a rich musical background but there were examples of musicians from non-musical environments. In the same study, family environment and
intrinsic motivation were suggested as the factors most influencing musical development, but teachers, colleagues, and socio-emotional support were also important. Ericsson et al. (1993) compared a group of expert pianists with a group of amateur pianists (average age of 24 in both groups). In this study (op. cit.), the role of innate ability is discounted but it is conceded that inheritable individual differences might influence processes related to motivation and the ability to engage in hard work.

Sosniak (1985a; 1985b; 1990) interviewed 21 American concert pianists aged 24-39, who had been finalists in international piano competitions. The author distinguished three phases in the development of the concert pianists. In the first phase there is a playful involvement with music. In the second phase, between the ages of 10 and 13, there is much more systematic study under the guidance of an expert teacher, a considerable increase in practice time devoted to developing skills and feeling for the expressive qualities of music. The young pianists begin to perform in recitals and competitions and to identify with the field. In the third phase, between the ages of 16 and 20, all the pianists in Sosniak’s interviews stated that they had studied with master teachers, who had served as revered role models. Almost all the time and energy of the pianists was invested in working and thinking about music. During that phase the pianists learned to make personal decisions regarding interpretation and expression in music and develop their own ways of practising and performing. According to Gabrielsson (1999: 562), the main features of the three phases described by Sosniak may also be traced in the three-stage developmental framework proposed by Sloboda (1994).

Manturzewska (1990) described six successive and overlapping stages in the lifelong development of musicians: a first stage of spontaneous musical expression and activity (early life), a second stage with guided musical development (about 6 – 14 years of age), a third stage involving the formation of the artistic personality, a fourth stage of professional stabilisation, a fifth stage in which the person teaches music, and a sixth stage in which retirement succeeds professional activity. The first three stages seem similar to those described by Sosniak (1985b). The first intense musical experience – listening to a certain piece of music, a certain performer, or a certain instrument – may occur during the first stage and often elicits a wish to become a performer. The master teacher becomes a model and a personal guide into various aspects of the musical world. More integrated theories of musical development will be discussed in the following chapter.
2.7. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter examined three distinct themes related to the context of piano teaching and learning: performance, practising, and sight-reading. Earlier and more modern studies of piano performance were reviewed, and a number of models for music performance presented. Basic knowledge of the psychological aspects of music performance – with emphasis on the piano – will facilitate subsequent analysis of the piano teachers’ opinions. Psychological studies in the field of music performance, however, tend not to confront the philosophical problematic of defining ‘musicality’, but rather approach the issue from an experimental and quantitative perspective. Therefore, in order to pass from the stage of simply describing a piano performance to the stage of understanding piano performance and practice, and explaining piano teachers’ opinions, an integrated framework of ‘musicality’ is needed. The quest for such a framework is the theme of the next chapter.
3. TOWARDS A THEORY OF 'MUSICALITY' BASED ON MUSIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1. AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF 'MUSICALITY'

The previous chapter approached the production of music (with emphasis on piano performance) from a rather 'technical' point of view. However, as has already been stated, a strictly technical approach is not adequate for fully understanding musicians' ideas about the teaching and learning transaction in the context of an organised piano course. In the context of the present thesis, experienced people (teachers-performers) introduce inexperienced people to communicating performing skills and 'secrets' for effective piano practice. They also introduce them to ideas about (a) the microstructure of a performance, (b) the development of musical expressiveness, (c) the development of personal musical characteristics, and ultimately, (d) beliefs and values in music (like personal preferences for a certain performer or a certain period in the tradition of western music or a certain score edition among many). In other words, piano teachers not only convey instrumental skills, but also contribute to the construction of an integrated musical 'self'.

Regardless of the level of the lesson, those who teach and learn music construct their own understanding of what I shall henceforth call 'musicality'. By 'musicality' I mean a large and not easily described set of interrelated characteristics composing each person's musical 'self'. From the definition it is evident that 'musicality' is (a) formulated in a certain historical, sociological, and ideological framework, (b) dynamically changing through a person's life, and (c) something that comprises many musical activities, like performing, auditing, composing, and improvising. Of course,
this definition of 'musicality' may not be adequate for someone who studies the epistemological, ontological, and aesthetic ramifications of music education. However, my definition could be easily characterised as 'operational' because it helps practically in understanding piano teaching and learning in a variety of contexts.

Attempts to define 'musicality' are seldom found in the academic literature on music education. Usually, the readers of a paper are left to understand the authors' ideas about 'musicality' from the context. Unfortunately, many people (musicians) who by their very position are most closely and practically associated with 'musicality' tend not to be philosophically analytical. One source in which the term 'musicality' is addressed directly is a paper in the Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education in which Brandstrom (1999) examines 'Music teachers' everyday conceptions of musicality'. Brandstrom (op. cit.) found two different conceptions of 'musicality' among teachers: an 'absolute' view, which suggests that musicality is biologically inherited, and a 'relativistic' view, which assumes that musicality is something socially constructed. According to Brandstrom (1999), those teachers who held the 'absolute' view of musicality, perceived it as measurable, innate, restricted to the western musical tradition, and focusing strictly on musical achievement and the reproduction of written music. On the other hand, those who held the 'relativistic' view of musicality, perceived it as 'musical experience'. It can be cultivated and is not easily measured, is not tied to any particular musical tradition, and has mainly to do with creativity and musical expression (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1 The components of 'musicality' (from Brandstrom, 1999)</th>
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<td>Absolute view of musicality</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Musical achievement</td>
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<td>- Measurable</td>
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<td>- Reproduction</td>
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The findings of Brandstrom (1999) presented in the previous paragraph, addressed the issue of ‘musicality’ from an epistemological point of view. In the academic literature, however, ‘musicality’ has indirectly been associated with a number of more practical or low-level topics, like performing technique and expressiveness. Expressiveness tends to mean something like playing ‘with feeling’, itself a difficult concept to define. ‘Technique’, on the other hand, is less problematic when connected to ‘musicality’ and refers to a performer’s physical (bodily or motor) skill in controlling his or her instrument. The distinction between technique and expression can be seen in the literature about the performance of music. In considering this balance between expressiveness and technique in the western musical tradition, Sloboda (1986) distinguished three types of music performers: those who can play relatively simple music with the utmost sensitivity (expressively) and have profound critical appreciation of other people’s performances, those who can tackle the most demanding pieces in the repertoire from the technical point of view, but often perform them insensitively, and the master performers, who combine excellence in both expression and technical skill.

Another indirect view of ‘musicality’ can be taken by studying some authors’ ideas about the most necessary music-teaching skills. For example, according to Uszler, Gordon and Mach (1991), learning factors the teacher needs to focus on in the context of a music lesson include ‘motor’ skills (guiding and controlling movements), intellectual skills (reading and counting), motivation, technique, musicianship, independence, and functional skills (i.e. sight-reading, harmonisation, transposition, and improvisation). Hallam (1998) has presented a detailed and prescriptive list of six musical skills that a student should develop during piano studies, which include aural, cognitive and technical skills, musicianship, and performance and learning skills. In all these skills, Hallam appears to seek the components of the development of musicality. This includes good sound production, understanding of different musical styles, ability to articulate musically, and appreciation and projection of the meaning of a piece to an audience. Other skills considered by a large number of studies as significant and necessary for students at all stages include those of creativity, composition, and listening (Bolton, 1954; and Hallam, 1998).
3.2. ‘MUSICALITY’ AND MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the previous section, the discussion focused on the notion of ‘musicality’, operationally defined by the current author as a large set of components which construct each person’s musical ‘self’. Brandstrom’s (1999) epistemological distinction between some musicians’ ideas of an ‘absolute’, and a ‘relativistic’ type of musicality was also presented. Finally, the current author reviewed a number of texts, the authors of which indirectly expressed their deeper understanding of ‘musicality’ with the help of a set of necessary musical skills, both in the field of technique and musical expressiveness. The purpose of the current section is, however, broader. Here, the current author will search the literature for an integrated theory which could help in approaching the notion of ‘musicality’. Such a theory (or ‘framework’) should have the potential for further illuminating each person’s musical understanding and behaviour. Since, according to the current author’s definition, ‘musicality’ refers to a person’s musical ‘self’, a fertile ground for searching for a framework of musicality is the field of musical development. For what is developing musically in an individual is presumably ‘musicality’ in this broad sense. An acceptable theory of musical development should not only illuminate the different components of a person’s musical ‘self’, but also describe the relationships between these components and reflect the nature of musical behaviour. In addition, an acceptable theory of musical development would take into account both the natural developmental inclinations of individuals and the cultural environment in which their development is realised.

3.2.1. COGNITIVE PROCESSES OF MUSIC PERCEPTION

One theory of musical development comes from Serafine (1988), who in the book *Music as Cognition*, noted that much psychological research in music is reductionistic and has focused on entities such as pitch, tone, and chords. For Serafine (1988), these entities are only the materials and not the elements of music. Thus, isolated pitches, scales, and chords (the music materials) are ‘pre-musical’ or ‘sub-musical’, and are the products of thinking *about* music rather than thinking *in music* (op. cit.). According to Serafine (op. cit.), listeners use music materials in order to construct musical properties. Music is thus a form of thought. Serafine (op. cit.) tried to establish a generic set of cognitive processes which she sees as underlying all musical production and perception (or rather ‘conception’). She (op. cit.) proposed a theory of some core cognitive
processes of music perception and discussed the processes by which music materials construct musically meaningful units. Certain musical processes are thought by Serafine (1988) to be universal or widespread and others idiomatic. In conclusion, the theory of Serafine reflects the essential nature of musical activity and from this point of view it could be used as a theoretical framework for approaching musicality.

3.2.2. Musical development and symbolisation

Another set of theories for approaching 'musicality' from a developmental point of view must be sought in the ideas of some researchers who examined musical development in terms of the use of symbols. The basis of all these theories are the ideas of Gardner (1973), who, in the book *Arts and Human Development*, argued that music is a unique symbolic form in the medium of sound. Symbols, therefore, can be seen as central elements in children's artistic development. As Gardner (1973) wrote characteristically, 'symbolisation requires appreciation of an object and the capacity to link the object known to a picture, label, or other kind of element that denotes it' (op. cit.: 90). An example of such a symbol theory is that of Barrett (1997), who claimed that invented notations of musical experience might be viewed as 'indicators of musical thinking' (op. cit.: 71). In another case, Davidson and Scripp (1989) argued that the musical development of children could be studied through a visual symbolic medium. For the authors (op. cit.), the use of conventional notation is an indicator of higher levels of musical development. In the *Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning*, Davidson and Scripp (1992) linked the production of music directly to the making of musical scores (op. cit.: 396). Several other researchers have placed emphasis on the analysis of children's musical notations. Bamberger (1991), Gromko and Poorman (1998), and Smith, Cuddy and Upitis (1994) are some of them.

3.2.3. The notion of audiation

Another possible way of approaching 'musicality' from a developmental point of view could be through the notion of audiation. Audiation is a concept proposed by Gordon (1976) in his book *Learning, Sequence, and Patterns in Music*. Audiation originally meant the ability of a person to hear and comprehend the sound of music no longer, or possibly never having been, physically present. According to Gordon's theory, a preparatory audiation phase exists before the people are ready to audiate. This phase comprises three distinct stages. In the first stage of acculturation the children recognise sounds and try to participate by responding to them with movement and babbling. In
imitation, the children are able to imitate what they hear and judge if their reactions match what is being heard. Finally, in the stage of assimilation, the children recognise their lack of co-ordination in singing and moving, and begin to perform their skills with greater precision. After the stage of assimilation the young learners have an objective sense of tonality and rhythm, and are ready for audiation. In the phase of audiation children can participate in music activities and receive formal music instruction. According to Gordon (1989), the theory of audition is valid across a range of musical modalities. As he writes, ‘once students have gained musical understanding through audiation they are able to perform and to respond aesthetically, and to use representations of their and others’ aesthetic feelings to the extent that their music aptitudes will allow’ (op. cit.: 21).

3.2.4. THE MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PERFORMING MUSICIANS ACCORDING TO SLOBODA AND DAVIDSON

Another interesting suggestion regarding musical development comes from Sloboda and Davidson (1996) who in their study about the young performing musician raise a number of issues related to the musical development of the young performers. The authors (op. cit.) also deal with issues like the parent and teacher influences in musical development. According to Sloboda and Davidson (1996), studies in musical development can be arranged in three ‘dimensions’ (a) the sample which they are focused upon, (b) the questions which they ask, and (c) the type of observations that are made (op. cit.: 171). It could be argued that these dimensions are methodological rather than conceptual. In addition, in Sloboda and Davidson’s (1996) text the parameters of musical development remain undefined and they are assumed rather than argued. For instance, the term ‘expressive skills’ appears to include all that goes beyond the technical level. However, the authors introduce the separate concept of ‘structural features’ which is seen to include technical issues like metrical or phrase boundaries. The conceptual position of Sloboda and Davidson (1996) is helpful because it deals with what Serafine (1988) would describe as the ‘elements’ of music. Sloboda and Davidson (1996) also raise a number of issues discussed by the current author in Chapter 2, like talent and performance, and parent and teacher influence. However, lack of conceptual clarity weakens Sloboda and Davidson’s view (op. cit.). By arguing that their sample of high achievers is distinguishable from other young people (op. cit.: 184) the authors believe that their findings cannot be generalised to include other populations.
3.2.5. CONCLUSIONS

The theories of musical development presented so far may have been empirically verified, but they cannot be used for approaching the notion of ‘musicality’ in the context of the current thesis. The theory of Serafine, for example, focuses only on the audience-listener mode and does not adequately investigate the impact of cultural and educational environment on musical perception. Moreover, Sloboda and Davidson’s findings cannot be appropriately generalised to include other populations, such as the group of teachers and students in the Greek context. In addition, the problem with the theories based on the use of symbols is that they do not comprehensively reflect the nature of musical activities and behaviour. Symbol theories are based on paper and pencil tests and, therefore, they are not suitable for dealing with piano teachers’ views of ‘musicality’. Runfola and Swanwick (2002) write that if we accept that music is a representation of our experience of the world, then music itself must be seen as the primary symbolic system. Music symbols are, therefore, secondary symbolic systems and in the study of such symbolic systems, some information is lost. The theory of musical development that will be presented in this chapter is the theory of Professor Keith Swanwick of the London Institute of Education. This theory can be used for dealing with teachers’ views of ‘musicality’ because it is based on a generic framework of musical experience and on observations of actual music making under open conditions. Swanwick’s (1983) theory has been widely cited and extensively reviewed in the literature. Further research has addressed questions of its validity and reliability. This theory will be presented in the next section.
3.3. THE DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY OF KEITH SWANWICK

3.3.1. Description

In his paper, *The Arts in Education*, Swanwick (1983) tried to touch on the issue of the nature and source of musical thought by sketching a facility governing the development of musical thinking. The result of this approach is presented in the form of an isosceles triangle in Figure 2. Swanwick (op. cit.) argued that the essential elements of every artistic engagement are (a) mastery, (b) imitation, and (c) imaginative play, and that these elements have corresponding artistic procedures, namely (i) handling and perception of sensory materials, (ii) projecting and locating expressive character, and (iii) awareness of dynamic structure. Swanwick based this view on Piagetian ideas about children’s play and the cognitive procedures of assimilation and accommodation.

![Figure 2 Elements of artistic engagement and psychological processes (adapted from Swanwick, 1983).](image-url)
Subsequently and as the result of a sustained study of musical development in children, Swanwick and Tillman (1986) proposed a model of musical knowledge development in four layers: ‘materials’, ‘expression’, ‘form’, and ‘value’. The children in this study were between the ages of three and eleven and came from several ethnic and cultural groups in London schools. Their compositions were part of classroom activities and the recordings continued for four years, nine times per year, yielding 745 compositions from 48 children. There was a cross-section of music from children of different ages and in some cases a longitudinal spectrum of compositions from individual students. The compositions ranged from brief spontaneous utterances to more sustained and rehearsed musical inventions. The data was then grouped into clusters with similar properties and these were seen to relate to and extend Swanwick’s original conception of four layers of musical thinking (Swanwick and Tillman, 1986).

This model has been depicted in the form of a spiral or helix (see Figure 3, p. 56). The phrase ‘towards social sharing’ appears at the bottom right of the spiral. By this Swanwick wanted to stress that there is a transformation in each one of the four layers from assimilatory, personal response to music (the left side) to accommodatory ‘social sharing’ (the right side) (Swanwick, 1994). As Koopman (1995) observed later, the left side is a ‘subjective pole’, whereas the right side ‘represents a dialogical world’. Social contexts are implicit in the right hand dimension. The concept of manipulative control is what makes it possible for people to make music together. The piano elements of manipulative control may include scales, use of pedal, and physical handling of the instrument. In the vernacular, simple melodic phrases appear which can be shared with other people. In the idiomatic the phrases and structure appear that are integrated to a recognisable musical style. Finally, in the systematic, new forms are generated and sometimes the existing musical conventions are challenged. Subsequently follows a presentation, adapted from Swanwick and Tillman (1986), of what the four layers of Swanwick include. The criteria referred to here apply specifically to composition.
Materials

Level 1 — Sensory: There is evidence of pleasure in sound itself, particularly timbre and extremes of loud and soft. There may be exploration and experimentation with instruments. Organisation is spontaneous, possibly erratic, pulse is unsteady and variations of tone colour appear to be have no structural or expressive significance.

Level 2 — Manipulative: The handling of instruments shows some control and repetitions are possible. Regular pulse may appear along with technical devices suggested by the physical structure and layout of available instruments; such as glissandi, scalar and intervallic patterns, trills and tremolo.

Expression

Level 3 — Personal expressiveness: Expressiveness is apparent in changes of speed and loudness levels. There are signs of elementary phrases — musical gestures — which are not always able to be exactly repeated. There is drama, mood or atmosphere, perhaps with reference to an external ‘programmatic’ idea. There will be little structural control and the impression is of spontaneity without development of ideas.

Level 4 — The vernacular: Patterns appear — melodic and rhythmic figures that are able to be repeated. Pieces may be quite short and will work within established general musical conventions. Melodic phrases may fall into standard 2, 4 or 8-bar units. Metrical organisation is common along with such devices as syncopation, melodic and rhythmic ostinati and sequences. Compositions will be fairly predictable and show influences of other musical experiences; singing, playing and listening.

Form

Level 5 — The speculative: Compositions go beyond the deliberate repetition of patterns. Deviations and surprises occur, though perhaps not fully integrated into the piece. There is expressive characterisation, which is subject to experimentation, exploring structural possibilities, seeking to contrast or vary established musical ideas. After establishing certain patterns a frequent device is to introduce a novel ending.

Level 6 — The idiomatic: Structural surprises are integrated into a recognisable style. Contrast and variation take place on the basis of emulated models and clear idiomatic practices, frequently, though not always drawn from popular musical traditions. Harmonic and instrumental authenticity is important. Answering phrases, call an response, variation by
elaboration and contrasting sections are common. Technical, expressive and structural control is demonstrated in longer compositions.

Value

Level 7 – The symbolic: Technical mastery serves musical communication. Attention is focused on formal relationships and expressive character, which are fused together in an impressive, coherent and original musical statement. Particular groups of timbres, turns of phrase and harmonic progressions may be developed and given sustained concern. There is a strong sense of personal commitment.

Level 8 – The systematic: Beyond the qualities of the previous level, works may be based on sets of newly generated musical materials, such as scales and note rows, novel systems of harmonic generation, electronically created sounds or computer technology. The possibilities of musical discourse are systematically expanded.

Further evaluation of children’s compositions showed that on each of the four layers there was a transformation from assimilatory personal response to music to accommodatory (‘social sharing’) response. This dialectical relationship was more fully developed by Swanwick in Musical Knowledge (1994), where he grouped several concepts together under the generic headings of ‘intuition’ and ‘analysis’. These pick up the conceptual basis of the left and right side of the spiral model. They are associated respectively and broadly with assimilation and accommodation, with musical encounter and musical instruction, the aesthetic and the artistic, personal interpretation, and cultural transmission (op. cit.: 176).
Figure 3 Swanwick and Tillman’s (1986) spiral model of musical development
3.3.2. Swanwick's Theory in Relation to Other Musical Modalities and Cultural Settings

Apart from children's compositions, Swanwick's developmental theory has been tested in the other musical modalities of performance, and perception. Specifically, similar criteria to those for composition have been employed in the assessment of musical performance, and high levels of agreement have been reported between judges on the hierarchical order of these performance statements (Swanwick, 1994). Hentschke (1993), in her doctoral thesis, found that the development of 'audience-listening' followed the same sequence as composing. The researcher (op. cit.) concluded that the layers of musical understanding might indeed provide a reasonable robust generic epistemology for music. Hentschke (1993) examined children's perceptions of music as 'audience-listeners'. Young children tended to comment on sound materials and expressive character, whereas reference to musical form appeared mostly among children around the age of ten (op. cit.).

In another doctoral thesis, Silva (1998) worked with twenty Brazilian children between the ages of eleven and thirteen. Each child made tape recordings of three memorised piano performances, recorded three of their own compositions, and made written notes on three recorded pieces of music. The 'products' in the three modalities of performing, composing, and 'audience-listening' were assessed by experienced teachers of music using criterion statements based on the eight modes of Swanwick's (1983) theory of musical development. Silva (1998) found significant agreement between judges in sorting the randomised sets of statements into a hierarchy matching the order predicted by Swanwick's theory. From this study, it was concluded that the theoretical basis of the spiral offers a valid general theory of musical understanding (Silva, 1998; and Swanwick, 1999).
In order to investigate the theory in other cultural settings, Swanwick (1991a) repeated Tillman’s (1987) original study in Western Cyprus. For the needs of this study, over 600 recordings of children’s compositions were collected. From these recordings, 28 were selected at random with a single rule for sorting, that there should be seven items from each of four age groups: 4-5, 7-8, 10-11, and 14-15. Seven primary and secondary music teachers were then asked independently to assign each of the compositions to one of the criterion statements on a ‘best fit’ basis. The relationship between the actual ages of the children and the placing of compositions by the spiral criteria was statistically significant. There was a clear ascending relationship between age and order of criteria and high levels of agreement between judges (Swanwick, 1994).

3.4. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, it has been argued that some researchers have identified patterns of musical development, some of them in specific areas of musical perception and production. In the previous sections, the current author presented a number of theories on musical development and concluded that the theory of Keith Swanwick is the most appropriate and comprehensive framework for approaching Greek piano teachers’ ideas of ‘musicality’. The choice of Swanwick’s theoretical framework was made because it has broad musical validity; is relevant across different activities; identifies qualitative, sequential, and hierarchical changes; has widespread cultural application; and is supported by systematically collected data. Other researchers have also used Swanwick’s theory in order to discuss human development in the arts. Hargreaves and Galton (1992), for example, presented a table of several domains in art, drawing substantially on Swanwick’s theory (see Table 3, p. 60). The authors (op. cit.) attempted to correlate development in composing, singing, musical representation (notation), and melodic perception under five generic headings. Another researcher (Koopman, 1995) made exclusive use of the theory of Swanwick in order to discuss musical development and music education.

Certain stages in Swanwick’s theory can be compared with stages found in some of the other theories reviewed in the previous sections. For example, Swanwick’s ‘sensory’ mode corresponds to Gordon’s (1997) period of ‘acculturation’, in which children hear the sounds of music in the environment (ages two to four). Then, according to Gordon
The children move and babble in response but without relation to the music. In addition, Swanwick's 'manipulative' mode is characterised by Gordon as the period of 'imitation', in which children focus on the musical environment and are able to copy with some precision tonal and rhythmic patterns. Connections can also be found between Swanwick's 'speculative' and 'idiomatic' modes of musical form, where structural relationships are construed between expressive units, and Serafine's categories of 'succession' and 'simultaneity'. There are also connections between the theory of Swanwick and that of Gardner. Koopman (1995) compared Gardner's earlier and later models alongside that of Swanwick and Tillman (see Table 2).

**Table 2 A comparison of Gardner's views and Swanwick and Tillman's model (from Koopman, 1995: 61)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Free exploration</td>
<td>1. Pre-conventional</td>
<td>1.a. Sensory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Implicit</td>
<td>2. Conventional</td>
<td>2.a. Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.b. Vernacular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.b. Idiomatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.a. Symbolic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.b. Systematic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, an interesting issue to discuss here is the sequence of musical development in Swanwick's developmental spiral. For Swanwick, the process of musical development is not a once-in-a-lifetime affair. The broken ends of their helix in Figure 3 (p. 56) indicate that the process through the four developmental layers is recursive and not linear. This in practice means that when, for example, pianists encounter a new piece of music, they are likely to find themselves back again at the beginning of the process. Finally, as regards the passage from one layer to another, Swanwick (1988) writes that 'we do not merely pass through one of these modes but carry them forward with us to the next' (op. cit.: 63-64).
Table 3 Five phases of artistic development from Hagreaves and Galton (1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Cognitive Aesthetic Development</th>
<th>Drawing</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Singing</th>
<th>Musical representation</th>
<th>Melodic perception</th>
<th>Musical composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meta-cognitive (15-years)</td>
<td>Independence from cultural styles and context</td>
<td>Freedom from artistic styles</td>
<td>Self-reflection in relation to social roles</td>
<td>Interval scales</td>
<td>Formal – metric</td>
<td>Analytic recognition of intervals, key stability</td>
<td>Active and reflective strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule systems (8-15 years)</td>
<td>Development of artistic conventions and style sensitivity</td>
<td>‘Visual realism’ viewer-centred</td>
<td>Story grammar analysis of structural complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Conservation’ of melodic properties</td>
<td>Idiomatic conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schematic (5-8 years)</td>
<td>Emphasis on realism and subject matter</td>
<td>Baselines, skylines</td>
<td>Standard narrative forms</td>
<td>‘First draft’ songs</td>
<td>Figural – metric; more than one dimension</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vernacular conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figural (2-5 years)</td>
<td>Concrete mechanism</td>
<td>Pre-schematic ‘intellectual’ realism</td>
<td>‘Frame’ or outline stories</td>
<td>‘Outline’ songs; coalescence between spontaneous and cultural songs</td>
<td>Figural: single dimension</td>
<td>Global features: pitch contour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-symbolic (0-2 years)</td>
<td>Scribbling</td>
<td>Scribbling symbolic play</td>
<td>Babbling, rhythmic dancing</td>
<td>Scribbling, ‘action equivalents’</td>
<td>Recognition of melodic contours</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sensory, manipulative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. THE RESEARCH PROCESS

So far the Greek context, the conservatories of Athens, and piano education in Greece have been presented in the first chapter of the study. A review of the literature concerning psychological perspectives of musical piano performance followed in the second chapter. In the third chapter a definition of musicality given by the current author and a number of theories of musical development have been presented. In the same chapter it is explained why Swanwick’s theory is the most appropriate as a framework for analysing and understanding the Greek piano teacher-performers’ views. In this chapter, the methodology of the research will be presented. In the sections that follow the entire procedure of the study will appear, while explanations will be given of whatever might relate to the whole process of the methodology.

4.1.1. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The current chapter is about research methodology. ‘Methodology’ is a Greek word and means the study (logos) of methods. ‘Method’ is also a Greek word. It refers to the way (odos) that a person follows in order to reach a destination. As has already been stated, the metaphorical ‘destination’, or aim, of the current study is an exposition of the ideas of a number of prominent Greek pianists about musicality and piano teaching. These pianists are concurrently working as piano teachers in recognised conservatories and music schools. The research method that was followed in the study involved letting the participants give their own accounts of what was going on in their classes. The information gathered was based on the pianists’ own words, from which the current researcher probed the meaning of musicality and identified the variables which affect piano teaching and learning. The research process was demanding in terms of handling and interpreting the material collected from the teachers. In the first stage, 200 hours of
piano teaching and learning were recorded and analysed, involving both the teachers and their students. The current researcher is also a pianist and piano teacher, and so she is not altogether an ‘outsider’ in this field. In the second stage, a number of teaching episodes from the first stage were extracted from the master videotapes and copied onto new videotapes. In the third stage, the researcher interviewed the pianists basing her semi-structured interviews on the selected teaching episodes. The analysis of the interviews (the fourth stage of the study) aimed mainly at exploring the meaning of ‘musicality’ and the variables which affect the teaching and learning transaction. Since the pianists approached were also piano teachers in respected Greek conservatories, another aim of the study was the investigation of what it means to be a piano teacher in Greece.

The methodology described in the previous paragraph is a rather ‘phenomenological’ one. According to Honderich (1995) in the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, phenomenology is a theory of human knowledge definable as the study of the essence of consciousness. From a philosophical point of view, phenomenology seeks to provide an account of human consciousness free from any presuppositions. In order to do so, it uses a kind of inner reflection upon human experience. The nature of this experience is revealed by the subjective account of it, and not by reference to objects existing independently of it. Philosophers call this kind of experience ‘eidetic intuition’. By means of eidetic intuition, people gain knowledge of the essential features of the world. Phenomenologists call such universals ‘essences’. If we leave the realms of philosophy and enter the sphere of social research, we will find that the main points about phenomenology have been set out by Schutz (1964) in his research on social settings. In his essay, *The Stranger*, Schutz portrayed a visitor to a strange society, who had to interpret the norms of this society in order to survive. The everyday understandings of this strange society were created and maintained in existence only through the interpretations of those who lived within it. As the stranger of the story was trying to understand the society, his own interpretations became an element in the construction of the common understanding.

What can be deduced from the *Stranger* is that in every social setting, everyone has different life experiences and therefore the interpretation of a specific event cannot be the same for different individuals. People give subjective interpretations and construct subjective meanings in order to come to terms with what they perceive. These subjective meanings are a result of each person’s unique life experiences. For example,
imagine the case of a piano teacher who moves the right hand during the lesson in a wave-like movement whenever the young student plays a fast phrase on the keyboard. The teacher’s gesture is a deliberate act. It might be an instinctive reflection of anxiety, or it may be a signal to the young pianist to play the notes more clearly. We cannot be sure about what the teacher’s gesture really means unless we ask the teacher him/herself. If we wanted to go further, we could try to explain the gesture by reconstructing the life history of the teacher – a very difficult task indeed. In conclusion, in order to understand particular events, we must see them from the point of view of participants, or in other words, interpret their subjective meanings.

Seeing things ‘from the participants’ point of view’, however, can be understood in various ways. First of all, the gesture of the teacher is an intended act, and it can only be understood with reference to the teacher’s intentions. Nevertheless, the teacher’s gesture has a wider meaning than the one s/he may give it. For example, the teacher may have studied in a conservatory where playing clearly was much appreciated. It may well be that the teacher has him/herself been a student of another great pianist, who also used to make the same gesture with the hands. Thus the subjective meaning of the waving gesture would refer to a range of feelings and moods that are connected with particular incidents in the past. However, subjective meaning may also be greater than what the person can comprehend, for reasons other than psychological. Igor Stravinsky, for example, may never have completely understood the full meaning of his phrase ‘rhythm and motion are the foundations of musical art’ (in Shapiro, 1978: 39). It could be argued that he lived in a context of social and historical forces that were beyond his comprehension. What also must be stressed is that the intentions of the teacher who made the waving gesture will make sense in a community of people who interpret the gesture. ‘Subjective meaning’ is shared. Finally, although the meaning of a particular gesture is associated with particular experiences and feelings which are a teacher’s own and nobody else’s, it employs words and grammatical structures which, according to Pring (2000), are ‘public’, i.e. not subjective. Through words people organise their thoughts and communicate their experiences to other people.

Having discussed the dimensions of ‘subjective meaning’, it is now time to focus on its nature. Is subjective meaning socially constructed, as some authors argue, or is it inherited from the environment in which we live? About this Guba and Lincoln (1982) claim that ‘there are multiple intangible realities which can be studied only holistically’, and that ‘the aim of the inquiry is to develop “an ideographic body of language”’ (p.
238). However, Pring (2000) argues that much depends upon what one actually means by ‘subjective meaning’. If by ‘subjective meaning’ one means people’s personal feelings, memories, connotations, or life experiences, then subjective meaning is a personal construct. On the other hand, if by subjective meaning we mean the way in which a particular person understands things, then we also need an objective world of social rules, as well as a common language. Of course, one could argue that these rules are themselves social constructs. However, as Pring (2000) argues,

Such ‘social constructions’, though maintained by social agreement, are an inherited feature of the world we are born into. They are embedded in the language which we acquire and through which we come to describe the social world and the relationships with each other (Pring, 2000: 101).

And also that:

It is not that there are multiple realities. Rather are there different ways in which reality is conceived, and those differences may well reflect different practical interests and different traditions (Pring, 2000: 51).

Strongly associated with the issue of the existence of one or many realities (the so-called ontological problem) is the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research. For many authors the differences between these two research traditions are not trivial but substantial. It is considered, for example, that those who conduct quantitative research make a distinction between ontology and epistemology. In other words, quantitative researchers make a distinction between what is researched and the ideas about the researching. This has been called the ‘scientific’ or ‘positivistic’ paradigm. On the other hand, qualitative researchers regard their ontological and epistemological assumptions as superior to scientific ones. Qualitative researchers have recognised the fact that every inquiry is value-laden. Thus for qualitative researchers there is no single reality. Instead the reality is constructed by the people involved and is the result of continually renewed agreement. The researcher’s ideas, like the ideas of Schutz’s ‘stranger’, are also elements in the social construction of reality.

One philosopher who does not accept the ‘false dualism’ between qualitative and quantitative research is Richard Pring. Pring (2000) argues that the distinctions within the qualitative and quantitative paradigms are often as significant as the distinctions between them. He reclaims reality for the educational researchers by writing that:

How we conceive the world could be different and, indeed, is different from social group to social group. Such ‘social constructions’ are constantly reconstructed as new experiences force us to reshape how we
understand things. Hence, the need for interpretive and hermeneutic traditions in which we seek to understand the world from the perspective of the participants, or to understand a set of ideas from within the evolving tradition of which they are part. However, such differences in how we understand reality are possible because there are stable and enduring features of reality, independent of us, which make such distinctions possible... The qualitative investigation can clear the ground for the quantitative — and the quantitative be suggestive of differences to be explored, in a more interpretive mode (Pring, 2000, p. 55).

In conclusion, the scope of the current study is not restricted to investigating piano teachers’ personal feelings and life histories but includes investigation of how they understand musical matters. Therefore, teachers’ ideas cannot be beyond the reach of this kind of analysis, which is illumined by a certain theory. Swanwick’s theory of musical development with its four layers and spiral-like character will be the basis on which the teachers’ words will be analysed. Teachers may of course have organised their views in a mosaic of micro-theories, which should in no way be regarded as useless. However, the difference between the possible micro-theories and Swanwick’s theory is in the level of generalisation. By ‘generalisation’ I mean not only the relevance of a theory to other social and cultural settings, but also the richness of this theory as embracing different musical phenomena and disciplines.

4.1.2. THE OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH

This study is a qualitative one and aims at understanding piano teachers’ perceptions of ‘musicality’ and its contexts. The investigation took place in Athenian conservatories since in Greece the piano is taught in the private sector and not in state schools. For the study good pianists who are also experienced piano teachers were selected. After being recorded on video in consecutive lessons, they were interviewed concerning topics relating to piano teaching and learning and to what they had been teaching in excerpts from the videos. These topics were:

i. Piano teaching and learning in the conservatories of Athens (what is taught and how it is presented),

ii. The variables that, according to the teachers, can influence the teaching and learning transaction (e.g., the conservatories and the environment),

iii. How some of the above variables may affect the teaching and learning transaction.
The first issue was investigated by a combination of observation, videotaping and interview. The second and third issues were investigated through interviews and small-scale content analysis of laws, regulations and other documents. The research framework of the study could be presented as in Figure 4.

More specifically the research framework comprises two distinct areas: (a) a rectangular outer area, which I call the 'context' and which includes some of the variables that may influence the teaching and learning transaction and (b) a circular inner area, which I call the 'teaching and learning transaction' area. The outer area will be investigated by a combination of observation, videotaping and interview. The study will also investigate what effect the issues of the outer area (the 'context') have on the teaching-learning transaction. Swanwick's theory about four layers of musical knowledge development will be tested as a framework for understanding and analysing teachers' perceptions.

Figure 4 The research framework of the study
The design of this research is presented in Table 4. The study is mainly divided into three distinct phases of unequal duration. A long first phase for the data collection in the field, followed by a shorter second phase for the interviews. The final phase is the evaluation of the findings and the final piece of writing about the most promising points. In the sections that follow the whole procedure of the study is described analytically.

### Table 4 The research design of the current study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose:</th>
<th>to investigate teachers’ ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research methods:</td>
<td>observations and interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample type:</td>
<td>purposive sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of the sample:</td>
<td>seven pianists and a number of observations in piano classes (five to seven learners for each teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of analysis:</td>
<td>logical analysis and theory building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.1.3. Selecting the participants and the conditions of the study**

Since the aim of this research is to investigate the teachers’ perceptions of ‘musicality’ and its contexts, it is apparent that the keys to the study are mainly the teachers themselves. However, in my preparation I had to decide about particular characteristics of students, content of lessons and pieces, places for observation and interviews, as well as equipment necessary for the research.

As far as the focus of the study, the teachers themselves, is concerned, I tried to choose those most influential in actually defining musicality. So that I might get the widest range of information possible, I adopted a ‘purposive’ approach in the choice of participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These teachers were selected on the basis mainly of the significance of their views concerning general awareness of the nature of musicality. So it is no coincidence that the particular teachers in the research are
considered pioneers in the entire musical community, not only in Athens but in Greece as a whole. This is only at an informal level, of course, since there are no set rules for the teaching of music in Greece. At this point, it must also be stressed that my criterion for selection was mainly the prestige of the instructors in the world of piano teaching and learning. It did not depend on external quantitative criteria, such as whether they had worked in more than one of the conservatories at the same time, although in fact these teachers do also have these characteristics.

Amongst the criteria for choosing the teachers was that they should have extensive knowledge of music and also of piano playing, that they should be experienced as teachers, and moreover as active ones, as required by Spradley (1979) in his book *The Ethnographic Interview*. Also, a further prerequisite was that they themselves should be performers, so as to have had experience of playing in public. Moreover they were piano teachers (‘kathigites’) who had the ability to teach not only at lower but also at advanced levels (see the ranking of the teachers in Chapter 1). Also they were members of examination committees in more than one of the Athenian conservatories, each of a different kind. My choice was due to the variation that prevails in Athenian conservatories in matters referred to in Chapter 1. I wished to approach teachers who had many-faceted experience of this situation. Apart from all the above-mentioned qualifications, I chose from among the most experienced ones, and ended up with seven participants, who are considered among the best teachers and performers in Greece. Moreover, three of them are usually committee members of an international piano competition, which takes place in Athens every two years in memory of Maria Callas. Gender and age were not among the criteria for selection. The teachers’ ages were between forty and sixty and all of them happened to be women.

I wanted better to understand the teaching and the views of the teachers. I therefore considered it advisable to observe each of them during teaching time, with between five and seven of their students of different ages, levels of attainment and progress, over a period of five weeks in at least three consecutive lessons for each student. With students of different levels of attainment and progress I would be able to observe teaching at different stages of development in musicality, from the demonstration of notes in the first lesson to references to topics of technique and musicality at advanced levels. Also by observing students at different levels, but within a period of a few weeks, I had the opportunity to observe lessons which had different preparatory aims. These could be either for examinations for classes, degrees and diplomas, or for public performances, or
for simply covering the curriculum. In addition, I had the chance to see the same student being prepared at one of the first lessons for a new piece, and the same student making progress. Moreover, the pieces which the students would play would be from a varied repertoire of styles, pre-classical, classical, romantic or modern, consisting of etudes, scales, simple notes written in a notebook as taught in the first lessons, and even concertos. Also they would vary in level of development, from pieces recently learnt for the first time to pieces ready for concert performance, or even for diploma examinations. The reason why I wanted there to be such a spectrum of works, broad in form and also in levels of attainment, was so that I might have a more complete picture of the approaches of the teachers and of the stages of development in the pieces.

Regarding the places where the observation was to be carried out, I did not want the usual working conditions to be changed in any way, so I wanted them to be in the conservatory. What type of piano would be used in the lesson was of no importance. I knew that in the conservatories we would have pianos of many different kinds, from uprights to Steinway grands. The teachers would sometimes use just one piano, or sometimes two, according to which piece of music was to be played, and what they wanted to achieve at any given moment. I wanted the observation to take place on conservatory premises. However, I preferred to hold the interviews in the teachers’ houses, where they themselves would feel more relaxed, and would not get distracted, as in the classroom, by people interrupting.

Finally, the equipment I needed to use at the times of observation would consist of a videocamera and a tripod, which I would set up in a suitable position in the classroom. I would sit quietly in a chair near the camera, taking down additional notes and writing down the thoughts and ideas which occurred to me at that moment. For the interviews I would use a video-player and a portable television in order to play back the excerpts from the video recordings at the time of the observation. I would also use a tape-recorder in order to record the interviews.

4.1.4. CONTACTING THE TEACHERS

First I decided who would take part in my study, which individuals would be most suitable for providing me with the information I needed. Then I mapped out all the conditions for the research (number and characteristics of students, number and duration of lessons, types of musical pieces, locations of observations and interviews, and
equipment). Finally, I approached those particular teachers to obtain their agreement to co-operate.

I needed willing participants who not only loved teaching, but also were ready to speak about it. It was among my duties to make my study sound interesting and to build up a good rapport between the teachers and myself. The need for such good relations is referred to by many researchers, such as Taylor and Bogdan (1984), and Erickson (1986), and would be even greater since the whole of our co-operation would last for more than three months. For this period I would be spending many hours in their classrooms for consecutive lessons, and ultimately I would be giving them in-depth interviews. I wanted to develop the best possible relationships, as well as to discuss matters relating to my study. Therefore I had to speak to them about myself, my studies and my experience as a teacher, so that we might share experiences and interests, and I might be more fully prepared to answer any of their queries.

Since the observation would take place on conservatory premises, I had to aim at getting the assent of the Director. Nevertheless, as became obvious in the course of the research, the key role would finally be played by the teachers themselves, who would determine the whole affair. Since the teachers were the ones who would be receiving me in their classes, it would be largely their decision, and so the directors of the conservatories made no objection. Whether the students would agree to participate and be recorded on video in their lessons, was of concern to the teachers at our first meeting. It depended on the way in which the teachers themselves presented the whole affair to their students, whether they agreed to take part in the research or not. The positive attitude of the students in their turn, as was natural, would also minimise the chance of parental opposition.

I realised how significant it was for the teachers to agree to participate in my work. Since, as Eisner (1991) says, the researcher is the one who has to convince the participants of the importance of the study, I felt that ultimately the whole business was entirely in my hands, but that I could persuade them. I knew all about the aspects of our co-operation and consequently was well aware of what exactly I required from the participants. In addition, I myself was a pianist and a piano teacher. All these factors influenced the study positively in this phase of contact with the teachers. I was in a position to answer any queries and to reassure them. From what had gone before I knew and understood in depth what might possibly annoy them in the course of our co-
operation. In my approach to the teachers the fact that I am a graduate and have worked in the past as a social worker and psychologist helped me a great deal. Thus I knew what they expected to hear from me concerning each of their concerns, such as practical problems with the videocamera, and my own presence in the class throughout their lessons. Moreover, telling them that I was a pianist would make it easier to convince the teachers, and also the students, that even with the camera I would know how to keep silent and ‘invisible’. Even if I appeared just as an observer, they would know that I had the same understanding and respect for them as one of their fellow-students. For all these reasons, I felt ready to approach the teachers, and, as appeared later in the course of the observations, I did not in fact disrupt the lesson procedure in any way at all.

I arranged a meeting with each of the teachers to explain everything I would be doing, how much of their time I would be taking up, and what I wanted them to do in the course of my research. As Erickson affirms (1986), it is very important for the participants to know exactly what their role will be in a research project. The truth is that while I was frank about what I would be doing, I was not equally clear about what I was trying to reveal. As Taylor and Bogdan stress (1984), the researcher should be ‘truthful’, but ‘vague and imprecise’ at the same time. I should not influence in any way the course of the research by saying clearly what I expected to hear from them. I would not be able to do this anyway. Although I had a particular plan for all the methods I would follow, and would be able to be thoroughly informative about this, matters might emerge in the course of the research I had not expected.

The fact that I would be observing the teaching with a videocamera did not seem to trouble the teachers themselves at all. They had reservations about their students, but agreed to co-operate experimentally. They themselves considered it an opportunity to express their own views and to see them in print, and thought it would also help them in the piano teaching, to which they were so dedicated. Some of the students might refuse to participate, but we agreed to find ways of persuading them in the course of the study. Of course, as I explained to the teachers, I was absolutely sure that neither they themselves nor the students would be disturbed by my presence. The camera would be motionless, while I would sit silently in my chair (an ‘observer’). I would not interfere with their lessons, either by extending them for the sake of the research, or by spoiling their quality or content, since everything would happen as if I were not present. That is, I did not want the children to look like professional performers playing favourite and well-prepared parts of their repertoire, or for the teachers themselves to give faultless
presentations, as in a seminar. I would be going to several lessons and so there would be no reason for model teaching. Such naturalness was exactly what I wanted, and the aim was to ask them questions from selected extracts on the video. I explained to them that what I chiefly required of them was extra time spent in their homes looking at the video extracts. Based on these, I would make recorded interviews with them. All the teachers gladly agreed to co-operate almost immediately in the research, and this was one step further towards getting the best possible results in my study. The seven teachers who participated in my research are represented by the names of the seven musical notes (A, B, C, D, E, F, and G) for reasons of confidentiality. A brief description of them follows.

Teacher ‘A’ is experienced, with a lengthy teaching background in conservatories with different organisational structures (private, municipal and subsidised institutions), and is also a piano performer and a committee member for piano examinations.

Teacher ‘B’ is an experienced piano teacher since she has been working for over thirty years. She is also a member of more than one conservatory examination committee at a private institution and a subsidised one, and a committee member for the ‘Maria Callas Grand Prix’ International Piano Competition.

Teacher ‘C’ is an experienced piano teacher and a member of the examination committee in a number of Athenian private conservatories, as well as in the COA, which is subsidised by the Greek public.

Teacher ‘D’ is an experienced piano instructor and a member of the examination committee for several private conservatories besides the COA, which is a subsidised institution. She is also one of the most well known Greek pianists and a member of the committee for the ‘Maria Callas’ International Piano Competition, which is held every two years in Athens.

Teacher ‘E’ is an experienced piano teacher who has taught in private conservatories and in the COA, which has been subsidised by the State, for decades.

Teacher ‘F’ is an experienced piano teacher and has been for a long time a member of examination committees in private conservatories, as well as in other government subsidised music institutions.

Teacher ‘G’, besides being an experienced piano teacher, is a respected member of a number of conservatories. She is one of the best piano-soloists in Greece and a member of the committee for the ‘Maria Callas’ International Piano Competition.
4.1.5. Observations

After I had asked seven piano teachers’ for permission to observe their lessons, in order to understand their teaching in depth, they all without exception agreed to participate in the study. These teachers had all the necessary qualifications, were working as piano teachers, and were members of piano examination committees in at least two recognised conservatories in Athens at the same time. They were observed during the course of three to five consecutive lessons, each teacher with five to seven students of different ages, levels of attainment and progress. The music pieces were at different stages of preparation, and covered a wide-ranging repertoire.

The observations took place in piano teaching rooms in the conservatories over a period of five weeks. The duration of the whole observation procedure was such as to enable me to answer the research questions and fulfil the purpose of the study, as considered necessary for fieldwork by Patton (1990: 214). In this study the duration of the lessons which were observed and videotaped totalled 200 hours. A camera was used for the video recording and was placed on a tripod in a suitable part of the classroom. I myself was present during the teaching as an ‘observer’ in accordance with the four different roles that Gold (1969) considers a researcher can take (see Figure 5). I videotaped the lesson without participating, just as if I was invisible. If asked by the students about my presence in the class during their lessons, I would justify it by explaining that I too was a pianist, and was an old friend of the teacher. Later I would discuss with the teachers the most interesting points of the tuition. The piano teachers would be asked to justify the directions and the suggestions made during the sessions.
As Erickson (1986) relates, to observe what you consider ‘familiar’ is particularly difficult, since it is less likely for something to appear remarkable in an ordinary situation. Deciding what a person’s behaviour connotes is even more difficult. Apart from the fact that people differ in personality or attitudes, relationships developing between human beings influence the natural evolution of affairs. Human beings themselves may react differently in different environments. For this reason I had to be particularly careful, even in the smallest details, because there might be further explanations which I had not expected, or even a whole theory held by the teachers. So in my preliminary thinking I decided to put into broad categories the matters which I was trying to reveal and understand. Thus I ended up with two categories referring first to the musical issues addressed by the teachers, and secondly the pedagogical strategies employed in the course of the lessons I observed. Afterwards from the interviews I would explore the teachers’ ideas underlying the teaching I had observed, if these had not been made clear in the observations.

A number of remarks could easily be made from the observations. For example, the Athenian conservatories differed in certain external characteristics, such as the construction of the conservatory buildings, the general style of the classrooms, the types of piano available, and the prevailing atmosphere. In some conservatories the atmosphere was rather austere and made the lessons rather ceremonious. By contrast, in others greater leniency prevailed. There it seemed natural for the teachers to take small breaks at their own discretion, to smoke during the lessons, or to have lunch with the students in the class. Although at first sight there appeared to be a friendlier relationship between teachers and students in such conservatories, I noticed that in the other
conservatories, where everything was conducted in a very conventional way, the
teacher-learner relationship was equally good.

Other differences I perceived were in the progress of students of the same class, as well
as in approaches to the same pieces by teachers, and even approaches by the same
teacher when dealing with a piece with different students. Some teachers would sit next
to the students and manipulate their hands or tap the rhythm out on their shoulders.
Others would sit so far from their students when they performed that sometimes they
did not appear at all on the video. I noticed also that the duration of the lessons differed
between students who attended the same class, depending on the teacher or the piece
being demonstrated. Moreover, the teachers put different emphasis on repertoire with
regard to the period of the works, the form, (for example, prelude, concerto, etude etc.),
or the proposed aim (improvement of technique or musicality). Furthermore, there were
different approaches to the improvement of technique (for example, practising away
from the piano or a special method suggested by the teacher). In the observations the
attitude of the teacher also was apparent and the emphasis given to musicality and
technique. Nevertheless, on more than one occasion the teachers used their own codes
of communication with the students, since they had already explained their
requirements. Therefore, as observer of the lessons, I definitely needed further
clarification. Also the differentiation between students was apparent, and the efforts of
the teachers to adjust the teaching, not only to their own aims, but also to the abilities
and personalities of their students. Frequently also the intense efforts of the teacher to
transfer knowledge to talented students were plain to see. This gave the observer the
impression that even talented students required that ‘extra something’ which the
teachers were aiming for. Sometimes if students had come from other conservatories,
teachers remarked, ‘you didn’t learn it there’, or ‘you didn’t practise scales at all where
you were’. So it was obvious that this differentiation between the different
conservatories, which a person could see straightaway, existed also in the minds of
teachers, a matter which brought further need for clarification. So after all the above-
mentioned, which I took seriously into consideration, I discussed everything at length
and in depth with the teachers. Then the teachers’ perceptions of musicality, piano
teaching and learning, and variables that influence their teaching emerged.

Despite the initial concerns of the teachers as to how the students would react to my
presence, and more particularly to the video camera in their lessons, it appeared that
there were no negative effects on the lessons whatsoever. One thing certain teachers
said they had noticed was that some of their students through fear of the camera had done more preparation than usual in the course of the research. As I learned from the teachers, at the end of the academic year all the children I had observed had done particularly well in their examinations. Certain teachers considered that the observation with the video camera had contributed to this success. Indeed ‘B’ invited me to repeat it because she had observed positive results in her students in the course of the research. ‘E’ invited me back so that my eventual departure might seem more natural for the students who ‘had got used to me’. The same happened with the students of ‘A’. I observed them in their lessons once more than was necessary for the same reason. The students appeared to study more, because they themselves felt responsible, since they were taking part in a study they considered important. This I had intended and this is what Eisner (1991) advises researchers to do. On the other hand, they felt greater respect for and trust in the advice of their teachers, since someone had come to immortalise their wisdom and their lessons. Therefore, the teachers thanked me at the end for the observations I had made in their lessons. They had proved to have had an educational function for their students, since at the end they had all done better than they had expected in their concerts and their examinations. The main aim of my study was certainly not to help certain students play the piano better, but to make a contribution to the study of the piano for all its students. However, I was very glad that it had also had this immediate positive result for those particular students.

4.1.6. PREPARING THE INTERVIEWS

After the observations in the class which lasted two hundred hours in all, I had to select seven extracts from each teacher’s lessons, with between five and seven students for each. On these would be based the interview questions, which would extend also to other more general topics concerning piano teaching and learning at Athenian conservatories, as well as their own teaching in general.

The fact that I myself was in the class as an ‘observer’ was a help in the choice of suitable extracts for my particular purpose. I had the same personal experience of their lessons and could more easily understand which excerpts would be the most representative of their teaching. Also the fact that I was an observer and did not participate gave me the time to observe even the smallest details. At the same time I could keep notes about which extracts contained matters of special interest and would help me complete the research. Moreover, some of the things expressed by the teachers
in the course of their lessons at the time of my observation gave me the opportunity to ask about other matters. I knew from previous experience that such things happened, and wanted to be further informed about them. These might lead me in other directions concerning topics I had not thought of, and to which, of course, I was predisposed and amenable.

Some of the characteristics I wanted in the video excerpts upon which I would base the questions were as follows.

1. Representation of a range of teaching activities,
2. Content of technical and musical issues,
3. Differences in age, level, and progress of students in the lessons,
4. Variety of periods, levels of difficulty and types in music pieces, even in scales or etudes,
5. A measure of unity in the excerpts,
6. Duration of six to eight minutes, to limit the time of the interviews.

The seven extracts I chose fulfilled the above prerequisites, with between five and seven students for each teacher. I named them A1, A2..., B1... etc., where the letter indicated the teacher, and the number the student. I wanted the extracts to last only a few minutes, so I had already noted down what had happened a little before and a little after the extract in the same lesson. Thus I could remind the teacher about what had happened in that particular lesson, and ask about the rest of the lesson, as I judged necessary.

Afterwards, I made out a plan of the questions arising from the excerpt itself, and of certain ‘general’ questions I would ask at the end of the interviews. They concerned topics which arose from their teaching and which were about piano teaching and learning in Athenian conservatories, what happened immediately before or after the particular excerpts and what used to happen generally in the course of their lessons. Moreover, I had kept notes of precise expressions used by teachers which perhaps had some deeper meaning, or which they repeated in the course of their lessons. These ‘general’ questions had one further purpose. They helped me to feel more at ease during the first questions of each excerpt. I was able to leave the teachers free to express their opinions without setting particular limits to the topics or the extent to which they should
develop them. For this reason my questions were semi-structured. While I had a general plan of what I wanted the teachers to inform me about, and of which questions would lead to the information I needed, the questions could be re-structured or re-organised in the course of the interview. For example, some questions could either be simply altered in their order, or be completely withdrawn if the teacher referred to topics I intended to ask about a little later. It was possible to add new questions in the course of the interview, if the teacher in the flow of conversation brought up other matters I had not foreseen. Moreover, my aim was to be continually on the alert in the course of the interviews for whatever new topic might emerge, without allowing the theoretical framework to constrain rather than stimulate the development of knowledge.

4.1.7. INTERVIEWS

For Feterman (1989) the interview is the most important technique for data collection in qualitative research. Patton (1990) distinguishes four types of interview: (a) informal conversational interviews, (b) interview guide approach, (c) standardised open-ended interview, and (d) closed fixed-response interview. These four types of interview are presented in Table 5 on pp. 79-80. Other researchers (Black and Champion, 1976; Lincoln and Guba 1985; and Powney and Watts, 1987) also distinguish interviews as ‘unstructured’, ‘non-directive’, ‘informant’, and ‘open ended’.

For this study a number of interviews of type (2) in Patton’s (1990: 188-189) taxonomy have been conducted. Of course, the most appropriate method would be for the researcher to begin with a number of informal conversational interviews, and then to proceed with the more structured forms. However, because the researcher has been working as a music teacher for many years, she already has the basic knowledge of the field, i.e. the world of piano teaching and learning in Athens.
<table>
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<th>Type of interview</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Informal conversational interview</td>
<td>Questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things; there is no predetermination of question topics or wording.</td>
<td>Increases the salience and relevance of questions; interviews are built on and emerge from observations; the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances.</td>
<td>Different information collected from different people with different questions. Less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions do not arise &quot;naturally&quot;. Data organisation and analysis can be quite difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview guide approach</td>
<td>Topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and wording of questions in the course of the interview.</td>
<td>The outline increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.</td>
<td>Important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted. Interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses from different perspectives; thus reducing the comparability of responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardised open-ended interview</td>
<td>The exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order. Questions are worded in a completely open-ended format.</td>
<td>Respondents answer the same questions, thus increasing comparability of responses; data are complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interview. Reduces interviewer effects and bias when several interviewers are used. Permits evaluation users to see and review the instrumentation used in the evaluation. Facilitates organisation and analysis of the data.</td>
<td>Little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances; standardised wording of questions may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers.</td>
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The aim of the interviews was to describe, explain and analyse the thinking and teaching of the teachers, to discover the meaning behind their reactions and to find theories and views about music. The interviews aimed to extract qualitative information about the teaching and learning transaction (content and method). They also investigated variables that, according to the teachers, can influence piano teaching and learning in a Greek context (e.g., the environment of the conservatory), and how these variables may affect the teaching and learning transaction.

To achieve my aim I met the teachers in their homes so that in a quieter environment we might avoid interruptions. First of all they were asked a set of personal questions concerning the length of their teaching experience, their qualifications, and other relevant information. Of course, the wording of each question was not the same throughout the interviews. In this phase, extracts from the videotapes were presented to the teachers, and questions followed each extract. In the interview questions there was a structure for discussion. In books about educational research methodology, these kinds of question are called ‘semi-structured’. This type of question was used to leave the teachers free to express their views in their own words and in their own time. As Pring writes (2000, p. 39), the interview will normally be only semi-structured, because otherwise there would be no scope for those interviewed to expound the full significance of their actions. In an effort to draw out the deeper significance of the events semi-structured questions were used. These were separated into two kinds: (a) those based on the excerpts, and (b) ‘general’ questions, for topics not covered and for matters of piano pedagogy generally, not focused necessarily on any particular extract.
The general questions helped with asking about the remainder of the lesson not shown in the video, as well as about the observations in their sessions. The questions were based chiefly on what had been observed in the chosen extracts. However, certain themes had already been allocated to a design, so that when they said something in the course of the interview, I was ready to understand it and to incorporate it into this design. So I was able to relax and listen carefully to the views of the teachers, asking related questions straightaway without being concerned about missing anything planned from the questions. Questions asked in the interviews included: (a) those stimulating the teachers to describe each excerpt, (b) those encouraging the teachers to clarify issues they might have raised, (c) those about something that the teacher might have done or said in the excerpt, (d) those about piano playing, teaching and learning, and (e) those about other variables that, according to the teachers, may influence the teaching and learning and the ways in which they influence it.

In the actual interviews, however, other matters were added which provoked further discussion. For example, sometimes the teachers compared the excerpts amongst themselves and amongst their students, as they watched them one after the other on video, or themselves made comments of a general nature concerning musical topics. They were asked about some of the phrases they had used at other times, or they would repeat during their lessons, and that had been noted down.

As to whether the interviews should be tape-recorded, there was a choice between the views of many researchers who have reported on the advantages and disadvantages (Black and Champion, 1976; Simons, 1981; Burgess, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Erickson, 1986; and Powney and Watts, 1987). It was decided that it would be good to tape-record them to obtain more accurate and complete data. It would enable me to relax during the interview, if some new and unexpected information appeared, and give room to manoeuvre, without fear of losing the coherence of the thinking. The tape-recording did not trouble the teachers at all. Perhaps the fact that they were all public performers, and consequently knew how to keep calm and collected, contributed to this. For the tape-recording at the time of the interview a very good small cassette player was used easily and discreetly, always of course with the consent of the teachers.

Having been a social worker for several years helped me also at this point in the research, since I had experienced interviewing in much more difficult conditions where I had had no notes and, of course, no tape-recorder. Nevertheless I had had to remember
in every detail the problems of people who trusted me, as well as individual matters, like age and personal background, in order to complete the official reports after the interviews and help these individuals. At the same time, I had to have the ability to perceive whether they were in fact telling the truth, or simply asking for my help just to convince me that they needed some financial support. That is, I had to be as suspicions as a detective, but only to show the complete understanding of a social worker. After having had one such experience of several years in a difficult and demanding place (I worked at the Athens Medical Centre for Venereal Diseases), interviewing the teachers, despite some difficulties, was for me an interesting experience. In my efforts to understand the teachers’ views I had before me an inexhaustible supply of offers of information. As one of the seven teachers said, it is so valuable to learn something that teachers should even pay their students for what they learn from them.

The teachers spoke to me in Greek which I would translate into English, and I did not think it necessary in the transcriptions from the cassettes to write down interjections such as ‘hm’, ‘eh’ etc. The sound might differ but the meaning was the same. What I gave particular attention to, however, was getting the closest rendering of their words. Even when the teachers used a completely Greek expression I had to find the equivalent in English. I had to give not only the meaning of the teachers’ words, but also the personal style of each, which indeed differed from one to another. I must admit that, for me, translating the interviews was the most difficult part of my study, since it was not in my mother tongue and the length of the interviews made it still more difficult. Nevertheless I am quite pleased with the result and certain that the teachers will not only recognise their expressions in the interviews, but also their own personalities. In the appendices all the interviews appear in full so as not to interrupt the flow, and so that extracts required can be found.

4.1.8. Evaluation of the Findings

The findings of the observations and the interviews will be evaluated in terms of materials, expressive character, form, and value. That is, Swanwick’s four layers of musical knowledge development (Swanwick, 1983) will be tested as a theoretical framework for assessing teachers’ beliefs and latent theories as has been referred to in Chapter 3.

In this chapter I have described the research methodology design and procedure of the study. In the next chapter I will try to shed light on my research into teachers’
perceptions of ‘musicality’ and its contexts, piano teaching and learning in Athenian conservatories, and those variables that may influence its procedure. More particularly in the subsequent chapters the analysis of the interviews with the seven teachers will be presented. The first of the chapters will include an analysis in a different form from the remainder. It will be done initially without theoretical preconceptions to test any match between the teachers’ theories and Swanwick’s. Subsequent interviews including the first will be analysed with the help of the emergent overall theoretical framework. The first analysis of an interview will contain tables with two columns. On the right side there will be texts from the interview, and on the left an explanation of what topic is referred to in the precise words of the teacher. In the same analysis the topics discussed at the time of the interview will be presented in categories which will guide and facilitate understanding of the subsequent analyses.
5. ANALYSIS OF TEACHER ‘A’ S INTERVIEW

This chapter will analyse in detail ‘A’ s views on the process of piano teaching and learning. To illustrate the analytical process, substantial relevant extracts from her interview are presented. She focuses on the quality of a lesson and variables influencing it. Because of her substantial teaching experience most major themes in piano teaching and learning are expected to emerge from this detailed inspection of the interview data. These themes will form the categories to guide and facilitate the subsequent analysis of the remaining interviews. So that the procedure which was followed might be more distinct, the first analysis contains tables in two columns. On the right there are extracts from the teacher’s interview, and on the left an explanation of what these refer to.

5.1. THE QUALITY OF A LESSON

‘A’ thinks that what should be learnt should be seen as very important in piano teaching. She particularly emphasises matters like strict adherence to the score and its detailed reproduction, development of technique, musicality and music structure control, as well as appreciation, comprehension and presentation of the meaning of a piece to an audience. The following sections will analyse her views on what should be learnt and in what order, and how they interrelate.

5.1.1. STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE SCORE AND ITS DETAILED REPRODUCTION

Initially, ‘A’ focuses her attention on attainment of skills concerning presentation of whatever is in the score, through comprehending its symbols, piano handling, and ways of studying to improve technique. Samples of her interview concerning every single skill that she wants her learners to acquire or improve, as well as the methodological ‘secrets’ which she believes could bring about technical improvement, will be presented in the following paragraphs.
5.1.1.1. Score symbol comprehension

‘A’ definitely gives a lot of importance to notes, pauses, phrases, dynamics, sound, fingering, rhythm, tempo, staccato, legato and portato being played exactly as they appear in the score. She is therefore meticulous in her choice of editions for study for her students to achieve optimum results, as well as ensuring their suitability for a student’s age and level. Additionally she strongly recommends slow and mental forms of practice in order to present properly whatever is in the score. She also adopts certain books, such as ‘The Easiest’ by Thompson, which she claims contributes towards improving reading skills (A: 67).

At first, we study it from the score. In classical music, whenever we have a phrase, we make it diminuendo and then we instantly inhale before we start the next one.

She is of the opinion that whatever is in the score (notes, pauses, phrases, intonation, dynamics, sound quality, fingering, rhythm, tempo, staccato, legato, portato and so on) should be adhered to right from the beginning, so that it will not have to be reviewed at a later stage (A: 10, 69, 74, 76).

I was the ‘dwarf, the hand-clapper’ and showed her the tempo... I just wanted her to feel the time by listening to clapping. She knows quite well that the tempo the clapper begins with does not change on the way at all. In this first text I take the opportunity of working portato and give them the meaning of rhythm. In the second text, I make some amendments in the score asking them to play legato in two, three or four notes.
Suitable choice of fingers according to a learner’s hand structure for the proper sound production and not simply for practising finger dexterity through his/her study of etudes.

74 One has to go along with what the score says in connection with the fingers, but the piano tutor now and then must interfere, taking seriously into account the child’s hand structure... I try to avoid an awkward finger position in pieces where we are servants to music, whereas in the etudes or exercises, where the selection of the fingers is exactly made for a technical purpose, I don’t offer him a hand.

76 A learner must train his fingers to be of equivalent strength and dexterity, in order to be able to produce the perfect sound for every specific case. Nevertheless, I always make an effort for every piece that’s not an etude and requires musicality and a better sound, to make it convenient for them by showing them the most suitable fingers.

5.1.1.2. Piano handling dexterity

Looseness is apparently the most important point. She always keeps on teaching it right from the very first moment of a student’s course and, as she always mentions, she never moves an inch further ahead without first achieving success at it (A: 57). If the student gets rid of this ‘stiffness’ and acquires the right body posture and hand position, then s/he will be able to handle the piano properly and produce the best quality sound (A: 69, 74, 80).

59 Hand positioning is very important. This particular child began with another teacher who had, unfortunately, not taught her the basic rules, and when she came to me she was very stiff. All the children who begin music with me learn all these things right from the very first day. They reach a good stage no more than six months later.
Hand movement and looseness contribute towards good-quality sound production.

82 The best sound is attained by letting the weight of the hands fall on the tips of the fingers, that is, it comes out only from a loose hand never stiffened up.

5.1.1.3. Methodological secrets for a better technique!

‘A’ believes that ‘a pianist without good technique is like a person without a tongue, a musician without hands, or even an athlete without legs’ (A: 120). Without the technique to express the deep nuances of the music, which is a pianist’s main objective, nothing worthwhile is attainable. Technique should precede musicality (A: 2, 28) since it is for her ‘an important servant’ to it (A: 100). To improve it she insists on her students studying scales, exercises and etudes (A: 76, 100), and recommends a variety of study methods depending on the student’s abilities or the difficulties of the music piece to be performed. As she says, ‘there is always a solution to every technical problem’ (A: 76).

Definition and merits of technique in piano playing.

Simultaneous progress in musicality and technique despite the fact that technique should precede musicality.

102 Technique is the means of expressing the essence of music.

104 No effort in music ends with technique. A piece cannot be interpreted or approached musically if we haven’t worked well on technique.
### Etude study for finger autonomy, dexterity and strength.

76 Our aim in the... etudes is to make all the fingers autonomous and powerful, that is, to reach the same level of dexterity, although they are not by nature made the same... For every finger we have to find a solution... The fourth finger can never play as powerfully as the thumb, but that does not mean that we have to leave it inert.

She chooses the appropriate study method commensurate with the ability of the student or the difficulties of the piece (A: 61). Methods which she normally recommends include slow studying (A: 61), repetition of difficult points, practising with each hand separately (A: 61), just singing, singing by numbers, and mental practice (A: 24). The latter method includes something that she calls a ‘packet’, vividly presented in one of the following examples (A: 63).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How singing or singing by numbers helps students.</th>
<th>How singing or singing by numbers helps students.</th>
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<tr>
<td>49 One finds no technique problems with one’s voice, as it is a natural means of expression. So by singing a learner will get loose and, as a result, I make him fully realise what this crescendo I am talking about is, and get him to be able in turn to do it with his fingers. The latter naturally obeys his voice and brain since he has already made it an integral part of his experience. My singing by itself cannot fully acquaint him with it. That’s why we not only sing together, but we count it, singing to improve the child’s rhythm.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Mentally learning by heart depending on age, knowledge and study level.</th>
<th>Mentally learning by heart depending on age, knowledge and study level.</th>
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<tr>
<td>24 We work out in our minds the changes in the chords that take place in the accompaniment, so we don’t let them learn by rote. I try to show them the pieces not mechanically, but consciously, depending on their age, knowledge and level of attainment.</td>
<td></td>
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The ‘packet’ method, which is mental practice for memorising position of hands and notes together.

63 I learned this from Nelli Semitecolo... We strike the notes of an arpeggio simultaneously, as if it was a chord. That is why she calls it the ‘packet’. Thus the placing of the fingers becomes the business of the pianist, and then he knows how to move his hand precisely from one position to another. It helps the children to get to know by heart the position of the fingers. If there is an arpeggio repetition, by changing it to a chord they realise right away what remains unchanged... They learn the accompaniment as if it were chords instead of arpeggios, so with the similarities or differences that they notice they memorise it fast.

Another methodological ‘secret’ is selecting detailed editions, and avoiding the originals, especially for junior students. In this way, students can succeed in rightly interpreting their pieces using the proper fingers right from the very beginning.

Selecting suitable editions for the proper interpretation.

45 I always choose editions which are quite analytical with a lot of interpretations. As for the tiny little children, I just do not like to use original editions since the children are just like a tabula rasa.

She has been influenced by the ‘Russian School’ (A: 57, 135) and the ‘Alexander Technique’ (A: 135). She believes that there are no other options in playing the piano because of the peculiar structure of the human body, and therefore accepts both approaches.

5.1.2. Musicality

Bringing out the composer’s deepest meanings, in addition to the piece’s ‘musicality’, carries a lot of weight with her (A: 74, 76, 89) and can be taught. To succeed in this she ensures that all the things in the score are observed and properly presented. These include quality of sound, fingering, rhythm, dynamics, harmony, phrasing, pauses, melodic contours, accompaniment, and keeping the sound intensities between the hands independent.
Musicality can be taught with strict adherence to the symbols of the score.

Reproduce a composer’s musical notions accurately.

Right interpretation, musicality, good quality of sound and rhythm, are crucial.

Seeking the appropriate sound to correspond to the composer’s intentions.

Aim: good quality production of music through phrasing and harmonious accompaniment.

109 The meaning of a music piece can be taught. Everything is in the score. It is very important for children to get to know that they have to perform the score exactly as it is written. That’s where musicality lies.

6 One of the most important requirements in music is to be willing to reproduce this passionate notion that the composer had in mind. Even the title of the piece itself, which is ‘the first concern’, states exactly that. We always look for what exactly the title means. Afterwards we try to find how the composer expresses the meaning of the title. I think he does this task by means of his small phrases, his pauses, which appear to be sighs. Suffering is always present.

55 What is more important though is the right interpretation and musicality of the work, as well as the good quality of the sound… If the performer does not pause, then neither the rhythm nor the interpretation will have been spoilt. A note will simply have gone astray.

82 I mean the one that serves music at that very moment: the sound that the composer is looking for. A soft sound would be excellent in a Nocturne, but not in any other piece that fits the quality of sound of a percussion instrument.

8 The basic thing… is always… a quality production of music expressed through phrasing, harmony, and accompaniment… Musical essence, which expresses feeling, should be interpreted in several ways.
Keeping the sound intensities of each hand independent.

90 I make an effort to make her, right from the beginning, keep the sound intensities between her hands independent. That is, I never let her accompaniment cover the melody.

Although stressing that a good technical background is necessary for expressing music, from the first lesson she considers both technique and musicality to be equally important.

Technique is a means of expressing music.

An advanced background in technique is a necessity for musicality.

2 Her standard of playing is very good, as she has a very advanced background in technique. I thought it was the best time for her to aim at musicality.

She does not allow her students to leave interpretation for a later stage and just strike the right keys. They should not use the piano keyboard as if it were a typewriter.

102 Without technique not only can we not express music, but hardly ever can we convey its meaning to others, which is our main target.

10 I just don't like the idea that we first look at the notes, then we strike the keyboard very hard, as if we were playing notes on a typewriter, and then we add music to it.

To help her students comprehend a piece's character she uses examples from everyday speech, metaphors or similes, asking them to sing the music during the lesson or for study at home, and to practise it at a slow pace. The composer's notions naturally depend on when and where s/he lived, but she discriminates between these and what appears to be expressed through the symbols in the score (A: 111).
Comprehension of the character of a music piece through examples from everyday talk, similes, singing or slow studying.

43 I used to tell him that whenever we talk we don’t behave like machines without using commas, colons etc. When we want to stress the word ‘P’ in the sentence ‘P, you are not right’ we have to use the comma after the word ‘P’ to emphasise it.

47 For all the technique and interpretation cases I used a variety of similes. For instance, portato is actually achieved by imitating a hopping grasshopper.

49 I regard singing as very important, since with it one can approach music in a simpler and more natural way... If he does it with his voice and listens to it he will most probably be able to give the right intensity to his fingers.

96 Tempo must be slow, so our antennae should be wide open to see that everything is performed in the way the composer would like, even if it is our first contact with the score.

5.1.3. MUSIC STRUCTURE CONTROL

‘A’ stresses the structural control of a piece, working towards presenting it as a coherent whole. She ensures that her students throughout make it apparent where the piece is leading. Better structural control is produced by concentration on the procedure or variety of phrases, on harmonic progression of the chords, on sense of rhythm, and on variety of sound and dynamics (A: 10). Despite believing in simultaneous emphasis on all the above-mentioned elements, she thinks that musicality, as well as technique, should precede the correct interpretation of the structure.
Emphasis on music structure control and technique, simultaneously. Recognition of technique as a basis for musicality and music structure control.

78 I meant it [the phrase: ‘get hold of it and keep it in your mind’] in various ways. Firstly, as motion, that is to give the harmonic progression to each phrase, the music structure or the development of music. Secondly, I was looking for the technical conception. I wanted her to know that her fifth finger was to play the most important note, which the previous phrase had led her to.

10 I always take good care that the children take notice of the harmonic progression, the phrases, the intonation and the dynamics... I would never have wanted them at first to be in a state like a nuclear catastrophe and then build them up again.

2 I wanted to show her the harmonic progression of the chords, that is, to familiarise her with the procedure of the phrase... I insisted on this particular point because I was certain she could make the grade, now that she has reached maturity not only in technique but also in musicality.

8 Perhaps, for a slightly older learner the pieces would have been of a harder structure and that would require a lot more technical competence.

In addition, ‘A’ believes that if the teacher uses examples from learners’ personal experience it will help them comprehend the structure of a piece. A student becomes aware right from the start that, just as s/he would never use an oral phrase in the same way twice, so s/he would not repeat a music phrase at the same intensity or in the same style. Moreover, the symbols in a score show the harmonic progression and the composer’s deeper meaning for that piece (A: 109).
Illustrating the right music structure comprehension from a learner’s personal experience.

43 I used to tell him that we were going to play it [the phrase] as if it were a sentence that we would want to emphasise. We wouldn’t repeat it in the same words. He can understand this because of his personal experience.

5.1.4. Appreciation, comprehension and projection of a music piece

‘A’ quite often refers in her teaching to the value of particular compulsory musical pieces in inspiring her students. As she says, her juniors rarely hear classical music except when she insists on teaching it. She finds herself in the awkward position of having to encourage them to accept her own aesthetic concepts in music.

A teacher’s attitude towards a piece inevitably influences a student’s appreciation of a music piece.

113 I do show a positive kind of preference towards the pieces that I would like to teach, so I can create in them the proper disposition towards them. Tiny little children, who normally haven’t been listening to a variety of music pieces, can hardly ever develop by themselves an assertive attitude towards music.

Helping students comprehend a piece e.g., playing, singing and explaining it.

92 I wanted to inspire her and help her love this piece… As I was playing it to her I told her that it was an excellent piece… which, besides its technical aim, was very attractive, as all the Bertini etudes are. It is a kind of stimulus that I use to make her study her pieces.

41 I sing, explain and play their pieces. I don’t just let them do their studies step by step on their own… I do not subject them to my own kind of music evaluation, but I think when it comes to an early age, I deem it necessary that they should accept such a bombardment of influences by their teacher.
The purpose of performing a piece at the preparatory stage is to express the deeper meanings intended by the composer. However, any gifted student, either from personal experience or from any other sources consciously elaborated on, could create his/her own personal style and interpretation. ‘A’, however, has to instil her own aesthetic concepts of music in her juniors or in less talented students who have not yet developed a musical point of view (A: 39, 45, 113).

Aim: to present a performance by developing a pianist’s own style in line with the composer’s deeper intentions.

39 When they grow up and consciously elaborate on these feelings and add to them their inner urge, then they will be able to have their own opinion on music interpretation.

She chooses pieces from every era, such as pre-classical, classical, romantic or modern. However, she always prefers to select those in line with her students’ standards in musicality and technique, and their ability to bring out the structure and the deeper notions of the pieces they are currently learning. She usually asks them to begin slowly so that everything can be executed more or less perfectly. Bringing out the right nuances of a piece can, in her opinion, be taught. To this end, she insists on her students attending first and foremost to its title, then to every detail in the score, such as pauses, phrases, staccato, accentuation and accelerando. She maintains that score symbols often embody the essence of the piece. Once having grasped what the score denotes, a student needs only develop the freedom to enjoy whatever s/he is performing, which eventually acquires special meaning for him/herself.
Preparing for a performance demands selection of repertoire at every level, slow studying and attention to what is in the score. The final target is for the performer to comprehend, enjoy and be able to convey his/her personal contentment to the audience.

8 What we should aim at at every level should be to render the deeper notions of music. That’s the reason why we should choose pieces which are not harder regarding technique for that level, in order to be able to produce the very essence, which is music itself. I would ask the same of any child no matter how old he is.

109 Everything is in the score... When it comes to Bartok, for instance, if you don’t handle staccato, accentuation or accelerando, you miss the very essence of the composer’s notions. Often score symbols have embodied the essence of the piece as well.

96 Our aim is to go through the first stage where we learn to read the score as fast as we can... This is the first phase of studying that a child has to complete as soon as possible, so that in the next stages he enjoys what so far he has already learnt and is enabled to convey it to an audience without having to have the assistance of the score.

For a ‘good’ performance she thinks pianists should bring out the meaning of a piece in the way the composer him/herself would have liked. In addition, they should do the best they can as regards technique and the detail in the score. Above all they should possess that ‘extra something’ which can move the audience and make all the difference to the performance. She pays great attention to a person’s preparation for a performance before an audience right from the very first lessons, since this is in her view the ultimate
goal in learning the piano. She constantly maintains that a pianist’s role, after becoming aware of the value of the piece played, is to appreciate it, and project and convey its value to the listeners.

| Description of a good performance: one with that ‘extra something’ which can move the audience. | 14 An excellent pianist has to be something more than an industrious learner... I am afraid this is a misfortune for pianists who don’t possess this ‘extra something’ that makes all the difference, although they have got diplomas and have acquired knowledge and technique. |
| Concert preparation is an integral part of her teaching. Its goal is sharing ‘beauty’ with the audience. | 20 For me ‘concert’ includes children’s appearances before an examination Board, ones the students hold in private, as well as all the concerts that a conservatory organises... The children should get to know at an early age that whatever they do they don’t do for themselves only, or just for me, but to be judged at exams by some other people. On top of that, they should actually share the beauty of whatever they do by conveying it to others. |

In order to familiarise her students with performing for an audience and dealing with nervousness (A: 18), she recommends mental practising. This avoids playing mechanically and, at the same time, trains them to cover up dexterously any mistakes they may make. As a rule, she tries hard to prepare her students in the best way by making their everyday lessons something like dress rehearsals for a presentation. To achieve this, she stands at a distance, without interrupting them even when they make mistakes, to accustom them to performing in front of audiences watching silently at a distance.

| Facing performance nerves. | 20 I don’t press them hard especially at this early age by insisting that they have to be 100% flawless... I let them get loosened up and if something gets out of order... that shouldn’t really matter. We try to express it as a whole. I have taught them right from the very start of their studies to appear before the public without any apprehension at all. |
22 I tell them that we are not machines. If this was a procedure of recording and erasing again and re-recording and so on, we would have to try to get it perfect, but walking on to the stage we make amends for a human mistake. This makes them a lot calmer. On the other hand, I am inclined to stress to them, even from their very first lessons that we do not stop if a mistake is made, but ignore it and go on.

24 Their pieces are separated into four parts, (that is, phrases or bars), I mean in their minds of course, and they know they have to begin from the directly following four-part unit. They can also analyse the accompaniment. We work out in our minds the changes in the chords that take place in the accompaniment, so we don’t let them learn by rote... I often ask them during their playing, if they make a mistake with a fast gesture, to move on to the next part.

53 For some final rehearsals... I always say to them ‘play’, and then I move away from them... At this point I also instruct them how to ‘patch up’ their mistakes without making them evident. I tell them ‘the better the patching up has been covered up the more rewards it will bring in the end’.

55 When there is a mistake in the notes, what counts more is not to bring it to light... If the performer does not pause, then neither the rhythm nor the interpretation will have been spoilt... The fact that I never interrupt them during a rehearsal is a matter of educational procedure, which is to get the children used to what they have to do at their final stage, which is to present a piece before a crowd that is beneath them, mute and motionless.
5.1.5. AWARENESS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE LAYERS IN PIANO LEARNING

‘A’ appears to regard piano learning as a gradual development of layers that remind us of the four suggested by Swanwick. She is consequently aware that the lower layers are a necessary basis for the upper ones. In her teaching, however, she actually looks for ways of teaching all these simultaneously, even to very young children or beginners. More specifically she herself places a lot of emphasis in her teaching on certain layers of piano learning. First, the careful study of the score, the correct production of whatever is in it, a dexterous handling of the piano and the development of technique; secondly, expressiveness (or ‘musicality’ as she usually calls it); thirdly music structure control; finally right appreciation, comprehension and projection of the meaning of a piece.

Introductory layer:
- studying consistently with the score.

Following layers:
- the conveyance of meaning to an audience and self-contentment with the music.

A multi-purpose sequence of acquisitive activities: technique, musicality and music structure control.

96 Our aim is to go through the first stage where we learn to read the score as fast as we can... This is the first phase of studying that a child has to complete as soon as possible, so that in the next stages he enjoys what so far he has already learnt and is enabled to convey it to an audience without having to have the assistance of the score.

2 I wanted to show her the harmonic progression of the chords, that is, to familiarise her with the procedure of the phrase. Her standard of playing is very good, as she has a very advanced background in technique. I thought it was the best time for her to aim at musicality... All previous levels serve the basic aim, which is actually musicality.
102 Technique is the means of expressing the essence of music. Without technique not only can we not express music, but hardly ever can we convey its meaning to others, which is our main target... Technique is a prerequisite, not the final goal.

104 No effort in music ends with technique. A piece cannot be interpreted or approached musically if we haven’t worked well on technique.

100 To get to musicality we have to pass, first and foremost, through technique. Technique might be one of our targets, but it is a servant to the music.

Despite maintaining the need for lower layers as a basis for higher ones, ‘A’ always aims to teach all of these simultaneously, even to young children or beginners. As she says, she would never want the pieces to be played as if there had been a nuclear catastrophe and they had had to be rebuilt right from the start. She would not want the students to strike the right keys and sound like a typewriter, only adding ‘musicality’ afterwards (A: 10). She is of the opinion that the score contains all the necessary directions about how everything should be performed and what should be seriously considered right from the very first moment (A: 39).

The simultaneous approach through technique as well as musicality.

100 I believe that technique and musicality must be approached, if that is possible, simultaneously... The children know that there are two parts to their homework: technique and musicality. Each part must always consist of some elements of the other one.

104 Technique cannot be separated from expressiveness. They must be like two things in parallel. I never make them function separately and just wait for one to be completed before moving on to the other.
She recommends that students be given music pieces within their abilities as regards technique, to be played at a very slow tempo and performed in the best possible way, as if by a professional. She trains her students right from the very first lesson for the ultimate goal. In her opinion, this is to bring out the exact meaning of a piece as the composer intended and to convey this meaning to an audience with as little nervousness as possible.

The upper layer in piano learning is the good-quality production of music for an audience. A persistent demand right from the start. Slow studying and suitable repertoire selection bring success.

20 The children should get to know at an early age that whatever they do they don’t do for themselves only, or just for me, but to be judged at exams by some other people.

4 Every learner can and must play the pieces to the same standard that a good pianist should have, no matter what his level is. In music it is very important that everything should be produced as well as possible. Otherwise, the result has no relation to music.

8 What we should aim at at every level should be to render the deeper notions of music. That’s the reason why we should choose pieces which are not harder regarding technique for that level, in order to be able to produce the very essence, which is music itself.
Both parts [the technical and the musical part] entail the music element. I want everything done to perfection, but at a very slow speed... I remind every child that the tempo depends on what stage he has brought the piece to, his potential such as how good he is at prima-vista.

5.2. VARIABLES INFLUENCING PIANO TEACHING AND LEARNING

From what ‘A’ states it seems that the quality of a piano lesson can be affected by a number of variables, such as the teacher, the learner, the conservatory, the conditions prevailing there, the learner’s family, or even society. The following sections will provide examples from her interview to reveal her thoughts and concerns about how these matters could affect the quality of a lesson.

5.2.1. THE TEACHER

‘A’ describes the characteristics and the teaching methods of a good teacher, and the essentials of a good teacher-learner relationship. A piano teacher, she maintains, besides being well-educated musically and having the necessary degrees or diplomas, first and foremost must be patient, strict and fair, encouraging learners and practising self-assessment. Equally, s/he should prepare at home to create the right conditions for learning, both imparting musical knowledge and inspiring students. She also explains how repertoire and criteria for choice can affect student learning. She rates above everything in importance a teacher’s suitability for and adaptability to a particular student, and stresses that a good teacher always does good-quality work under any circumstances. The importance that she places on a teacher’s role in piano learning is evident from her insistence that the effectiveness of his/her work is revealed through the way the majority of the students perform.

More specifically she believes that music is ‘a demonstration of sentiment and feeling and many other human factors’; so a teacher, apart from possessing degrees and diplomas, should be experienced and mature. S/he must also approach the student with a sense of responsibility, dedication, and a mentality appropriate for the level or age, but also with justice and fairness, irrespective of his/her talent. An ideal teacher always
prepares at home for what s/he is going to teach. S/he studies books relevant to music teaching, as well as practising on the piano the pieces that s/he is either going to teach or to present at concerts. The teacher must be strict with him/herself and be prepared to change methodology and admit mistakes even in front of the students.

Experience and maturity.

6 Music is a demonstration of sentiment and feeling and so many other human factors. So a teacher, being more experienced and a lot more mature, can work out these concepts.

Dedication and responsibility.

121 In our country we rely on a teacher’s conscience and disposition to devote himself to his duty and bring results… A teacher needs to be a responsible person, not only to his students, but to parents who entrust their children’s education to them.

Working fairly and conscientiously for everybody.

131 A teacher has to do the right work for all the children regardless of whether they want to be professionals or not.

Proper pre-lesson preparation and self-assessment.

139 Whenever I get home after work I think hard about whatever I am going to give them for homework next time. I never in any way have any inhibitions about admitting that I made a mistake… Only God is Omnipotent… …one should never be categorical.

135 I have most definitely been influenced by the Russian School… If on my way I come across some other ‘school’ that appeals to me better, I might think it over and change… By teaching children, studying books and my endless piano practising, I try hard to become as good a teacher as possible. Teaching the piano without actually playing it is unthinkable for me. Whenever I put on a concert I invite my students to it. I take it as vital for my students, as well as for me, since I also learn a lot of things.
The music pieces that she selects for her students are appropriate for their current standards of musicality and technique, their purpose (namely improving technique or musicality), and their ages. She is convinced that the ultimate aim is to interpret the deeper notions of the composer in the best possible way. This, in her opinion, is achievable only if the pieces are easy enough for the students to cope with. Despite choosing pieces from every era, such as pre-classical, classical, romantic, or modern, she is always keen on selecting those preferred by her students. Therefore she always aims to study the pieces to be taught and demonstrate them on the piano, thus, as it were ‘charging’ her students’ ‘batteries’, and so attracting their interest. She appears to regard some books as necessary for learning the piano. These include ‘The Easiest’ by Thompson, which improves their technique. She confesses that studying with teachers of the ‘Russian School’ has so deeply influenced her that she has adopted Russian composers to a great extent in her teaching repertoire.

Criteria for selection of repertoire depend on a learner’s level of attainment, age, personal preferences and purpose served.

8 Repertoire and music level are parallel. What we should aim at at every level should be to render the deeper notions of music. That’s the reason why we should choose pieces which are not harder regarding technique for that level, in order to be able to produce the very essence, which is music itself. I would ask the same of any child no matter how old he is. Perhaps, for a slightly older learner the pieces would have been of a harder structure and that would require a lot more technical competence.

31 I... select very carefully the pieces I am going to assign to them, so that they are suitable for the purpose for which they are given. For instance, for the improvement of their technique, or even to vary their music topics (that is, lyrical or dramatic ones), to lead them to various musical situations, or to help them learn something new.

113 I... let them make their own choice between two or three pieces of the same difficulty or of the same era that would... offer them equal practising value.
33 She doesn’t like etudes or exercises. She has never had any trouble with musicality pieces. If I could choose among all the pieces of the same kind that could actually fulfil my purpose, I would have done it. My opinion is that if a child does not like a music piece, he doesn’t have to play it.

Despite the variety of repertoire, her preference for Russian composers is evident. Thompson’s ‘The Easiest’ is highly esteemed.

135 I have most definitely been influenced by the Russian School... That’s why I keep on teaching Russian repertoire as well... In addition I am interested in many other composers from other countries.

67 I regard this ‘Easiest’ book by Thompson as very good because it starts with separate hands, and beginning from the middle ‘doh’, at the same time the right hand is in ‘Soh’ clef and the left one in ‘Fah’ clef. So it is useful for reading the notes on these clefs... Pictures that are in this book, are always a great help to me.

According to ‘A’, in relationships with students the teacher should try to keep a balance between strictness and friendliness, depending, of course, on the child and the situation. She herself always tries to be fair, however much strictness the case demands. She always regards encouragement and praise of students as of vital importance, since they need to feel satisfied and be made aware of what has been done well, so that they will repeat it in the future.
A teacher has to praise his students. Every time I try to give them the right dose for the right moment. They might need strictness or friendliness, all depending on the child or the time. Learning music is a hard process, and they know that I must be strict but fair. They know that they are going to get ‘bravo’ whenever it is due to them, and they appreciate it.

I often praise them in order to encourage them... A ‘bravo’... is good enough for them and it’s within the teaching framework. It’s not right to let an achievement go without a reward. The very same child that is successful does expect anything in that respect. I do this for another reason too, that is, for him to realise when he has done something outstanding.

It is important that they have the sense of being successful in something even when they are little, tiny children.

She believes that a teacher’s suitability for the level of students taught is more important than the conservatory where they study. Even at the elementary level the children need experienced and qualified teachers, but in most private conservatories rarely get them. Teachers must be specially trained, patient and fair, strict and loving, because at a later level, if the students lacked basic knowledge, it would be catastrophic. For advanced classes the teacher should ideally be a soloist, and competent on the stage. Finally, she maintains that even a student with very small hands can become a distinguished pianist with the help of a competent teacher.
The most suitable teacher for every level and individual brings success. 124 Elementary classes... need experienced and qualified teachers... At this stage... teachers should possess a lot of knowledge and have gone through special training and, at the same time, should be patient and fair, strict and loving. As for the advanced classes, it will be too late if the foundations haven’t been laid before the final structure. Much more particularly at this stage a teacher has to be a soloist himself, so that he can instruct his students in stage secrets, which are always absolutely necessary.

141 My teacher... was herself a great soloist with a natural talent, so there was no reason for her to try to work out any kind of methodology, as she could play the piano so well in an instinctive way. She could, however, be a very gifted teacher for MA students, whereas I needed to learn the basic aspects of piano playing.

She shows how much she believes in the teacher as one of the main factors contributing towards good piano learning. She stresses that, if competent, the teacher will definitely produce good-quality work, whatever the circumstances or however many schools s/he teaches at (A: 123, 124). This becomes quite clear from the remarks that she made during the interview: ‘The effectiveness of a teacher’s lessons as a whole can be seen quite clearly from the work of the majority of his/her students’ (A: 137).

One of the teacher’s roles is to help a student to enjoy studies. She herself places a lot of weight on trying to inspire her students to study the piano. Classical music is not very prevalent in Greek society, so most learners have no means of getting to understand, appreciate and love it, except through a teacher’s professional guidance. To achieve this, she always prepares herself, studies a lot of music books, and practises on the piano at home, so that she can perform the music pieces in the best possible way in the presence of her students. In addition, whenever she puts on a concert, she invites them to attend it. They quite often sing the pieces together, or she just listens to them from a distance as they perform. To make their study of music seem more like a game, she explains everything in full and in her conversation uses symbols or metaphors they can easily comprehend. In this way, and by praising whatever progress they make, she develops contentment and willingness to continue study. Finally, she urges them to
participate actively in competitions and concerts, and always asks for their parents’ cooperation and attendance at their children’s piano sessions. Thus, the students will have someone at home who is closer to them and can contribute to their progress.

She considers it her fundamental duty as a teacher to be well prepared for every lesson, so that she can play the pieces for her students as well as possible (A: 135). By playing at her best and simultaneously expressing her appreciation of the quality of the pieces (A: 113) she achieves a twofold goal. She makes them study the pieces as well as she has done, and by recognising their merits they get to love them. Moreover, she quite often holds concerts and invites her students to attend her performances (A: 135).

Her well-planned pre-lesson preparation, her performing and stressing the quality of the pieces encourage a positive attitude towards music in her students.

31 I never enter a classroom unprepared. I study the pieces that I am going to teach my students, so that playing them myself I can get the best out of myself.

10 A teacher has to start playing the piece first, so that the learner can listen to it and then the teacher, passing remarks on it, can inspire the child to study it.

26 With little children, since they usually haven’t heard much from this sphere of music (I mean the classical one) during their whole course, I usually play the pieces for them.

39 I affect them very much, but I have to, since they cannot get any relevant experience from anywhere else. Someone has to show the way this music is studied.
To make her students feel at home, she adopts a kind of group psychology. She and her students sing together the notes of the music pieces that they are supposed to learn, or she counts out the rhythm in a form of song. In approaching music in a natural way she considers it necessary for the students rather than herself to do the singing (A: 49). The students thus become fully aware of what they have to achieve by listening to their own voices and making the piece part of their own personal experience. This will also direct their fingers properly (A: 49). Mentally guided piano playing, to which singing contributes, is, in her opinion, necessary for the execution of a piece.

She distances herself from her students when they play, trying not to interrupt them, however many mistakes they make. In her opinion, a teacher’s final goal is to help the students to become autonomous, so that they can play at their best in front of an audience. The teacher familiarises the students with an actual performance by keeping at a distance like the audience.

At a certain moment they are going to be alone during their presentations. If I am close to them all the time, and encourage student autonomy, they are going to lose their autonomy.

Explaining the pieces and their aims is for her an important part of her task as a teacher (A: 74). That is why she regularly uses examples from her students’ everyday experience. In addition, she uses symbols, comparisons or metaphors relevant to their age and knowledge to help them not only to understand what she is teaching them, but also to turn piano learning into a kind of game. To further inspire them to work at improving their technique, she encourages them to imagine they are competing with themselves and rewards them for their progress by praising them and motivating them to continue their efforts.
Everyday experiences, symbols, comparisons or metaphors are used as motivation and means to guide and explain a music piece. A learner’s age, background and knowledge become decisive factors in her choice.

70 I avoid using dubious theories about music, and I restrict myself to explaining everything in a suitable way for a child, since I have to deal with children of five to six years old. They cannot add up simple fractions in Arithmetic at school. They learn these things by experience. The tick-tock of a clock must fit in a clap, and these are the quavers for a child. This is the only way that they can understand me.

47 We have a wide range of codes with symbols and metaphors, so they feel at home and absorb ideas a lot better. This is definitely applied at C’s level, as well as for all the other children attending the first and second Preliminary level.

69 I just tried to make a game out of it. I was the ‘dwarf, the hand-clapper’ and showed her the tempo.

59 With the various symbols the children not only understand better what you mean, but they see it as something like a game and enjoy it.

57 I talk to her in symbols or comparisons. Instead of using the word ‘fingers’ I re-play it with the word ‘grasshoppers’... No matter what the symbol is, it’ll suit me fine if it fulfils the end it serves.
Competing with oneself and praise as motivation.

33 I have so far given them pleasure in their success at a kind of championship level by using my voice intonation, my descriptions, by making them expect fulfilment in their progress and by congratulating them, with the satisfaction that we have overcome a difficulty and finally exclaiming, ‘look the fifth finger is now working independently’.

She insists on her students participating in competitions both for their own pleasure and to help evaluate their own abilities (A: 29). She also prepares them to play in concerts so that they can share their experiences with the public, which is the ultimate goal of piano learning (A: 20). Finally, she recommends regular parental attendance at children’s piano sessions to produce home follow-up to her supervision. If parents attend, they can get a good idea of the quality of the work presented and the essential nature of every session. They can thus contribute towards improving their children’s knowledge by reminding them of the example given them by their teacher’s performance (A: 34).

5.2.2. THE LEARNER

‘A’ takes into serious consideration all the characteristics of each student, including age, level of attainment, personal idiosyncrasies, abilities, potential, musical background, talents, and industriousness. According to the individual’s age, level of attainment and general attitude, she stresses technique, musicality, and music structure control, as well as appreciation, comprehension and public presentation of the meaning of a piece. Furthermore, she expects her students to play the pieces like professional performers. Anything that has to do with piano playing should be presented in the best possible way, regardless of age, attitude, level of musical attainment or anything else. Finally, when looking at the results, she claims that, even if they do not make the grade as professionals, they will get a lot of benefit from the studies. This is why she regards it as her duty to teach her students all aspects of piano performing, whether they make music a career or not. Besides, as she says, even a student with small hands can become a great performer with proper instruction from a tutor.

More specifically, ‘A’ takes into account every aspect of a student’s personality.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age, background and level of attainment.</td>
<td>24 I try to show them the pieces not mechanically, but consciously, depending on their age, knowledge and level of attainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age, talents and personal idiosyncrasies.</td>
<td>26 With little children, since they usually haven’t heard much from this sphere of music... during their whole course, I usually play the pieces for them... M2... is very talented so we have no problem... Music really does move her immensely. She might be a little more fond of romantics because she is a rather introverted child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Background, level of attainment and potential.</td>
<td>104 I dare to demand from my children a variety of sound intensity, a very good crescendo, or getting the semiquavers equivalent and fast in cases where I am absolutely sure that I have taught them, and I take it that it is within the child’s level and potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age and abilities.</td>
<td>43 There may be a time when they might understand it on their own, but if they are at P’s age, it’s a teacher’s duty to point it out to them. If you explain a similar case to a sensitive recipient it may not be necessary, since he might have already stored away whatever you had told him then for the first time. In other cases, however, you may be compelled to repeat it many times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talents, intelligence, age, and musical background.</td>
<td>70 C is very talented, and very intelligent, but, unfortunately, has a very bad background, so I am trying hard to help her to get over her bad attitude... C being at this stage, I do what I would have done if she had started playing the piano just now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59 When she came to me she was very stiff... I had to insist on it, not only in the lessons where you were present, but I keep on doing so even now that she is at a better level. She still carries with her weaknesses from the past.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For younger students she always insists on technical matters, as well as on comprehending the musical value of a piece, since she thinks that it is her duty to encourage them to appreciate classical music and learn its rules. As for matters of expression and structure, she believes that young children do not easily appreciate the meaning of music, and that is why she asks them to do what suits their age and level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical development in relation to student’s age.</th>
<th>100 I place a lot of emphasis on technique, especially with learners of M2’s age.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation in relation to student’s age and level of attainment.</td>
<td>10 A very small child, especially if he is a beginner, cannot possibly get the very essence of music. He has, naturally, to go through some ‘coarse’ musical stages without each note being as if it was played by an older child. When it comes to an older one, I always insist, right from the start, on the right interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and technique in relation to student’s age.</td>
<td>45 If a child is at a very early age and level, as P is, I don’t think you can afford the luxury of allowing him to take interpretation initiative steps on his own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music evaluation in relation to student’s age.</td>
<td>8 For a slightly older learner the pieces would have been of a harder structure and that would require a lot more technical competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41 I do not subject them to my own kind of music evaluation, but... when it comes to an early age, I deem it necessary that they should accept such a bombardment of influences by their teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She talks to little children very straightforwardly and explains everything with metaphors or examples closely linked to their personal experiences. This is to help them not only to understand the piece, but also to view it as a kind of game (A: 70).
She is able to pick out students with specific talents by highlighting abilities which some might possess to a greater or lesser extent. This ‘musical instinct’, as she calls it, distinguishes them as born pianists. Stirred by an inner need to play with perfection, they overcome any technical hardships through their own innate sense of musicality (A: 36).

Comparing students’ progress facilitates identification of the extra-talented ones who can overcome any difficulties.

28 I... am astonished at the quality of her immediate notion conception. It’s that musical instinct that she possesses... Her inner world is so sublimely sensitive that it comes to light in the way she expresses music. She is of a very gentle disposition. You only have to mention something and she is there to absorb it like a sponge. When she comes to the culminating point of inspiration, she reproduces it in musical terms in an instant... Since she is a natural musician I regard her as a born pianist.

36 I don’t know if she possesses Sgouros’ [a famous and gifted Greek pianist] talent, who, after only a glimpse at the score can immediately play the piece off-hand, but she does have musical talent and a marvellous sensitivity.

She defines a talented student as an intelligent and sensitive person who spontaneously reacts even to the slightest difference in tone in the music, comprehends it and expresses it on the piano. S/he possesses freedom of movement, and a very good ear for music. S/he has his/her own views, takes music seriously and stores away a lot of experience, which is afterwards carefully sorted out and used to create a personal style (A: 12, 45, 133). She insists that being industrious and autonomous in studies is the essential element, even if a student is endowed with talent (A: 89). However, even these qualities are not good enough without that ‘extra something’ (A: 14), and without the guidance of the right kind of teacher, who can make even a student with unsuitable hands into a successful pianist (A: 141). Finally, she seems to define a talented student as one who at that particular level has reached the top, musically speaking, even if s/he gives up studies at that stage (A: 133).
A gifted student must be industrious and autonomous in his/her studying.

An excellent pianist must be more than an industrious learner with good technique.

89 She is quite intelligent, a good recipient and possesses a good ear for music. In short, she has got a superb talent for music... If she were a little more industrious and autonomous in her studying and did not expect everything from her teacher, she would have absorbed a lot more repertoire and faster as well.

14 One needs to possess that ‘extra something’ that M1 hasn’t got. I am afraid this is a misfortune for pianists who don’t possess this ‘extra something’ that makes all the difference, although they have got diplomas and have acquired knowledge and technique.

What ‘A’ mainly expects of her students is that they should concentrate on producing good-quality music. Regardless of their course level, after enjoying the music they play, they should be able to convey its subtle notions just as a professional performer would. She also would like them to be able to evaluate their own abilities and playing, so that they can be left on their own, not only in their studies, but also in public performances. She expects all this, as well as industriousness, even from her talented students (A: 89).

One main objective is for her students, regardless of study level, to present all the deeper notions of a music piece, just as a great performer would. Therefore she chooses music pieces suitable for their level of technical ability.

4 Every learner can and must play the pieces to the same standard that a good pianist should have, no matter what his level is. In music it is very important that everything should be produced as well as possible. Otherwise, the result has no relation to music.
He might reach the stage of playing some easy pieces of music, depending, of course, at what level he has dropped out, but, whatever the case, he will learn to perform in the best possible way.

What we should aim at at every level should be to render the deeper notions of music. That’s the reason why we should choose pieces which are not harder regarding technique for that level, in order to be able to produce the very essence, which is music itself.

In the next stages he [the student] enjoys what so far he has already learnt and is enabled to convey it to an audience without having to have the assistance of the score.

It is an integral part of a learner’s home assignment to be able to classify his needs regarding sound, expressiveness, notions and tempo.

I am going to get her to take part [in a music competition], next year that is, just for pleasure and, at the same time, so that she can match herself against other participants and assess herself and come to conclusions about her potential.

She uses certain methods to help her students to self-assess and develop autonomy, such as challenging them to participate in music competitions or standing at a distance to watch them as they perform.

She expects a student to enjoy whatever s/he has learnt and be able to convey it to the audience.

She expects a student to self-assess his/her playing.

She uses certain methods to help her students to self-assess and develop autonomy, such as challenging them to participate in music competitions or standing at a distance to watch them as they perform.
If I am close to them all the time, and keep on instructing them, they are going to lose their autonomy. I just want to keep a balance, not to make them feel like little ponies that are led by a horseback rider.

According to her, whether s/he is finally going to take up piano playing as a profession or not, a student attending piano lessons can get the following benefits. First, s/he encounters a highly intellectual and qualitative kind of work, and becomes an interpreter of a variety of the deepest notions of very highly esteemed composers (A: 131). The fact that s/he may not reach higher levels of studies will not inhibit the acquisition of a basic knowledge of music. If nothing else, this will offer the satisfaction of being able to appreciate its subtle nuances (A: 14, 131). Besides this, s/he will learn to discipline thinking, put thoughts in order, and into some kind of system, abilities which may be necessary in acquiring other forms of knowledge (A: 131). In her teaching she attempts to give her students the best education available, so that they can perform well, and enjoy music, whatever level they reach, whether they become professional performers or not (A: 121).

5.2.3. The Conservatory

‘A’ believes that there is wide variation between a large number of conservatories in Greece, although all the diplomas or degrees that they grant are officially of equal value. According to her, every Greek conservatory is independent and autonomous, since the director follows his/her own policy, which obviously varies in strictness with regard to the criteria for examination assessment, repertoires, aims and teaching methods (A: 123). She has no hesitation in commenting on several conservatories where the Board of Directors treats students as ‘profit-making clients’ (A: 119, 123). She says that if there were one general panhellenic examination for a music degree or diploma, as is the case in England for entry examinations, Greek degrees or diplomas could actually be regarded as of equal value.
Comparison between musical education in Greece and in England. In Greece, conservatories vary in policies, criteria regarding examinations and level of studies, teaching methods, repertoires, set targets and attitudes towards students, parents, and guardians.

119 In Greece, no music institution is ever tested out in regard to quality of services through a panhellenic examination as it is in England... Unfortunately, every school of music is completely independent and autonomous, so it follows its own policy, applies its own criteria and levels of studies, and lays a lot of importance on discipline and targets, and, worst of all, treats its ‘clients’ as a means of bringing in profit. The degrees or diplomas that are awarded most of the time are hardly ever under any kind of state supervision. Typically throughout a piano course they award degrees that are of no value at all, compared to others that require hard work and involve very impartial and strict examinations, but... both are recognised by the state as equivalent.

As ‘A’ says, music education in Greece has been left to the teachers’ discretion, as they are assumed to be devoted to their tasks. She maintains that the variation in standards is increased still further because of the non-graduate teachers in several conservatories.

Variations in teacher selection methods and qualifications.

Recommendation for establishing a Conservatory Quality Control Committee.

121 I would be very happy... if there was a kind of committee which would investigate the quality of work done at all conservatories, so we could get the uniformity among them which doesn’t exist now. In our country we rely on a teacher’s conscience and disposition to devote himself to his duty and bring results. But if he himself is not well educated it is only natural that he will not have much to offer... I am sorry to say so, but a large number of piano teachers are not well qualified, that’s why we get this mess with regard to uniformity of Music Education in our country.
She suggests that the director of a conservatory should select the best available teachers (A: 128), because she thinks that experienced and qualified teachers are necessary even in the elementary classes.

Appropriate teaching personnel should be selected.

The director of a conservatory should be capable of choosing his teachers and allocating them to positions where they are most suitable. Elementary classes, for example, need experienced and qualified teachers whereas what mostly happens in the private conservatories is that those classes are undertaken by inexperienced ones without a degree.

She seems to give great importance to the conservatory as a significant contributor to piano learning. She also worries about the lack of uniformity in Greek conservatories. She has no hesitation at all in naming the COA, in which she studied, as the ‘best ever’. Nevertheless, she stresses the fact that a teacher’s competence in recognising a student’s needs and abilities in music is a lot more important than the conservatory itself. She herself studied at the ‘best conservatory of Athens’, but regrets that her teacher there, although a famous and talented soloist, failed to help her to acquire the essential basic knowledge she really needed (A: 141).

5.2.4. THE FAMILY

As ‘A’ says, although Greek parents themselves do not listen to classical music, since the prevalent attitude favours other kinds of music, they do believe in the value of a musical education. They might not know what hardships their children are going to be involved in, but they themselves are the ones who take the initiative for their children by enrolling them for piano lessons.

Parental initiative in piano learning.

[Parents] have no idea at all how important it [piano course] is, or how much time and hard work it involves. They are not interested in what standard their children can reach. The majority of parents simply want their children to learn some music. Although they don’t really know anything about the usual attendance procedure and music training, I am convinced that no harm could come out of that as regards their children’s progress.
As modern Greek parents do not have much spare time, they usually enrol their children in the nearest conservatory (A: 128). They themselves, as a rule, have little understanding of classical music, so the teacher has the additional task of acquainting the learners with this kind of music and helping them gradually to appreciate it (A: 39).

Financial status is also, in her opinion, an important factor in piano learning and can affect a child’s progress at the conservatory. She instances a girl who was coached in every school subject at home because of her family’s affluence, and consequently was never trained to learn anything by herself or to think for herself. According to ‘A’, this is essential in piano learning.

Finally, to help her students to rid themselves of the negative effects produced by all the above-mentioned factors, ‘A’ looks for co-operation with parents. She asks them to take an active part in helping them to study together at home. Moreover, by observing their children’s piano lessons they can get acquainted with this kind of music and know exactly what their children are confronted with. She is of the opinion that at this early age, when children usually begin piano lessons, they need this kind of co-operation and control (A: 34).

5.2.5. Society

In Greek society children never get the chance to learn about or appreciate classical music, except during their piano tuition (A: 39, 45, 113). Therefore ‘A’ usually plays their music pieces to them on the piano, so that these become familiar, appreciated and finally enjoyed (A: 26). The majority of Greek children have a heavy school curriculum, and usually take up sports commitments and courses in foreign languages as well. They cannot therefore spare time even to listen to music and are unwilling to go to a conservatory far from home (A: 128).
Society’s lack of interest in classical music and students’ heavy school curricula leave a teacher isolated in his/her task.

The very same teacher says that classical music is not particularly popular at present in Greece. However, there is still a readiness to attend piano lessons, in addition to classes in ballet, foreign languages and sporting activities, and a large number of parents therefore enrol their children at conservatories (A: 130).

5.3. CONCLUSIONS

‘A’ is very experienced and her views on the subject carry a lot of weight. At her house in Athens we discussed issues arising from video excerpts and observations I had made during her tutoring and various subjects involving piano learning and teaching at Athenian conservatories. What she perceived prospective pianists should learn, and what influences this learning, were the major themes she raised. ‘A’ insists on such matters as strict adherence to the score and its detailed reproduction, development of technique, musicality and control of music structure, together with appreciation, comprehension and presentation of the message a music piece should convey. For ‘A’, the issues categorised as ‘what pianists should learn’ are interdependent, and she always refers to her awareness of their interrelationship.

One very important piece of information to arise from the interview with ‘A’ was her notion that piano learning involves a number of stages, or different developmental pathways, henceforth to be called ‘layers’. Though she did not explicitly mention layers, the reader of this work can identify four different features of ‘what should be learnt’ in her view. First there is a layer of basic and more advanced piano skills, like comprehension and presentation of whatever is in the score and handling of the piano. In this layer she focuses on practical issues such as muscle relaxation, hand position, body posture at the piano, and the secrets of effective study to improve technique. Her ‘methodological secrets’ include study patterns like repetition of difficult points, mental
practice, playing with one hand alone, singing the piece and singing by numbers. In this layer she also focuses on muscular relaxation. Looseness must be achieved right from the very first lesson, because, she argues, only when performers are relaxed can they achieve the right posture for their hands and bodies, and produce good-quality sound. She also believes that technique precedes musicality, and very characteristically says that without technique a musician is like a person ‘without hands’. She herself admits she was greatly influenced by the ‘Russian School’ and the ‘Alexander Technique’. According to her, the peculiar structure of the human body limits the ways in which a person can play the piano.

After a first layer of issues which ‘A’ terms ‘technique’, follows a second layer she calls generically ‘musicality’. The notion of musicality is connected with matters such as quality of sound, correct fingering, rhythm, sound dynamics, harmony, phrasing, melodic contours, accompaniment and independence of each of the two hands. In general, she stresses that everything in the score must be carefully attended to and properly presented. In this layer she also makes a clear distinction between the expressiveness intended by the composer for the work and the ‘personal expressiveness’ of the performer. This has been defined by Swanwick (Swanwick and Tillman, 1986) and, according to him, is unique to each individual. Despite believing that a good background in technique is necessary, she sees technique and musicality as equally important.

In the third layer ‘A’ seems to be keen on the control of the music structure, which is attainable only after assimilating the flow of the piece. What follows next includes right rhythm, notes, pauses, quality of sound, dynamics and intonation, and simultaneously harmonic progression, flow and variety of phrases. She believes that there should be equal emphasis on every item constituting control of the music structure. Technique and musicality should always precede control of music structure.

‘A’ often stresses the importance of the piano and the value of the pieces she teaches, even the simple etudes and scales. She constantly tries to win over her students’ attention and to help them to appreciate the pieces they study, irrespective of their level. She feels that in Greece classical music – and ‘Western’ music generally – have few friends. As a piano teacher it is therefore her duty to help her students to appreciate classical music. Often she finds herself in the awkward position of having to impose her own aesthetic viewpoint to some extent on her students. Sometimes the instilling of
musical values relates to more practical goals such as piano performance. Performing before an audience is for her a basic target in the learning process, and therefore she believes that the pianist’s role is to understand and appreciate the value of the piece to be performed. Only when performers have fully appreciated the value of a piece, can they project and convey it to an audience. Thus the performer becomes a kind of transposer of values. ‘A’ maintains that score symbols often embody the value and essence of a piece. Having reached the stage of faithfully copying the score, students somehow have to free themselves from it. They have to reach a kind of fulfilment, which brings the fullest contentment with whatever they are playing, just as if it were their own composition.

Apart from ‘what should be learnt’, ‘A’ cites a number of variables which may influence the quality of a piano lesson in Athens (see Table 7, p. 128) including teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society. Firstly, for ‘A’, the teacher plays a significant role in the quality of a piano lesson through the teaching strategies adopted and the repertoire chosen. Taking herself as an example, she says that during her sessions she guides her students in various ways to (a) understand whatever she is to teach, and (b) endear it to them. For example, she sits at the piano to demonstrate the pieces, explains with a full description or through metaphors what her students should be aiming at, directs their hands, and sometimes asks them to hold her hands as she is playing. At other times, she sings the pieces along with her students, or listens to them from a distance as they play. She believes the repertoire should include composers from every era, such as pre-classical, classical, romantic or modern. It should be in accord with (a) students’ standards of musicality and technique, (b) their purpose, such as improvement of technique or musicality, and (c) other personal particulars, like age.

‘A’ is convinced that the ultimate aim is to interpret the deeper notions of the composer in the ‘most appropriate’ way. This becomes possible only when the pieces are of such a standard that the students can cope with them. She also believes that some piano books, like Thompson’s ‘The Easiest’, improve their technique. She also admits that, through studying with teachers of the ‘Russian School’, she has been deeply influenced by Russian composers and has largely adopted them in her teaching repertoire. For her the ‘ideal’ teacher, besides being well-educated musically and having the necessary degrees or diplomas, is strict but also patient and fair, does self-assessment, is willing to prepare work at home, instils confidence and inspires learners. She ranks above everything else a teacher’s adjustment and adaptability to each student’s needs stressing that an ideal
teacher should always do good-quality work. Finally, for her the teacher’s role in piano learning is of great importance. This is evident from her beliefs. First, she thinks that the effectiveness of the teacher’s lessons as a whole can be seen quite clearly from the work of the majority of the students. Secondly, she believes that any student – whether or not his/her hands are suitable for piano playing – can become a very distinguished pianist if s/he has a competent teacher.

Next, she claims that a student’s characteristics can influence piano learning. For this reason, she adopts the most appropriate methods according to the student’s age, level of attainment, personal idiosyncrasies, abilities, potential, musical background, natural talent and willingness for hard work. For example, for young students she always insists on good technique and comprehension of the piece’s musical value. She sees it as her duty in the lessons to help them to embrace classical music and learn its codes. As for the musical expression and structure, she thinks that it is not easy for the very young to understand music fully. So she asks them to handle only what is suitable for their age and level. Although tending to esteem all talented students, she also values industrious students who study autonomously. She describes talented students as prompted by an internal need to play to perfection. This allows them to overcome any technical hardships. They can reach the peak of the music course at a particular level through their own musicality. She argues, however, that talent is not enough: practice and independent learning are always necessary.

Another significant contributor to piano learning is the conservatory. She worries about the lack of uniformity in Greek conservatories, concerning the quality of the different diplomas and degrees issued, although officially they are of equal value. According to her, every Greek conservatory is independent and autonomous. The director follows his/her own policy, varying in strictness or leniency with regard to the criteria for examination assessments, repertoires, targets, and teaching methods. She has no hesitation in naming several conservatories where the board of directors treats students as ‘profit-making machines’. On these policy grounds she refers to the COA as the ‘best conservatory ever’. Comparing the teacher’s and the conservatory’s influence on a student’s needs and standards of piano learning, she sees teacher competence as much more important than conservatory policy. As she says, music education in Greece has been left mainly to the teachers’ discretion in carrying out their tasks. The fact that a number of teachers in several conservatories do not hold a piano degree constitutes a negative factor that further widens the gaps between the conservatories.
A further variable influencing piano learning is the family. Although Greek parents are not usually adherents of classical music, ‘A’ believes that they appreciate its value. They might not know what hardships their children are going to be involved in, but they take the initiative and make the first move by enrolling their offspring for piano lessons. She thinks parents contribute significantly to their children’s piano learning, which is why she always elicits their cooperation. She invites them to participate actively by attending their children’s piano lessons, so as to acquaint themselves with this kind of music and discover exactly what their children have to deal with. It also helps them monitor their children’s studying at home. She believes that young children especially need this kind of parental assistance and she therefore recommends any parental involvement conducive to children’s learning.

Finally, the very same societal context of the piano lessons may affect a learner’s progress. According to ‘A’, in Greece, which has never had a proper classical music tradition, classical music is regularly performed in only about three concert halls. Besides, ‘A’ stresses how difficult it is to fit piano studies into a Greek schoolchild’s heavy daily schedule. Evening cramming classes and private coaching compensate for the poor quality of state education. Piano learning must compete with other time-consuming activities like foreign language lessons, sports, and sometimes ballet classes. To deal with this competition, ‘A’ tries to inspire her students and strongly emphasises the creation of ideal learning conditions. She always prepares herself, and studies and practises hard on the piano at home. In this way, she can present well-executed pieces to her students. She also invites them to attend whenever she is giving a recital. She tries to make their study of music appear like a game, and explains everything in terms of symbols or metaphors to help familiarise them with the music pieces. By praising every bit of progress they make, she leads them towards a sense of complete satisfaction and a desire to continue studying. Additionally she persuades them to participate actively in competitions and concerts.

‘A’’s views about both ‘what should be learnt’ and what influences piano learning are very rich and complex. Although there is no simple one-way equivalence between these ideas and other teachers’ ideas, there seems to be a strong relationship conceptually between ‘A’’s ideas and the components of Swanwick’s layers of musical knowledge development. For example, there is a connection between the components of Swanwick’s ‘value’ layer and what ‘A’ says about ‘projection’ and about that ‘extra something’ which should be present in a good performance. In addition, she introduces
more concepts than the spiral – for example, one for the ‘attitude’ of a teacher who can effectively instil his/her aesthetic views in students. She regards piano learning as a gradual development of progressive layers and considers that the lower layers are needed as a basis for the upper ones. She also believes that all these layers must be re-activated during the whole process of music making.

Like Swanwick (1979: 67), who believes in an objectives hierarchy, which led him to the theory of the four layers (Swanwick, 1983; 1991b; 1994), ‘A’ speaks of a gradual acquisition of knowledge. In an initial layer she starts from the acquisition of skills that have to do with score reading and the production of the best possible sound. To produce a good sound, ‘A’ insists that dexterous handling of the instrument is required. In this layer the development of technique is absolutely necessary. At the end of this layer the students should be able to enjoy the feeling and the actual handling of the instrument. In the second layer ‘A’ aims at making students perform the music elements (phrases, notes, legatos etc.) as the composer intended. The targets of this layer presuppose the development of technique, so that the student can control the music structure to a certain degree and bring out the melody and the rhythm. Students’ personal experiences, such as singing and listening, contribute to a more expressive performance. In the third layer ‘A’ aims at total music structure control. The student can now show the coherence of the piece through harmonic progression. One phrase follows another as in a conversation. A composer’s fundamental music elements must be conveyed with all their authenticity, taking into account instrumental peculiarities. Technique and expression must already have been acquired. In the final layer students must have developed technique, expression and structure, and have appreciated and comprehended the meaning of the piece. At the end of this layer they will be able to convey this meaning to an audience with a ‘personal commitment’, as if it were their own composition. The following table shows ‘A’’s ideas on ‘musicality’ in relation to Swanwick’s layers of musical knowledge development.
Table 6 Teacher ‘A’’s views of ‘musicality’ in relation to Swanwick’s layers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swanwick’s layers</th>
<th>Teacher ‘A’’s views of ‘musicality’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>‘Technique’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strict adherence to the score and its detailed reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Score symbol comprehension,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>piano handling dexterity,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>methodological secrets for a better technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>‘Musicality’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Music structure control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Appreciation, comprehension, and projection of a music piece</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Awareness of the interrelationships between the above presented ideas

Moreover, ‘A’ refers to transactions between the five context variables mentioned above (see Table 7, p. 128) and the quality of a piano lesson. Although the variables discovered are not included in Swanwick’s model, this model does pick up some of the crucial elements of these transactions. One of the transactions that ‘A’ describes is a teacher’s influence in Swanwick’s ‘value’ layer. She claims that a teacher can pass on his/her values and mentality to the learners whenever s/he tries to inspire them to study a compulsory piece they do not like. S/he can help them not only to comprehend its meaning, but also to appreciate and convey it to an audience, as if it were their own composition. A teacher can thus succeed in developing the knowledge of the upper layer Swanwick calls ‘value’. Besides, a learner, depending on age or potential, can conceive the meaning of a piece, and can then succeed in acquiring what Swanwick includes in the ‘expressive character’. Additionally, lax conservatory policy in the examination repertoire, for example, when scales are not compulsory, may inhibit a learner’s acquisition of technique, which can be included in Swanwick’s ‘materials’ layer.
Parents’ attitudes, mentality and values also influence all the musical knowledge layers, and what contributes even more to this is the strong bond between Greek parents and their children. For example, the attitudes of parents towards music can influence the attitudes of their children (influencing the ‘value’ layer). A society’s values and dominant musical culture also affect piano teaching and learning in every layer. For example, when learners reduce the content repertoire because of heavy educational commitments, they may not develop all the necessary knowledge in technique, having studied fewer scales or etudes (influencing the ‘materials’ layer). Also they may not develop their understanding of the expression of composers of all eras (influencing the ‘expressive character’ layer). In addition, the mass media’s promotion of every kind of music other than classical hinders learners’ comprehension, appreciation and conveyance of a composer’s notions (influencing both the ‘expressive character’ and ‘value’ layer).

**Table 7 Variables influencing piano teaching and learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables influencing piano teaching and learning (Context Variables)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservatory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Society</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From all the above it can be concluded that Swanwick’s theory could be tested as an epistemological framework for understanding ‘A’’s ideas on the quality of the musical transactions, or their ‘musicality’. The *materials*, the *expressive character*, the *form* and the *value* of music can be seen as distinct layers by which piano teaching and learning in Athens could be better approached and understood. The difference between ‘A’’s ideas
and Swanwick's is that 'A'’s have been shaped and expressed in the particular context in which this study is taking place. Therefore, weight will also be given to the context variables influencing piano teaching in Greece. The analysis of the remaining interviews, including 'A'’s, will be along the lines of Tables 6 and 7, pp. 127 and 128 respectively. To avoid premature closure, vigilance will be maintained in case of other potential elements. Alongside these musical elements, the perceptions of 'A' about the personal and societal variables influencing piano teaching and learning in Athens will also guide analysis of the other teachers’ views. Along with the identified elements of musical quality, they will constitute the emergent analytical model. The headings (see Tables 6 and 7, pp. 127 and 128 respectively) will be: 'musicality' variables ('materials', 'expressive character', 'form', 'value', and their interrelationships), and context variables (teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society), which affect, shape and constrain the musical transactions. Investigations will also be made into how context variables influence the 'musicality' variables in the minds of the teachers.
6. ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

In the previous chapter, ‘A’’s interview was analysed in detail to categorise appropriately her perceptions of the quality of the teaching and learning transaction and the contextual variables. The analysis of ‘A’’s views explained how they were used to set up the analytical framework for the rest of the data. It also justified the use of the analytical categories. In this chapter all seven interviews, including ‘A’’s, will be analysed according to these major themes but with an eye to the emergence of any further elements. Themes so far observed in relation to the ‘musicality’ variables include: (a) some topics pertaining to Swanwick’s ‘materials’ layer, e.g. strict adherence to the score symbols, handling of the instrument, and the secrets of technique improvement, (b) ‘musicality’ – relating to Swanwick’s layer of ‘expressive character’, (c) control of music structure – not dissimilar to the elements of Swanwick’s ‘form’ layer, and (d) the appreciation, comprehension and projection of the music piece – topics relating to Swanwick’s ‘value’ layer.

The structure of ‘A’’s ideas strongly relates conceptually to Swanwick and Tillman’s (1986) notional schema of the four spirally developing layers, based to a large extent on Swanwick’s theory (1983). Therefore, the existence of the same relationship in the views of the other participating teachers will also be investigated. Finally, teachers’ views on the specific contextual variables possibly affecting piano teaching and learning will be analysed at both macro- and micro-levels. The former includes teachers’ understanding of the main societal forces affecting piano teaching and learning, such as the policy of the conservatory and parental interference. The latter includes the most important interpersonal relationships that always develop in the teaching and learning transaction. The following sections contain a comparative analysis of all the seven teachers’ views about piano pedagogy and how these affect their practice, as well as what, according to the teachers, may influence their teaching in the Greek context. The ways in which the teachers view pedagogic practice and its relations to musicality, as
well as the extent of agreement and disagreement between the teachers will become apparent in the following sections. This chapter, *Analysis of Interviews*, is followed by the *Discussion* chapter concerning all the main findings.

### 6.1. ‘MUSICALITY’ VARIABLES

In the following sections, the views of the teachers are analysed according to what should be taught in each layer of musical knowledge development. Their ideas about the interrelationships between the layers in piano learning are also presented. The unfolding of the ideas which follows will reveal the significance they give to the reproduction of music in a ‘musical’ manner in line with the composer’s intentions. The quest for ‘musicality’ in piano playing is not just their ultimate goal, but their aim from the very first touch of the keyboard.

#### 6.1.1. MATERIALS

In the *materials* layer of Swanwick’s model the seven teachers insist on strict adherence to whatever is written in the score and its detailed reproduction. To achieve this, they recommend the development of certain ‘notational’ or ‘manipulative’ skills connected with the proper handling of the instrument. They furthermore suggest various study methods (‘methodological secrets’) for technique improvement equipping learners to deal with the next layers of musical knowledge development. The teachers’ views will be analysed below.

##### 6.1.1.1. Symbol comprehension (Notational skills)

As in Swanwick’s first layer, the *materials* layer, so in the initial stage of piano learning, all the teachers begin their teaching by imparting knowledge of ‘materials’ with which their students can approach a musical piece (C: 55, D: 54, E: 18, 42, 106). For the teachers the symbols as they are depicted in the score are the main ‘materials’ by which a learner may discover the music which the composer was aiming at (A: 74, 76, F: 81). The score constitutes for a pianist the mediator between the composer and the performer, since it includes everything (C: 16, D: 85, E: 106). Elements to be found in a score include: note accuracy, accentuation and duration, pauses, dynamics, fingering, trills, gruppetti, phrases, rhythm, tempi, use of pedal, sound qualities, and interweaving of notes (i.e. staccato, legato, and portato). At this point ‘B’ stresses that all the symbols in the score should be thoroughly understood and be seriously taken into
account by a pianist, even the pauses where it seems as if the music has fallen silent (B: 181). As ‘B’ claims, even ‘a pause is part of the music’ (B: 181).

In their attempt to assist the students in correctly executing the score symbols the teachers tell them also right from the start of a course about characteristics of the piano which are due to its construction (F: 49, 67). They explain how to use the pedal as a tool for better presentation (B: 52, C: 16, G: 90), and how to produce a good-quality sound on the piano (C: 146). The sound control on the piano is considered by the teachers to be particularly difficult (B: 28, G: 36). As ‘B’ says, a pianist is more restricted than a singer, a violinist, or a flautist, all of whom can control the sound and ‘temporarily hold it back and listen to it again. Once a pianist has struck the keyboard, that is the end of it. There is no going back’ (B: 28).

According to the views of all the participating teachers the simple recognition of the symbols in the score and their positioning on the piano are not sufficient. The student, right from the first moment of his/her studies, should aim not only at the positioning of the correct notes, but also at discovering the ‘musicality’ latent in the score symbols (A: 94, C: 16, D: 54, 85, E: 106, F: 139). As ‘F’ says, a student should aim, right from the first moment of touching the piano, at playing every single note in the best possible way, even if the note is wrong (F: 4).

According to the teachers, ‘musical’ playing is achieved when the pianist tries to express what the composer was aiming at (A: 74, 76, E: 32), which in their opinion is found in the score (C: 16, D: 85, E: 106). To be sure that their students are following the correct procedure for executing a piece, they choose the most suitable editions for them. In their opinion, these are ones which are in line with the aims of the composer, and for most of the teachers that means the original editions (B: 152, 155, D: 85, E: 68, F: 83). At this point ‘A’ and ‘G’ report that in their choice of editions they take into account the age and level of their students. For young students and beginners they avoid original editions. They consider these to be insufficiently detailed for their students at such stages (A: 45, G: 34).

Nevertheless, the teachers may sometimes interfere with the score by adding their own suggestions. However, they always insist that students should only play what they consider the composer would have wished (E: 42, 65, 66, G: 34). The teachers may interfere with the score when they think that the edition is not as analytical as it should be. They may also interfere when it does not recommend fingering suitable for the
natural construction of a student’s hands (A: 74, 76, E: 42). They intervene when they think something will sound better if it is played with a different intonation, or with a finger other than the one recommended in the score. Sometimes they also interpose the use of the pedal, to cater for the improvements introduced into the piano as an instrument since the time when the piece was composed (E: 65, 66). The teachers believe that a student should keep to the new form of the score, even after a teacher’s intervention. This view of the participants agrees with the findings of Kingsbury’s (1988) research in which he talks about the authority of the score and that of the teachers. According to his research, a performance is related to the score. However, the relationship between performance and score is ‘indeterminate and problematic’ (op. cit.: 92). Freedom from the score is permitted only to the good performers (op. cit.: 94).

Whether the score is in the original edition or the one with the teacher’s remarks, the participants insist on presenting it faithfully and in a musical way right from the beginning (A: 10, 94, B: 60, G: 16, 33). This is because they believe that natural human reflexes make it difficult for the pianists to correct at a later stage what has been incorrectly learnt from the start (C: 148, G: 12). Playing each score symbol in the correct manner from the beginning develops reflex functioning, which leads to instinctive finger movements, and brings the best results. As ‘B’ stresses, there is also ‘finger memory’ – a kind of finger automatism (B: 67), which is developed by repeating the same movements and using the same fingers right from the start of the study of a piece. Then, even if the pianist is distracted during a public performance, the fingers will still be able to continue playing automatically in the correct manner.

From the beginning of the piano studies the teachers suggest methods which help towards a more musical implementation of what the score involves. These include slow study, and practice in sight-reading (E: 42, F: 78, 80, 131), listening (F: 59, 72, 74, 141) and memorising (B: 73, 75, F: 4, 31), which agree with the findings of music psychologists on practising the piano (see Chapter 2). In particular slow study helps with the reproduction of the correct symbols, the use of the correct fingers, playing in rhythm, and generally in the manner the composer would have wished to hear the piece (A: 94, C: 16, 54, 148, G: 80). The same view is expressed by D’ Abreu (1964) when he says that by slow study a pianist has the time to examine in detail everything written in the score. Sight-reading also greatly helps a student, not only to read notes at a fast pace (B: 247, C: 130, 132, E: 106, F: 78), but to feel fully at home with them when playing. In this way, a student is enabled ‘to learn to move’ the ‘eyes and hands’ away from the
note which has just been fingered, and to move instantly onto the next one (F: 80). This agrees with Sloboda (1986) who believes that eye movement during sight-reading is under immediate cognitive control, since the pianist has to attend simultaneously to the staves and to the keyboard. According to Wolf (1976), however, a pianist good at sight-reading does not need to look at the keyboard, and plays with musicality even when s/he does not strike the right notes. This also agrees with the views of Moore (1959), as well as those of the participants. They think that in every attempt of a pianist even when s/he does not know a piece well, as happens in sight-reading, his/her immediate aim should be ‘musicality’. According to the teachers, practice in sight-reading helps develop reading skills, which in turn assist the development of ‘musicality’. Musicality can be achieved even from the first touch of the keyboard when the student tries to free him/herself from the score. For the development of reading skills ‘A’ employs certain books, such as ‘The Easiest’ by Thompson (A: 67), while ‘E’ recommends studying as many pieces as possible (E: 106).

Listening helps in the comprehension of notes and production of good-quality sound, since students free themselves from concentration on the depictions of the notes in the score, and can concentrate exclusively on sound quality (G: 14, 90). Whatever they set their hands to should be musically and audibly correct right from the very beginning (G: 4, 8). In the same vein ‘D’ stresses that, for acquiring the fundamental prerequisites for the best sound quality, independence from the score is equally important. For this very reason, her students’ homework always includes exercises in listening to pieces and then trying to play them as nearly as possible in the way they sounded. She says, ‘I do not regard a musician who cannot perform a piece that he hears on the radio or in a concert hall as a really good one. He should practise that. A musical person is one who comprehends sounds’ (D: 39). Finally, in the teachers’ opinion, memorising helps break down bondage to the score, making it possible to play by heart and to pay exclusive attention to quality, rather than to reading the score. The importance of practice in memorising is mentioned in the literature by researchers, such as Newman (1974) and Sloboda (1986), who recommend methods for its development. For example, Sloboda (1986) suggests breaking down a piece into units. This will help free the pianist from attention to the score and enable him/her to begin from the next unit if a mistake is made. Thus, s/he will be able to concentrate on the music and to give fluency to the performance.
In conclusion, the continual aim of the teachers even at this initial stage is to get their students to bring meaning to the same music as defined in the score symbols and not simply to play the correct notes. As ‘F’ says, ‘music is poetry’ and, just as reciting ‘every syllable with the same intensity’ is not ‘poetry’, so playing the piano ‘in a monotonous way with the same tone’ is not ‘music’ (F: 108).

6.1.1.2. Piano handling dexterity (Manipulative skills)

All the participating teachers, from the very first moment of the course, put great emphasis on teaching how to handle the piano. Their goal is to get students to perform musically everything they see in the score (A: 57, 59, F: 6, 18, 56, 141). It is very difficult for a student to correct at a later stage what has been learnt in the wrong way. They believe that students must succeed in performing everything as accurately as the composer would wish. This can only be done if they learn from the beginning of the studies to stand in front of a piano and place their hands on it properly (A: 59, B: 192, F: 8). They can then develop ‘manipulative’ skills and achieve the best results. They can play notes accurately in the correct rhythm and tempo with the best quality sound and control of phrasing, dynamics, linking of notes, and so on (C: 16, G: 53).

The teachers have various suggestions about how to correctly position hands and body to enable the pianist to deal with difficulties, particularly with regard to the construction of the piano, in producing the appropriate sound on each occasion (C: 88). Most of the teachers seem to believe that the ‘Russian School’ of piano playing recommends the best methods for standing in front of the piano and using the hands (A: 57, 135, B: 163, E: 34). As ‘E’ says, unlike Westerners who play ‘nailed to their seats with their arms almost stuck to their ribs’ (E: 34), the Russians sit relaxed in front of the piano with their shoulders lowered (E: 30). They put their arms in a position where they can move and ‘lead’ their fingers to the following notes in such a way as to ‘fly’ over the piano (E: 34). The teachers suggest that for the correct hand positioning the wrist should be parallel to the keyboard and not fixed on the wooden part of it (F: 102, 104).

They give particular suggestions about how their students should stand and place their hands on the keyboard. However, they believe that what is most important is the production of the musical sound appropriate for each occasion rendering what the composer would wish (B: 188, D: 45, F: 8). As ‘C’ says, ‘it is impossible for the position of the hands on the piano to be fixed because one has to play numerous things that are completely different. It is one thing to play only one note and another two or
three notes, a scale, a staccato or a legato’ (C: 144). Moreover, they believe that there are individual peculiarities of body and hand to be taken into account (C: 82). Ultimately, however, they consider that the construction of the human body leads pianists to employ almost the same method, because with it their hands gain looseness and as a result produce the best-quality sound (C: 144, 146). The teachers advise their students to listen very attentively to the sound they produce (C: 88, G: 78). If the sound is not what they expect, they should adjust their body posture or hand position accordingly (C: 38, 69, G: 78). As ‘C’ says, ‘I tell them, of course, that they should sit erect in the centre of the stool with palms facing downwards, but at the same time I don’t set guidelines. You only guide them to learn to listen to the quality of their sound. There is the old saying *a musician’s own ears are his brain*’ (C: 146).

All the teachers consider looseness of the body and hands to be the basis for piano learning so they aim to teach this to their students from the beginning of the studies. Otherwise it will be hard for the student, and to a certain extent for the teacher, to deal with them successfully later (A: 57, 59, B: 125, C: 67, D: 45, 54, E: 10, 34, 42, F: 99, 141). As they stress, the body and arms must be relaxed with the weight of the hands falling on the tips of the fingers. Only thus can a person succeed in gaining absolute control of the keyboard and getting a more expressive and ‘musical’ sound (A: 69, 74, 80, 82, B: 79, 125, C: 67, D: 45, E: 30, F: 99, G: 42, 48, 49). As ‘E’ says, ‘it’s a hard task for a person to perform with stiffness. Whatever he sets his hands to, will sound “wooden”… You can never produce a good sound, nor can you make your phrases melodic, if you haven’t learnt to set your hands free’ (E: 30). The teachers describe the ideal manner of handling the piano as maintaining the same looseness as that of a person out strolling (B: 193) or sitting indoors in a very comfortable armchair, even if the fingers are actively in movement (E: 30). At this point ‘E’ takes Richter as an example. He is said to have known how to exploit the power of his arms so well that, keeping them free with the weight falling on the tips of each finger, he could even move an entire piano with the tip of his little finger (E: 30). For a student to learn how to acquire fingers free but full of power and energy, ‘E’ and ‘G’ think it is not enough for the teacher simply to say ‘loose’ (E: 30, G: 30). According to ‘E’ the teacher should help the student to understand this when told to take a breath and to feel calm (E: 30). Only when feeling at ease and relaxed can a person free the body automatically (E: 30). In the same vein, ‘G’ suggests the teachers should show the students the exact sound to be produced, because she believes that the students will not relax properly if they do not
see the need to change (G: 30). She considers it so important to pay attention to both looseness and sound that she herself wonders which to teach first. ‘It looks as if the sound has the upper hand. If, for example, I tell a student to try to produce a particularly soft sound, he’ll try to find the solution without my help’ (G: 28), she says.

In their efforts to help the students to achieve looseness the teachers employ various techniques. For example, ‘B’ advises them always to keep their thumbs relaxed, since, according to her, this can loosen the whole arm (B: 103). A technique for violin playing, which a violinist demonstrated to ‘G’ could be, according to her, the solution for the stiffness problem (G: 44). She also suggests two exercises, which she describes as follows:

You play the notes a lot closer to the keyboard, moving your elbow in such a way that it makes an imaginary circle. As you play legato and close to the keyboard, the sound produced is softer and pleasanter. The elbow will follow the fingers, if the hand is really loose. What I mean is, you should start the move from the finger, and the elbow or the fist will follow. What you should concentrate on is how to put the weight of your hand on the tip of your finger (G: 42).

For difficult things I recommend a study that I call ‘hammers’. What I mean is lifting your fingers just before touching the keyboard and keeping them loose. To get this you need to lift each finger at the very last moment and with great speed and let it fall on the keyboard, thus avoiding finger stiffness at the time. So you get a natural movement. I call it ‘hammers’ because the sound produced in that way is somehow coarse (G: 41).

The teachers also recommend the avoidance of superfluous movements. These interfere with a person’s looseness when trying to get the good sound desired (C: 108, G: 92). They may also distract the audience from what is meant to be expressed, thus altering the composer’s intention (B: 2, 4, G: 92). At this point ‘B’ adds an exception to the rule and says that superfluous movements may be excusable for the sake of gaining more expressiveness in pieces by romantic composers (B: 148). Finally, even in this exception to the rule there is apparent the general aim of the teachers that the pieces should be presented in a musical manner. Rules, which previously had been required for the sake of the music itself, may be broken in order to produce a still more musical sound. This is because all of them believe in what ‘C’ claims, namely that there are no limits to how well a pianist can play (C: 88).
6.1.1.3. Methodological secrets for a better technique!

All the teachers regard the development of technique as a necessity. It is a basic attainment for anyone entering the world of music and approaching musical expressiveness (A: 2, 28, 100, 104, C: 38, E: 26, 84, 91, 94, F: 91, 149, G: 116). Technique for them is not the ultimate goal (E: 20) but a means of attaining more expressive playing (E: 82, 47). As ‘A’ says, technique is the ‘servant’ of ‘musicality’ (A: 100).

According to the teachers, technique is necessary (A: 76, G: 67) for ‘training’ and ‘strengthening’ the fingers (G: 38, 63, 94), so that a learner will be enabled to move on to the subsequent layers. For acquiring technique or its improvement they particularly impress on their students certain methods of studying which combine elements adopted by schools of piano technique. Most of the teachers believe that the ‘Russian School’ recommends more effective methods as far as technique is concerned (A: 57, 135, B: 163, E: 34). However, all the teachers consider it to be impossible to ask all learners to adhere to the principles of a single music ‘school’ (C: 144, F: 93, 102, G: 38, 39). As ‘B’ says, ‘every student has to be treated in his own special way, and what’s good for one might not be so for another’ (B: 235). As to what method the student is to follow, the teachers take into consideration a number of factors. These include individual characteristics, abilities, shape of hands, the composer’s aims, and difficulties to be overcome at any given moment (A: 61, C: 38, D: 95, E: 70, F: 102, G: 90). Then, according to the teachers, even pianists who do not have the appropriate hand structure (B: 190, 192, E: 92, G: 4), or any special talent for music, will be enabled to ‘direct’ their hands themselves without playing in an uncontrolled way.

Methods mostly recommended to students include direct technique methods, such as the study of scales, etudes and exercises, and methods which develop both technique and musical expressiveness, such as intensive study of the technical difficulties in the music pieces they are to play, and listening skill exercises. According to all the teachers, however, even when a person is studying an exercise that seems to aim exclusively at the improvement of technique, s/he should try to ‘play beautifully’, paying attention to the ‘right sound’ and the music itself (F: 143). As ‘D’ says, ‘if there is a staccato somewhere, that in itself must express something’ (D: 45). According to the teachers, technique and expressiveness, or what they call ‘musicality’ (which comes from good sound quality), are interconnected. They ask their students to develop ‘musicality’ along with all the other exercises exclusively concerned with technical skills. As ‘A’ says,
technique may be considered a prerequisite for the development of ‘musicality’ (A: 2, 28, 104), however, technique and ‘musicality’ (i.e. musical expression) should be developed simultaneously (A: 104). The same view is held by Hallam (1998) when she claims that a student during practice should develop six musical skills (aural, cognitive, technical, performance, and learning skills, and musicianship).

Since the ultimate aim of all the teachers is to help students to play in the most musical way, all their methods include both technique and musical acquisition as goals. More specifically, the first ‘methodological secret’ the teachers ask their students to make use of, is starting from a slow tempo (A: 61, C: 40, E: 30, 34, 42, F: 112). They consider slow study to be the most important kind of practice, since it enables a learner, even from the start, to play the piano as rhythmically and as musically as possible. Studying thus allows time to meditate before putting ideas into practice. These are ‘C”s comments on the above-mentioned practice:

Slow practice... is not a specific study, but it becomes one because you simply cannot play the piece at a fast pace, since you still don’t know it. If a person is given a new piece, no matter how difficult or easy, it is like the first step one takes when learning to dance. One starts slowly and as time goes by the pianist’s hands or the dancer’s feet gather speed. It’s not a matter of repetition, but the faster you think, the faster you play... A person must know what he is playing. Everything is to be correct and performed on time (C: 40).

As ‘F’ claims, ‘what is difficult’ is ‘to achieve the proper slow execution’ (F: 112). For this reason, the teachers consistently advise their students to play at a tempo at which they can keep good control over the whole procedure. Then they can produce an excellent execution of the whole piece. They can move gradually from a slow pace to a fast one (B: 71, E: 42, F: 56, 123), keeping control over the tempo by counting aloud (F: 56) or using a metronome (C: 40, F: 123). Also playing in the best possible way even from the beginning of the study of a music piece can be achieved in various ways. These include using each hand separately (A: 61, E: 42, F: 56, 78) – exercising mainly the left hand (B: 144) –, repetition (E: 34), as well as special concentration on the ‘difficult parts’ (B: 75, 109, C: 40, E: 41, F: 93, 121). As ‘F’ says, ‘if they [students] have a problem only on the last bar, they have to work harder only on that particular bar’ (F: 121). Not until they have ‘successfully dealt with any difficult points’ can they ‘incorporate the rest of the piece’ (F: 121).

Practising mentally and away from the piano (A: 24, B: 2, 58, 67, 97, C: 82, 102, 112, E: 68, 70, F: 68, G: 81, 83), which is also recommended by all the teachers, helps a
student to become more aware of a piece. It also brings more freedom at the piano keys, and by extension improves technique. So the student will keep the whole piece more clearly in mind (F: 68), and if a mistake is made anywhere, will recognise at any moment at what point to continue. Nevertheless, practising away from the piano, according to teacher ‘C’, is apparently useless unless combined with various other keyboard exercises. These will not only verify the correctness of whatever the student has memorised, but will also develop listening skills and improve quality and control of sound. She says:

I know someone who learns all his pieces thoroughly on the table. He has not, however, managed to play the piano so well, because they need to be heard too. You have to see if whatever you have in your mind can be heard on the piano as well as you imagine it. I recommend this kind of study only when someone wants to learn the piece over a long period of time (C: 102).

Listening exercises are very important for the teachers. These help students to overcome most technical difficulties. They also get them to the next stage of the piano learning procedure, which develops the expressiveness (or what they call ‘musicality’) they are always aiming at. For the development of listening ability the teachers suggest three approaches. These are (a) playing what is heard without the help of the score (D: 39), (b) listening to the pieces they study being played by other pianists without copying them (B: 153, 211, C: 86, F: 44, 45), and (c) paying close attention to the sound quality in the student’s pre-recorded performance (B: 22, D: 71, G: 110). To enable a person to acquire ‘a good ear for music’ (F: 74), the teachers also suggest singing, especially for learning polyphonic and expressive pieces (A: 49, B: 171, C: 84, E: 12, F: 12, 74, G: 32).

Another exercise recommended by teachers is ‘standing up’ (B: 77, 79, F: 99), so that a person may not only be able to gain a better body posture and hand position, but also loosen up. This leads to a more expressive piano playing. ‘When you stand erect your arm hangs down from the shoulder, so it’s obvious what is right. Many children block their strength at the elbow. While you are standing you don’t do that. When you are trapped with the elbow still, it more or less becomes stiff. The arm should be relaxed right from the top, so that the weight of the hand falls on to the tips of the fingers’, ‘B’ says (B: 79). In the same vein, ‘F’ claims that with this exercise the student can distinguish ‘how the sound is heard when the arm pressure comes from the shoulder’ (F: 99).
Furthermore the teachers insist on practising sight-reading (C: 130, 132, E: 105, 106, F: 78, 80, 131). Students can then play a piece easily, as soon as it is seen in the score, even if it has not been heard before. The teachers are thoroughly convinced that such students are likely to be able to cope with a new piece a lot faster than those who lack this skill. The teachers believe that sight-reading is a very useful skill to possess, because, as 'C' says, it could reduce two hours of study to a mere half hour (C: 130).

For some students this is an innate ability. However, all the teachers believe that, even if it is not innate, ability in sight-reading can be improved with the appropriate practice, and so they recommend certain methods. 'F', for example, suggests playing directly by sight as many previously unknown pieces as possible. According to her, with this study the students learn to move the eyes and hands from one note to the next, and consequently facilitate sight-reading in particular (F: 78, 80, 131).

All the participating teachers strongly recommend the study of scales, etudes and exercises for technique improvement. This enables students to develop the dexterity necessary for coping with any difficulty in producing expressiveness (A: 76, 100, B: 159, 215, C: 44, D: 87, E: 2, 30, 47, 91, 92, F: 83, 93, G: 69). Scales, etudes and exercises are considered by the teachers to be as vital for a pianist's further progress as everyday physical fitness training is for an athlete (D: 87, 88). Stressing how much she believes in these matters, 'F' states that she does not belong to any particular 'school' of technique, but has created her own 'school', where one has to study scales and arpeggios every day (F: 93).

The teachers' ultimate goal in teaching scales, etudes, and exercises appears to be to help their students to cope with any technical difficulty that may crop up in their music pieces (E: 2, 8). As 'C' says, with scales 'you improve your technique: you learn to handle the keyboard and you get familiar with the notes of the pieces since they embody scales' (C: 44). Since the pieces usually involve elements such as scales, arpeggios and so on (B: 215), in addition to being played with technical correctness, they should show a high degree of musicality. 'D' believes that a student should study scales or arpeggios using the same notes as those in the scores of the pieces studied and with such musicality as the pieces themselves demand. She comments on this matter as follows: 'I think that physical education in music, that is finger training, can be achieved through the very pieces themselves. By just studying them one can develop one's technique' (D: 88). According to the teachers, not only does technique develop musicality, but also the search for musicality improves technique (D: 46, 88, E: 46, G: 28). As 'G' claims, if the
student sets out to understand the piece musically and says to him/herself, ‘I don’t like this sound’, s/he will find a way to play it (G: 28).

Apart from usual methods employed by all the teachers, some of them appeared to give particular emphasis to certain ‘special’ methods which they had learnt sometimes from other teachers and sometimes from their own personal experience. One of these ‘special’ methods was that of ‘A’ and ‘G’, who called it a ‘packet’. This method, as has already been mentioned in the analysis of ‘A’’s interview (see also A: 63), is mental practice for memorising the position of hands and notes together. The pianist plays simultaneously up to six consecutive notes, like a chord, whose execution in a piece affords difficulty. In this way s/he understands the position which the fingers should take up when the notes are played consecutively as written in the score and simultaneously the fingers ‘memorise’ (B: 67) this position. ‘D’ also adopts a ‘crystal clear’ technique method the well-known performer Argerich uses. This kind of exercise initially makes piano handling more difficult, but by completing it a student appreciates how much easier it is to play without such difficulties. ‘D’, who has been a fellow-student of hers, describes Argerich’s exercise as follows:

You play with your fingers facing upwards rather than down on the keyboard (D: 97).

‘B’ suggests a ‘special’ method of studying all polyphonic pieces. She describes it as follows:

I... ask them to play the two voices by assigning them to both hands. I do this to make them distinguish the two voices, because if they get used to playing them with both hands it would be absolutely wrong. I also ask them to play the lower voice piano on the right hand and the higher voice forte on the left hand (B: 169).

One of the difficulties students encounter on the piano is trying to play the notes separately from each other. For this ‘F’ recommends a special study where the student presses the first note and directly moves the hand over the next note without touching it. This is done in order to teach the hand this movement. The student then presses the next one (F: 80). In addition ‘G’ suggests a specific study for pianissimo (G: 38) used by Fleisher. She analyses it in the following way:

When you play fast and have to do a pianissimo, it’s likely that you will miss most of the notes. Fleisher tells you at the beginning to play it. If you don’t possess strong fingers he tells you to begin playing forcefully, in order to get your fingers strengthened. Then says, ‘now play it without the
slightest sound’, and afterwards he lets you re-play it allowing some notes to be heard. After having played it for four to six times, depending on your technique, of course, all the notes come out a lot clearer in pianissimo (G: 38).

Teacher ‘G’ also advises students who find the pedal hard to handle, ‘to practise scales or arpeggios on it’ (G: 90). In these the notes are usually simpler than the ones in the pieces themselves. That is why this study helps the pianist concentrate exclusively on pedal control. Moreover, teacher ‘B’ recommends a number of special methods for students with short fingers, like using two hands instead of one to play widely separated notes (B: 197). Besides, she is of the opinion that during his/her study a learner should use other means, such as a mirror to control body posture (B: 4), or a metronome to discipline technique and rhythm (B: 233, 235).

In conclusion, all the teachers consider that everyone, even those with short fingers or little talent, can improve technique by practising suitable methods for each eventuality. As teacher ‘G’ says, technique acquisition is possible for anyone, and that is why she thinks of it as a fundamental prerequisite for anyone who wants to move on to the next layer, which is expressive character (G: 116). As she states, ‘I believe that a good technique can be acquired by anyone… there are a few learners who cannot get even that. It’s not a large proportion. It might be only something like one per cent’ (G: 58).

6.1.2. EXPRESSIVE CHARACTER

The next layer after materials, which entails technique development, involves expressing a piece of music ‘musically’ (A: 74, 76, 89, B: 48, C: 6, D: 43, F: 12). In this particular layer the teachers emphasise the importance of bringing out the right character of the piece, reproducing musically its deeper notions (B: 12, 148, 201, D: 43, E: 18, 20, 57, 82, F: 149), always in line with what the composer would have wanted (C: 98, D: 60, F: 18, 82, 113, G: 26, 58, 63).

‘Musicality’ – the teachers’ name for ‘expressiveness’ (A: 2, 12, B: 60, C: 94, D: 86, E: 2, F: 47, 56, G: 38) – is their main interest, since, as ‘G’ says, music itself is a song, which must be sung ‘magically’ or ‘magnificently’ (G: 112, 116). According to the teachers, ‘musicality’ is required during the whole piano course, even when students are at the very elementary stage of their studies (A: 10, D: 28, E: 72, 91). However, an advanced background in technique is considered by the teachers to be a prerequisite for developing the ability to express oneself musically (A: 2, 102, F: 91). As ‘C’ explains,
it is impossible to express yourself without ‘a good technique’ since without it you cannot ‘control yourself, the piano or your hands’ (C: 38). A good quality sound is produced only with relaxed hands, proper body and hand positioning and the appropriate fingers (E: 10, F: 123, 141, G: 28, 78).

On the other hand, according to the teachers, however technically competent a person may have become, the sound must never lack musicality or melodiousness (E: 2, 47, 49, 82, F: 139, 143). This balance between technique and expressiveness has been commented on in the literature. For example, Sloboda (1986) argues that great performers can combine excellence in both expression and technique. Should they have to choose between the two, the participating teachers prefer ‘musical’ playing, even with insufficiently developed technique (B: 243, E: 8, 12, F: 4, 108, 149, G: 8, 16, 38). Moreover, although the teachers believe that ‘technique’ precedes ‘expressive character’, they think that sometimes the quest for the latter helps to achieve the former (D: 46, E: 46). As ‘D’ claims, if the teacher sternly says to students, ‘put your fingers like this on the keyboard’, they are likely to make very ‘slow progress’. However, if the teacher tells students, ‘you need this expression, so put your hands like this so that you get this result’, they will understand (D: 46). According to teacher ‘D’, if students are ‘alert enough to get the meaning of the sound’, they will definitely find what hand movement to make to bring out this ‘brilliancy’ (D: 45).

The teachers believe that expressive character development can be attained first and foremost by strict adherence to the score and its expressive reproduction, since everything can be found there (A: 109, C: 82, D: 85, G: 67). Playing ‘with expression’ becomes possible through close attention to matters such as: sound quality, phrasing, dynamics, correct note accentuation, interweaving of notes with or without the use of a pedal, note and pause duration, clarity of both melody and accompaniment keeping sound intensities of each hand independent, good rhythm execution, and a fixed tempo. Comprehending a composer’s ideas is a prerequisite for producing all the above-mentioned qualities (A: 6, 111, C: 16, 82, 96, 118). However, according to the teachers, it does not matter if some notes are not played exactly as written in the score. As ‘F’ claims, ‘music is not only about playing the right notes’ but about ‘how you play’ them (F: 4). ‘What’s important’, she always maintains, is ‘the way you play something, the way you talk, or express yourself’ (F: 87). The character of a piece is not altered much by a small slip in a few notes (E: 12, F: 4, 149, G: 8, 16, 38). However, other more
serious mistakes, like monotony of sound (F: 108), or change of rhythm, could make even a ‘waltz’ seem like a ‘march’, says ‘F’ (F: 31, 61).

To obtain the most suitable expressiveness – or ‘musicality’ – the teachers recommend various approaches. In their opinion it becomes a lot easier to ‘play a piece of music musically’ when it is performed at a slow tempo (A: 96, E: 20, 42, F: 112, 113). The music should be sung as melodiously as possible (A: 49, B: 48, C: 6, D: 62, E: 12, F: 12). The student should listen attentively to whatever is being played, so as to evaluate and improve it if necessary. At this point teacher ‘C’ gives the listening aspect priority over practicalities like hand position, which could be distracting (C: 69, 88). In the same vein, teachers ‘B’ and ‘G’ stress that wrong body postures and movements often flatten the piece’s character. They also distort the true expression of what the composer wanted (B: 148, G: 38, 92), even if the pianist strictly adheres to what is written in the score.

In this layer the teachers constantly emphasise the quality of sound and its means of attainment. They also stress the peculiar difficulties faced by a pianist in contrast to other instrumentalists (A: 55, 82, B: 28, 32, 201, 223, C: 6, 16, 69, 96). Expressing music on the piano is particularly hard, since a sound produced on this instrument is by itself a ‘monotonous’ and ‘continuous thud’ (C: 88). Moreover, a variety of sound qualities can be produced on the piano according to the demands of the piece. As teacher ‘B’ says:

We mustn’t forget that music, like painting, means colour, light and nuance. All sorts of sound: obscure, or quite often dazzling, sad or merry, pleasant or depressing. Each and every one should be there, either individually or combined. You have to make a great endeavour to pinpoint them (B: 50).

The teachers believe that a piano can take the place of a whole orchestra. This convinces them that mental practice, where students imagine the sounds of different instruments and try to imitate the appropriate sound in each case, is frequently essential for playing the piano ‘musically’ (B: 231, G: 38, 39). Such an imitation facilitates polyphony, whenever distinction among melodies is deemed necessary. According to the teachers, projecting the theme and the voices of a polyphonic piece should be attempted at an early stage. They can be clearly heard if the pianist treats them as if they are being played by different instruments or sung by a whole choir (B: 167, C: 82, 96).

In the teachers’ opinion there is a difference between what a composer intends to convey and a performer’s ‘personal expressiveness’ (A: 111, C: 16, 38, 88, 96, 98, 118,
As defined by Swanwick (Swanwick and Tillman, 1986), this is unique to each individual. In the same vein, the teachers say that if a person observes different performances of the same work of a composer, s/he will observe different interpretations. Every composer expresses personal experiences and background, as well as the atmosphere and problems of his/her time (D: 6, 7, 8, G: 16, 24, 73, 79). This agrees with the ideas of Clynes (1983; 1985; 1987), supported by Thompson (1989), that every composer’s works are characterised by an inner ‘pulse’, resulting from his/her own experience. At this point, as a good example of her arguments, ‘C’ cites Bach, a typical pre-classical individual who composed polyphonic religious music (C: 54, 82). However, a pianist also has his/her own character, personality, age, background, experience, dexterity and shortcomings, IQ, manual characteristics, ear for music, and family background which shape his/her personal interpretation of a piece (B: 139, 148, C: 122, F: 44, G: 24). Personal expressiveness, springing from the performer’s ‘inner world’ (G: 71), vividly reveals itself whenever the piano is played. When not fully familiar with the composer’s mentality and time, a pianist may alter the expression of what the composer intended. S/he may present a piece as if it was from another era, even if it was a piece of his/her own time (B: 139, 148, G: 24). ‘B’ thinks a good example of this is Gould, the well-known pianist, who, in her opinion, has his own ‘peculiar way of expressing Bach’ (B: 152).

As ‘C’ says, music is not ‘what everyone likes to play’ but ‘how the composer would like the piece to be played’ (C: 16). The teachers believe that it is up to a performer to minimise the differences between the composer’s expressive character and his/her own interpretation. They also think that with appropriate guidance from the teacher even the character of Chopin, Mozart, and Beethoven pieces, which are regarded by them as especially hard to perform properly (D: 10, E: 20, F: 91, G: 71), can be taught (A: 109, B: 133, G: 38, 78). As ‘E’ says, the teacher’s main task is to teach the student music (E: 47, 49), since technique can be learnt by the student even without the help of the teacher (E: 2, G: 58).

In order to facilitate better understanding of the composer’s subtle meanings, the teachers use examples from everyday speech, metaphors or similes. These stir the imagination and help the student to understand what nuances of expression should be given to a music piece (A: 10, 43, 47, B: 131, D: 23, 68). A performer should understand the purpose and the deeper notions of a piece. These are influenced by the ideas of the period and the society in which it was composed, and by what the composer
may have wanted to express (B: 131, C: 98, D: 6, 7, 8, E: 18, 20, 26, F: 89, 91, G: 63).

This attempt on the part of the teachers to facilitate understanding of a composer’s meaning agrees with Clynes’s (1995) ideas that a performer should have enough experience of a composer’s music to understand his/her characteristic ‘pulse’. As he claims, the more experienced the person is, the more s/he should be able to understand in depth the specific style of each composer. As the teachers stress, even the shape and the structure of an instrument at the time when the piece was composed should be seriously considered in playing music (B: 150, E: 38, 39). After having taken into consideration all the above-mentioned matters and comprehended the piece well, according to the participants, the student can attain ‘some freedom in this discipline’ (D: 37). S/he will be carried along with the music (E: 26), and thus develop personal expressiveness always in line with the composer’s intentions (C: 86, D: 22).

In order to help students understand a composer’s wishes, ‘C’ advises them to be ‘broad-minded’ (C: 118). To this end she urges them to read various books, listen to other instruments, go to the theatre and watch films (C: 118). Although this appears to be extra-curricular, she believes that ‘broad-mindedness’ should be an integral feature of their studies in order to give them deeper insight. The seven teachers also insist on the students listening to the works of several great performers of the piece which they are studying, so as to understand what atmosphere they should create and what is to be listened to. The teachers warn them not to copy the performers but to allow themselves freedom to develop their own personal expressiveness, which may be different from that of the great interpreters (C: 86, F: 44, 45). As ‘C’ says, ‘I want them to learn music’ and ‘not to copy’ other pianists, not even the best. Their final goal, according to the same teacher, should always be ‘gradually... to develop their own point of view’ (C: 86).

In conclusion, according to the teachers, ‘musicality’ or ‘expressive character’ follows technique development. They believe that musicality can be taught (A: 109, B: 133), when it is not an innate ability (A: 36, B: 243), so they use a variety of methods. They connect the meaning of ‘musicality’ with the understanding and interpretation of a piece according to the character the composer would give to it. According to the teachers, however far they develop their own autonomous expressiveness, they should at all times maintain a deep respect for the composer’s music, spirit and aims (C: 98, D: 60, F: 18, 82, 113, G: 26, 58, 63). As ‘C’ says, the student should always keep in mind that the pianist is the means by which the audience listens to what the composer wished to convey (C: 118).
6.1.3. Form

After the development of technique and of expressiveness the teachers focus their interest on music structure control. This will give a piece unity, continuity and identity (A: 2, 8, C: 112, E: 44, F: 57, 59, G: 60, 73, 96). According to the teachers, music must always be viewed ‘as a whole’ (D: 45) and not as individual notes singled out without any coherence or interweaving (C: 112). A phrase, for example, should be performed in such a way that it leads on to another, so that the piece may acquire an identity and be recognised by the listener (C: 4, E: 44, F: 45, 57, 123). Otherwise, as ‘F’ claims, ‘music would have no significance at all’ (F: 125). It would consist of randomly scattered notes with no content whatsoever (C: 112, F: 125). Similar ideas have been expressed by Serafine (1988) who criticised the study of isolated music materials (see Chapter 2).

To help students to comprehend and play music as a coherent unity the teachers employ illustrations from students’ personal experience (A: 43). For example, they compare music to the construction of a house or a speech, both of whose main features, like music, are coherence of identity, meaning and context. The builder of a house needs to build the framework before the other parts of the construction. Similarly, the pianist has to imagine first the form and the harmonic progression of the piece, and then to deal with particular notes (D: 2). As ‘D’ comments, ‘if you start from the minor details you never reach your objective’ (D: 2). ‘D’ claims that music is a journey through time (D: 67). The audience will not know at any particular point what is to follow if the performer places special emphasis on each individual note and fails to imagine the piece as a whole.

The teachers also compare music to everyday speech (C: 50, 54, F: 2, 59, 125). To make the context understood, accenting every syllable is not enough. A person is supposed to know what s/he is going to say right from the very start, and what the overall meaning of his/her speech will be. Only then will s/he be able to attend to all the varieties of intonation in the phrases to show what emotions s/he intends to convey. The very same thing applies to music. What is most important is uniform structure and harmonic progression, so that, whatever is to be played, leads to an ultimate coherence. ‘Music is a womb of phrases’, ‘F’ says, exactly like speech (F: 4, 125), and these phrases are connected to each other and cause the piece to flow (F: 45, 47). Just as ‘we don’t speak in disconnected syllables, like “al-ways an-swver my que-stions please”’, when we play the piano, one thing follows another, and what we want to be heard is a complete phrase’ (F: 2). A pianist should show a clear beginning, middle, and end (C: 4). S/he
should handle the piano in such a way as to ‘lead’ the hands towards the final note of each phrase (E: 34) and so clarify the form of the piece to the audience (C: 4). Likewise, comparing a music composition to an extract from a written passage, ‘B’ claims, ‘it’s like a full statement in a passage that we have read. Full stop. It goes on and... reaches the end after a number of complete statements’ (B: 115). According to her, when it comes to music it is not only notes played that are important, but also familiarity with what one is aiming at and knowing how to achieve it. ‘One should know it right from the start, and have thought about all the points and where they lead... The process must be fixed in your mind and be capable of being put it into practice. This is what we call structure’ (B: 115). In the same vein, ‘E’ says that in every piece there may be many alterations, where the pianist has to simplify each separate element in his mind, in order to execute everything at the time of the performance. Only then will s/he be able to keep them under control as a complete unit, engaging not only the hands, but also the mind and spirit (E: 57).

According to the teachers, the symbols in a score show the harmonic progression and the composer’s deeper meaning for that piece (A: 10, 109, B: 129, 167, C: 4, 94, E: 34, F: 59, 143, G: 94). The combined efforts of the teachers and their students to develop this layer lead them to concentrate mainly on a composer’s characteristic way of repeating or interchanging certain patterns to make them parts of a whole, without interrupting the sound flow, but rather emphasising it (G: 80, 24). Matters to which the pianist should give attention, according to the teachers, include the correct rendering of legato, variety in sound qualities, pauses, interweaving and interchanging of themes and phrases, independence between hands and between themes, dynamics, harmonic progression, and maintaining tempo and rhythm right through the whole presentation.

The teachers also refer to the attention which pianists should give to the melodies in polyphonic pieces which are interwoven but must nevertheless still keep their independence. According to the teachers, in polyphonic pieces one has to emphasise the most musically significant voices, so that they emerge much more clearly without cutting up the piece or altering anything (C: 82, 106, G: 73). Any technical difficulties in the process should not interrupt the progress of the piece. ‘C’ instances one of her students, who found it hard to play a motif of minor importance. Every time this motif emerged, he paused for a short while and emphasised it. A listener might have thought that this was the centre of interest in the piece, and might consequently have missed the very essence of the music (C: 106). ‘G’ also mentions a student of hers, who was asked
to study *Rhapsody in Blue*, a piece of music which deals with many themes. Every single one of these should be played in a distinct mood, but keeping the sound flowing and the whole of the piece a coherent unity.

*Rhapsody in Blue* is a piece with numerous themes. They cannot be played in the same mood. One is passionate, another tense, and yet another a lot more relaxed... If someone manages to express this variety there might be a danger of it losing its unity. So we have to combine both variety and unity (G: 26).

In conclusion, the seven teachers believe that control of the structure is one more step towards more musical playing. To give a piece its form, a pianist should be able to execute with musicality every variety of phrases, dynamics and sound qualities, and generally perform all the score symbols in line with the composer’s intentions. According to the teachers, the variety of phrases, dynamics, sound qualities, and so on, is an integral part of the music itself, and so the pianist must give it great importance. As ‘D’ claims, ‘even if the composer intends to present the same two phrases in a sequence with the same dynamics, they shouldn’t be played in the same way... Music is like speech. You cannot repeat a phrase with the same intonation and accentuation. It is a matter of time and travelling in time. We are not the same as far as time is concerned. Even time changes continually and continuously. Now, in what I am telling you at this very moment the very same phrase expressed later will be completely different in intonation’ (D: 67).

**6.1.4. VALUE**

In the *value* layer the teachers refer to the value of music and musical pieces and attempt to get their students to appreciate them. In this layer the teachers use words such as ‘love’, ‘affection’, ‘personal involvement’, ‘authenticity’, ‘value’, ‘enjoyment’, ‘fulfilment’ and ‘inner contentment’. These describe attitudes and emotions that, in their opinion, their students should possess whenever they reach the highest level of piano playing. In this layer their main objective is to help students to comprehend and appreciate the good points in the music in order to perform them in their own style, as if they themselves were the composers (B: 48). They themselves must be ‘carried away’ by the music (E: 26) and themselves feel, and be able to convey to the audience, the authentic meaning the composer intended (A: 45, C: 50, E: 82, F: 147).

In Greek society the kind of music taught in conservatories is not usually heard in the mass media. The teacher is the only one who can alter the student’s attitude towards this
kind of music. Usually s/he has not encounter it before enrolling in the conservatory (A: 45, 113, C: 8, D: 24, 61, 62, E: 4, 14, F: 16, G: 108). According to ‘D’, the teacher’s authentic attitude towards the value of music in general and each piece in particular is what contributes most to a student’s correct comprehension and presentation of the subtle nuances of a piece (D: 26). As she frequently remarks, her teaching springs from her own ‘feelings’ and ‘attitudes’ towards music (D: 24), her love and faith in music’s value. This is what she particularly tries to instil in her students. The teachers’ attempts to convey their own love of a piece and its value become particularly obvious in cases where the piece is compulsory for examinations. Such a piece will not have been chosen by one of their students, or selected by mutual agreement with them (B: 209, E: 55, 84, F: 37).

In this layer all the teachers give weight to preparation for public performance, which for them is the peak of achievement in the studies (E: 28). Nevertheless they believe that from the beginning when a person studies a new piece, s/he should prepare for a complete interpretation. They consider that a student should not only study the pieces s/he is going to perform. S/he should also study a variety of other pieces, so as to understand them in depth and interpret them in the best possible way (B: 213, C: 82, 88, E: 106). In the course of one such preparation the student should not only understand for him/herself the meaning of a piece and appreciate its value. S/he should also be able to convey it to an audience, or to the examining committee at the end of each academic year. The student should correctly learn notes, expressiveness and control of structure, for better performance preparation. Also s/he should learn to deal with nervousness, or at least learn to play in spite of it, without forfeiting ‘perfection’ in the manner of playing (C: 14, E: 95, 103, F: 87, G: 60). According to ‘C’, nervousness springs from students’ ‘awareness that they haven’t prepared themselves well’ (C: 14) and as a result they may find themselves at a loss (C: 12). She claims that for a successful public presentation the main thing is to have thoroughly studied and familiarised yourself with the pieces of music, so that you are able to present them whether you are nervous or not (C: 14). In the same vein, ‘F’ advises her students to study persistently the difficult points in technique and to aim at a ‘101%’ performance. In this way their presentations will still be ‘perfect’, even if nervousness reduces it to only 100% (F: 87). For dealing with nervousness the teachers also encourage patience and careful study at a slow tempo, where everything should be played perfectly and ‘musically’ (A: 109, E: 34, F: 113, G: 16). There should be repetitions, especially at difficult points (E: 34, 41), and
rehearsals in front of a mini-audience before the final performance (B: 105, 107, D: 31, 32, E: 87). The teachers try not to interrupt their students as they perform in their presence during the final rehearsal (A: 53, 55, C: 92, D: 4, E: 87). As ‘C’ says, ‘to be able to play for twenty minutes and concentrate on what we are doing is something we have to learn’ (C: 92). One method which gives a performer self-confidence and enables him/her to react well if anything crops up during a performance is memorising a piece part by part. Thus a person may be able to start a piece from any point where a mistake has been made (A: 24, G: 60). A student must overcome technical difficulties and anxiety, and acquire not only self-confidence but also finger ‘memory’, which greatly helps ‘automatism’ and eliminates mistakes during a performance (A: 63, 76, B: 67). The importance the participants give to automatism agrees with Sloboda and Davidson’s (1996) view that ‘automaticity’ is one of the five most necessary characteristics of expressive performance (see Chapter 2). According to the teachers, this ability can be developed by using the same fingers for the given piece right from the start (B: 67). It can also be learnt by heart (A: 24, B: 143) and by repetition, moving from a slow pace to a faster one (B: 71, C: 40). The teachers also recommend mental practice. This helps students to avoid playing mechanically and, at the same time, trains them to cover up dexterously any mistakes they may make during a performance (A: 24, 63, C: 82, 112, F: 4, 31).

Another way to prepare for a performance is to listen either to the teacher performing the pieces or to other pianists performing on CDs or at concerts (B: 153, 211, C: 84, F: 43). In this way the students will manage to draw out the good points from the pianists’ presentations, thus improving their music comprehension, and strengthening their imaginations by attempting to produce their own interpretations (B: 153, 211, C: 86, G: 110). They should gradually develop their own points of view about the interpretation of a piece, as long as they respect the composer’s spirit. This becomes one of a learner’s goals when preparing for a public performance (A: 39, B: 153, C: 86, E: 26, 94, G: 71). The teachers want their students to understand a music piece fully, so that they can appreciate its notions and values. They therefore give them a brief biography of the composer, and an account of the mentality and values of the society in which s/he lived. ‘Music is a social expression, besides being the finest of all the arts, and reflects the values and the spirit of the age it is connected with’ (D: 6), ‘D’ says. For the same reason, the teachers advise their students to acquire additional learning besides that of piano playing, in order to be able to express the meaning of every piece performed (C:
116, G: 63). During their tutoring they stress the values and the notions that a music piece entails. They lead their students to a better comprehension and appreciation by passing onto them their own positive attitudes (A: 45, C: 8, D: 24, E: 4, F: 16, G: 108). According to the teachers, in order to be fully aware of whatever s/he is to perform, the student should be familiar with the composer’s life, works, and the age s/he lived in. S/he should also understand the form and construction of the piano at that time (B: 139, 150).

The teachers also advise students to avoid excessive body movements. These are usually the result of low self-esteem, or a tendency to perform in what is thought to be a more attractive way. However, they may distort the proper transmission of the composer’s notions (B: 2, 4, G: 92). ‘B’ suggests using a mirror to help the student to control the body position (B: 4). In addition, the teachers recommend that the student tape-record his/her own playing during the lesson or at home to enable him/her to distinguish mistakes made in expressiveness or in quality of sound (B: 20, 24, D: 31). Moreover, for a successful presentation ‘E’ recommends that the student during study at a slow tempo should learn to exaggerate (E: 34), so that what is played may be clearly conveyed to the listener as required (E: 34). As she says, even when ‘piano’ is written in the score, the music must be heard by the audience (E: 34). This recalls Hallam’s advice for a pianist (1998: 164), ‘to play with listener’s ears’. What ‘E’ means by ‘exaggeration’ is rather analogous to what actors do in a theatrical performance when they speak louder and with greater expressiveness than in everyday conversation. In the same way pianists should exaggerate in dynamics and expressiveness during a performance. They should make everything stand out clearly, so that even the listener furthest away at the back of the hall may hear and understand in depth the meaning of what is being played (E: 34). This agrees with the views of Sloboda and Davidson (1996) on the ‘flexibility’ of a performance where a pianist can exaggerate in order to highlight different aspects of music.

The teachers think that it is ‘musicality’ which makes a performance successful, even though the pieces may be played at a somewhat slower tempo (A: 92, 104, B: 253, C: 38, 94, D: 86, E: 20, 24, 34, F: 149, G: 38). ‘B’ stresses that listeners are not interested in the difficulties in technique a pianist may find in playing a piece, but ‘only want to listen to the music’ (B: 109). During a public performance the teachers, however, permit small mistakes in notes, provided that these are played with ‘musicality’ (E: 12, 20, F: 85, 86, 87). As ‘F’ claims, ‘what’s important is the way you play something, the way
You talk, or express yourself, and if some ‘trifling’ mistake occurs, it should not affect you in the least (F: 87). In the same vein, ‘B’ says that during a performance a pianist ‘should only think of the music’ without getting stuck on minor details (B: 109). But the teachers never consider acceptable mistakes that alter what the composer wished to express, or playing which, despite being technically irreproachable, has no feeling in it whatsoever (B: 125, 243, E: 82, F: 139, G: 10). ‘B’ says, ‘[The audience] look for musicality. It’s wonderful to be perfect, but, if we had to choose between perfection and musicality, we would choose the latter. It provides us with subtle insight, emotion and pleasure’ (B: 243). For ‘G’, a good performance can also be successful even if there are mistakes in notes. It simply has to have elements which move the audience and lead them into a magical world where there is no chance of ever noticing minor faults. She explains it as follows:

I am not interested only in... technique. I want myself to be moved. So far my students have moved me only two or three times. And it’s important for me to be moved by a person I have taught and, at that very moment, to forget about all I taught him at my sessions and all the mistakes he probably made; and just get carried away by his magnificent playing (G: 112).

The teachers stress the importance of a pianist becoming personally involved in the music ‘heart and soul’ (B: 48), but without personal ambition, which, is a great drawback in a performer (D: 34, 35). ‘D’ says, ‘when you are involved in the piece you must forget all about yourself. If you get involved in whatever you are doing, you forget yourself so much that you concentrate on that and nothing else. So your own personality disappears... I wish we could do it’ (D: 35). In the same vein, ‘C’ claims that when a performer expresses a piece s/he should always endeavour to encourage the audience’s admiration for the composer rather than the performer. Otherwise, ‘C’ says, it would be like an actor reciting Hamlet’s monologue. The actor might aim to convey what Shakespeare had in mind, but be so admired for the excellent presentation that Shakespeare himself would be altogether forgotten by the audience (C: 118).

In conclusion, the participants believe that teachers should develop a learner’s aesthetic sensibility towards music. The learner should thus interpret the score ‘musically’ as embodying meaning intended by the composer and convey it to the audience. In this layer, a pianist should enjoy the music and be in continual search of ‘perfection’. As ‘C’ says, ‘there are no limits to how well we can play. There is always room for improvement’ (C: 88).
As in Swanwick’s (1983) theory, the participating teachers maintain that musical knowledge is developed by progressing from the basic elements to the more advanced. A pianist’s final aim should be to acquire the ability to express a piece to complete satisfaction and comprehend it, as if it were his/her own creation. The teachers have a certain orderly pattern in mind as described above. They believe that some previous knowledge is a prerequisite for the development of further more advanced knowledge. They nevertheless deal simultaneously with all the layers right from the outset. In their opinion, from first to last the playing should be ‘musical’, even in an easy piece and at a slow tempo.

In particular the order of what should be learnt, according to the participating teachers, should be: (a) score symbol comprehension, (b) piano handling, (c) technique development, (d) expressive character or ‘musicality’, (e) music structure control, and (f) value issues, such as comprehension, appreciation, and presentation of meaning. All the teachers believe what ‘F’ says, that the ‘building’ up of musical knowledge occurs only ‘step by step’ (F: 47). However, in the event of shortcomings the teachers appear to regard it as absolutely necessary for a learner to re-activate knowledge, even when the top layers have been reached. This agrees with D’Abreu’s (1964) view that a student should revise pieces continually to ‘re-learn’ what s/he may have forgotten and to ‘strengthen’ what s/he already knows. Even when knowledge has already been gained, the teachers correct or reinforce it throughout the procedure. For example, ‘C’ remarks in the interview, ‘as a rule, we insist on that [technical development], but for the children you listened to, that wasn’t the first time they had played the pieces. They had reached a fair level of attainment. If they do meet with some difficulty in technique we come back again’ (C: 112). Swanwick’s model thus appears validated in the reference to the ‘need for re-activation’ of the different layers in new musical situations. So the teachers’ opinion is in line with Swanwick’s view that ‘the developmental spiral has to be re-activated each time music is encountered, and certainly when we are faced with a new piece as a performer, or in an audience or when composing, or improvising’ (Swanwick, 1988, p. 82). Extending the argument, the teachers say that the search for knowledge, which could be placed in the second layer, for example, would greatly help a student in learning the basic elements. As ‘E’ claims, when students aim at playing ‘musically’, they simultaneously improve their technique (E: 46). For example, when the teacher
demonstrates expressiveness to learners right from the start, they can find out for themselves how to position their hands on the keyboard to get better technical results (D: 46).

The teachers firmly believe that right from the beginning everything should be dealt with ‘musically’ and simultaneously, albeit at a slow tempo, with strict musical adherence to the score, and be continuously re-activated. As ‘D’ claims, a teacher ought to talk about everything from the very beginning of a course, and insist on students putting it all into use. Gradually they will get the results they are after (D: 3). In the same vein, ‘F’ says that even if students do not know the notes well, they must simultaneously start attempting to learn more difficult aspects of knowledge (F: 124). ‘I have to tell them about everything right from the beginning, whether they are able to do it or not. They should know what they have to accomplish within the next few lessons’ (F: 125), she says. According to ‘G’, studying each element separately, notes and fingers, then dynamics, is regarded as ‘a non-artistic attitude’ (G: 12). This is why ‘A’ compares the keyboard of a piano to that of a typewriter when a pianist strikes the keys without ‘musicality’ and leaves music for a later stage (A: 10). ‘B’ claims that a pianist setting off on the studies without paying attention to every musical detail is like a civil engineer planning to construct the top floor of a building without first constructing the supporting pillars (B: 58). There is another important reason why the teachers insist on the perfect presentation of a piece albeit at a slow pace from the beginning and even from the very young beginners. It is because they believe that mistakes in sound, interpretation, or musicality are hard to correct at a later stage (B: 56, 60, C: 148, D: 2, E: 14, F: 6, 17, 56, 112, G: 48). As ‘C’ insists, ‘the mistakes that we make at the beginning haunt us for the rest of our lives’ (C: 148).

In conclusion, the teachers consider certain elements fundamental, as does Swanwick, and consequently appear to follow a certain order of priorities. They think, however, that the attainment of the more advanced knowledge can help in the assimilation of the more elementary. Thus they seem to consider it necessary that a person should aim at the simultaneous attainment of all the layers of musical knowledge. This should be so even from the very first lessons when a sufficient level in the basic ones has not yet been reached. Moreover, in accordance with Swanwick’s theory, the teachers believe that every form of knowledge should be ‘re-activated’ in the course of learning the piano. Even when a person has reached the highest layers of musical knowledge, s/he should constantly be turning back to repeat the study of the elementary ones. According
to the teachers, everything must be played 'musically' and everything has equal importance in music. As ‘E’ says, even to play a phrase, which is considered basic knowledge, ‘may be the most difficult thing’ (E: 32).

6.2. CONTEXT VARIABLES INFLUENCING PIANO TEACHING AND LEARNING

All the participating teachers believe that piano learning in Athens is influenced by five variables: teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society. In the sections that follow there is a description of the teachers’ views about these variables and about how they influence piano lessons in the Greek context.

6.2.1. THE TEACHER

The importance of the teacher in piano learning has been referred to in great detail in the interviews with the seven teachers (A: 123, 124, 137, B: 93, C: 138, D: 16, 52, 69, E: 74, 100, 116, F: 20, 113, G: 116). In their opinion, in the conservatories all that is required for learning music is a suitable teacher (A: 123, 124, 141, E: 74, F: 20). The teacher’s character, knowledge and ability to transmit it, methods of teaching, repertoire chosen for teaching, ‘methodological secrets’ for technique improvement, and developed relationship with the students, influence their progress in the piano, whether they are talented or not (see Table 7, p. 128). Not only does the teacher help students to acquire good musical knowledge, but also instils a love of music, of hard work, and of the instrument itself (A: 45, D: 26, E: 24, 57, 84, F: 6).

When the teacher takes each student’s special characteristics into account, the results can be particularly outstanding. As ‘D’ says, a student’s performance in such a case may even reflect the teacher’s personality (D: 69). This agrees with Kingsbury (1988) who found strong links between teachers and students within the conservatories. In Kingsbury’s study (op. cit.) teachers place themselves in an imaginary line of musical descent and have their own ‘personal’ students. This means that a student can be characterised as ‘a student of teacher A’. The line of musical descent goes from teacher ‘A’ who has studied with teacher ‘X’, who in turn studied with teacher ‘Y’, who studied with teacher ‘Z’, who was a student of Rachmaninov. According to Kingsbury (op. cit.), the relationship between teacher and student is so essential that the success of students augments a teacher’s prestige. This agrees with what teacher ‘A’ says in the current study. Specifically, the way in which the majority of the students perform, shows how
effective a teacher’s work has been (A: 137). Characteristics which the teacher should take into consideration in order to transfer successfully his/her knowledge to a student include the student’s personality and idiosyncrasies, age, level of attainment, musical background, natural physical build, hand formation, talent, abilities, and industriousness (A: 70, B: 10, 235, C: 122, D: 95, E: 22, F: 145, 147, G: 71). This section, however, will focus on a specific subject that has special importance in the Greek context in which the study took place. This is the teacher’s attitudes towards music and towards matters relating to piano pedagogy (A: 113, C: 8, 42, D: 26, 61, 62, E: 24, 84, F: 16, 43, 44, G: 116).

According to the seven teachers, in Greek society especially, where the classical music taught in conservatories is not the predominant form elsewhere, the teacher is the only means of endearing students to this kind of music and its study. Often the teacher tries to instil his/her own aesthetic values. This is in an attempt to convince students of the beauty of compulsory pieces which are not amongst their preferred works (A: 45, B: 175, D: 26, E: 24, F: 6, 43, 44). ‘D’ claims that ‘learners always yearn for a particular kind of “catechism”. They need it and it helps them to be relaxed’ (D: 26). Piano learning is influenced in all the layers of musical knowledge development by the attitude of the teacher towards what should be expected from a student’s performance. It is also influenced by the suitability of the methods used for the current aim, as well as by the suitability of the repertoire selection. More specifically the teacher’s attitude defines what is ‘good’ in a piano performance. If a teacher gives particular importance to technical skills, thinking that a student is good at the piano only when the fingers move swiftly over the keys, s/he minimises the significance of ‘melodious’ and ‘musical’ playing (E: 47). According to the seven participating teachers, the teacher who neglects musicality for the sake of a better technique gives special weight only to the materials layer. Thus although his/her students seem to be able to deal with difficult works, in reality they have not progressed even to the second layer of musical knowledge, the layer of expressive character or ‘musicality’.

For all the participating teachers, however, ‘musicality’ is the main aim (A: 2, 12, B: 60, C: 94, D: 86, E: 2, F: 47, 56, G: 38). As ‘E’ affirms, the learners can study technique on their own (E: 2), but where they need their teacher’s help is in developing musicality (E: 49). She also stresses that a piano teacher is a musician. S/he should mainly teach music (E: 49). This agrees with Swanwick’s reference to the concept of ‘teaching music through an instrument, not just teaching the instrument’ (1994: 144). To help their
students to play ‘musically’ these teachers are satisfied with less material, or easier pieces (within the capabilities of the student) (A: 8, 133, B: 207, D: 28, F: 87). In this way they can give to the pieces the appropriate character, as the composer would have wished, although playing at a slower tempo, thus giving greater emphasis to *expressive character* (B: 56, E: 26, 34, F: 56, 123). The common coin of the seven teachers is the study of a varied repertoire with pieces from all periods (pre-classical, classical, romantic, and modern) (B: 213, C: 82, 88, D: 39, E: 94, 106, F: 40). In this way students can get to know the music of all eras, and understand, appreciate and perform them well (influencing both the *expressive character* and *value* layer). The teachers also stress scales, etudes, and exercises for technique improvement, always emphasising points where weaknesses are to be found (influencing the *materials* layer) (A: 100, B: 159, C: 44, D: 87, 88, E: 2, 91, F: 40, G: 69). Their main aim is to get their students to play in a ‘perfect’ way. They should have worked on all the layers of musical knowledge development, even from the very first moment of their study of a piece (A: 10, 20, B: 60, C: 148, D: 2, E: 28, 72, F: 6, 112, G: 12).

The teachers’ influence can be greater when their attitudes towards piano playing combine with appropriate methods. As long as teachers favour ‘musical’ rather than technical playing, singing the melody will help students to develop good-quality sound (influencing the *expressive character* layer). Attitudes towards particularly skilful and rhythmic playing are assisted by the use of a metronome (influencing the *materials* layer). A pianist has positive results in all the layers of musical knowledge when the teacher believes that knowledge should be re-activated. The teacher will advise students to work simultaneously at all the topics that could be included in Swanwick’s four layers (B: 30, 34, 223, C: 112, E: 89, 91, F: 6, G: 94).

In the development of all the layers of musical knowledge teachers’ attitudes influence piano playing in a variety of ways. For example, the teacher may have his/her own perception of the meaning of a piece, which may not be the same as that of the composer. S/he may thus change the student’s attitude about how a piece should be played. The teacher therefore directly influences the *expressive character* layer, and consequently all the other layers. The teachers may consider some pieces by Mozart and Haydn to be ‘easy’, because they make less complex demands on technique (B: 137, E: 20, 94). Since they value a performance in which the great skills of a pianist are apparent, they believe that a piece requires more than simply being difficult musically. Thus at advanced levels these teachers do not ask students to play works which chiefly
demand musicality (E: 94). This hampers the development of the expressive character layer, but it gives other dimensions to the question of what a ‘good’ performance entails, and what ingredients constitute a prestigious work (influencing the value layer). The attitude of these other teachers comes into conflict with the views of those participating in the study. The latter give special emphasis to the musicality they seek in all the layers of musical knowledge, and from all the students, regardless of their level of attainment. The attitude of other teachers may differ also in their preference for speed and dexterity over musicality in playing. These teachers might sometimes prefer fast and technically dexterous playing without mistakes in notes, but without any particular feeling, to ‘musical’ playing at a slow tempo, albeit with some wrong notes (influencing the value layer) (B: 125, 243, E: 82, G: 10, 16, 112).

Teachers have different attitudes about whether pieces should be played according to the construction of the piano as it is today, or whether the composer’s indications should be respected in line with the construction of the instrument of the period (B: 150, 152, E: 38, 39). So teachers’ views differ about whether Bach should be played with the pedal in an attempt to interweave the phrases, or without the pedal to imitate the sound of the harpsichord, which was the instrument for which Bach originally composed the piece (B: 152). The composer may perhaps have wanted to hear his/her works played louder or with more legato at certain points, but did not have the ability to produce this on the instruments of that time. Some teachers therefore believe that a person should exploit the potential of the modern piano. This attitude greatly alters their teaching of topics in all layers, such as those of materials (e.g., legato or portato), expressive character (e.g., phrases, quality of the sound), form (e.g., connection between two phrases), and value (e.g., what is ‘good’ in a performance). The positive attitude of teachers towards simultaneous study of other subjects which broaden the scope of a student’s knowledge also influences piano playing in the value layer (C: 116, D: 7). As ‘C’ affirms, it is not enough to be dedicated exclusively to music. Even the parallel study of topics apparently unrelated to music can help a pianist better to understand, appreciate, and present music (C: 116).

The attitude of a teacher influences the valuation given to the talent or industriousness of a student, albeit one of lesser ability. The teacher who has greater belief in industriousness usually takes on the weight of responsibility, considering that suitable directions will help the student to play the piano better. Teachers’ methods of teaching what can be classified in Swanwick’s four layers include: (a) demonstrating pieces on
the piano (A: 113, B: 18, 119, 211, C: 22, 69, D: 69, E: 46, F: 2, G: 26, 30) to show the notes (influencing the materials layer), the expression (influencing the expressive character layer), and the structure (influencing the form layer), or to help the student to appreciate the piece (influencing the value layer), (b) singing to demonstrate the good sound quality (influencing the expressive character layer) (A: 49, C: 6, 8, 84, D: 62, E: 46, F: 12, G: 114), (c) listening at a distance when they perform (A: 53, B: 2, 52, D: 2, 4, E: 86, 88) to help in the production of the best sound quality (influencing the expressive character layer) and in the preparation of a performance (influencing the value layer), (d) tapping the student’s shoulders to show the rhythm (C: 10, E: 18) or counting (F: 12) to demonstrate the rhythm or the tempo (influencing the materials layer), (e) conducting (B: 121, F: 12, G: 116) to show the appropriate expression (the expressive character layer), the rhythm (influencing the materials layer), the progression, or the structure (influencing the form layer), (f) manipulating their hands (E: 46, F: 7) to show how to keep the hand loose or how to hold it (influencing the materials layer), (g) explaining by words or phrases the character of a piece (A: 74, B: 32, 62, 131, 209, D: 23, E: 30, 57, F: 108, G: 114) to challenge the students’ imagination (influencing all the layers and especially the expressive character), and (h) jotting down remarks on what and how much a learner has studied for each lesson (B: 219, F: 145), in order to plan what s/he has to correct, and to evaluate performances (influencing all the layers).

In the opinion of the seven participants in the study the attitudes of the teacher to topics related to music and piano pedagogy influence piano learning directly. They therefore give great value to the teacher’s role in the whole piano course. According to the participants, teachers must know about music, piano playing, pedagogy, and psychology (B: 123, 237, C: 22, E: 63, F: 33, 129, G: 47, 116). These will develop suitable attitudes towards music and musical education which will lead to positive results (B: 123, 237, C: 140, G: 47, 116). According to ‘G’, teachers should also be familiar with conducting techniques (G: 116). In the opinion of all the participants, they should prepare at home and self-assess their own teaching (A: 31, 135, 139, B: 16, 211, C: 136, E: 14, 46, 110, 112, F: 4, 45, G: 22). They should cultivate a strict (but also fair, friendly and encouraging) relationship with the students (A: 105, 107, 139, B: 227, C: 59, 61, 140, E: 26, 55, 63, 74, 108, F: 104, 153, G: 120). They should do good-quality work, whatever the policy of the conservatory where they are working might be (A: 124). They should be willing to co-operate with the parents (A: 34, E: 10, F: 137), and also with the
students themselves, in order to find solutions together to matters related to all the layers of musical knowledge development. They should also maintain a good relationship of mutual respect with colleagues. They should have good relations with the students not only in the classroom but also outside, encouraging them to go to concerts together (A: 135, B: 229), and organising concerts in their own homes (B: 105, 107). They should give their students extra lessons, if they judge it necessary, in order to correct any points in their teaching which they consider weaknesses (F: 4). Besides the content of the lesson, the teacher should discuss personal matters which may distract students from the study of the piano, and try to provide solutions (E: 108, F: 153, G: 120).

‘C’, however, stresses that the teacher should always keep his/her ‘distance’ to some extent, especially outside the teaching situation (C: 65). According to her, it is the classroom where a teacher-student bond is actually created. She argues that ‘it is not necessary to have a drink with your students in order to develop a good relationship. There is nothing inherently bad in this, of course, but... it is not a good thing to share social activities, since the child can get confused and say, “is he or she my friend or my teacher?” If you get drunk with your teacher, the quality of your relationship may change. Besides, children have their own friends and their own private life. We as teachers don’t have so many things in common with them and so we may not be such good company’ (C: 65). The teacher should inspire students, and motivate them to study. S/he should also give them the opportunity to evaluate their own playing by themselves (A: 29, 84, C: 140, E: 26, 94, F: 2, 95, 141, G: 18, 56), and compare it with that of others.

In conclusion, the participants think that the ‘ideal’ teacher is not simply one who gives the students ‘methodological secrets’ about how to study the piano. The ‘good’ teacher will aim, by whatever method, to inculcate dedication to music and to its study. The appropriate attitude of a teacher towards matters relating to piano pedagogy can help students with musical weaknesses to take up a successful career in music, even if they have ‘defective body structure’ unsuitable for piano playing. Their influence on piano learning is very great, because without a good teacher even talented students might waste their talents (C: 34, E: 53, F: 147).
6.2.2. THE LEARNER

According to the participating teachers, students’ own characteristics can influence the quality of the piano lessons and the teacher must take them into serious consideration in order to produce the best possible results. With these characteristics in mind the teachers explain what can be expected of their learners and mention the benefits they will get from the piano. However, their expectations and the benefits gained from piano learning are always the same regardless of the student’s characteristics, even if the music course is not completed. Students’ characteristics which the teacher takes into account include: personality and idiosyncrasies, age, attitude towards music, level of attainment, musical background, abilities, talents, and industriousness (see Table 7, p. 128). As became apparent from the interviews with the teachers, these characteristics differentiating students influence the piano lesson in matters that could be included in the four layers of musical knowledge development. For example, the teacher has to dedicate more time to improving the technique of a student whose musical background lacks basic knowledge of scales or of body and hand positioning (D: 2, 54, E: 91, 92, G: 16, 53, F: 133). S/he should also try to discover how to demonstrate the expressiveness of a piece appropriately for the age of the student (A: 70, B: 62, D: 77, E: 10, F: 35, G: 114).

It seems from the views of the teachers that talent and industriousness help students to deal with any weaknesses or with any particular demands made by a piece being studied (A: 28, 36, G: 48, 61, 92). This is a view which predominates in the literature. For example, Kingsbury (1988) talks about the value of ‘talent’ and Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993) stress the importance of the time spent by students on practice. In the same vein, for the participants these two factors are so necessary in the progress of a student that by themselves they can help a student to learn the piano. If something is lacking in one, it can be supplemented from the other (A: 89, B: 10, 243, E: 92, 94, G: 54). That is, talented students may not need to do the same study as ones without the same natural abilities, since they supplement study with talent. Nevertheless, in some cases a talented student may play with faultless expression, but with weaknesses in technique, and consequently need greater study to deal with these weaknesses. As ‘E’ says, even talented students who do not study enough are unlikely to succeed in playing the piano (E: 53). The equivalent occurs with hard-working students. However hard they study, they may not succeed in playing ‘perfectly’ if they lack that ‘extra something’ in their nature that will lead them to the highest peak of knowledge. They
must feel the music within themselves and thus convey emotion and contentment to the audience (A: 12, 14, G: 16, 100).

The need for talent and its influence on the progress of a student is apparent from the definitions given it by the participating teachers (A: 26, B: 91, C: 34, D: 10, E: 53, G: 120). ‘C’ says that talents are as numerous as individuals in the world (C: 50), and likewise Kingsbury (1988: 80) claims that talent is ‘polysemous’ and ‘polymorphic’. At this point it is worth mentioning the different views amongst piano teachers about who can truly be called a ‘talented’ student. It could be the one who plays with remarkable technique (influencing the *materials* layer) (A: 36), or the one who has remarkable musicality (influencing all the layers) (E: 12). The teachers give as examples students who, despite having superb technique, do not show such musicality (A: 36). Some students because of their remarkable musicality have succeeded in concealing the negative impression which some of their mistakes in technique may have created (B: 243). Also the teachers have different views about who can be called ‘talented’. It could be one who simply has natural skills and makes progress because of them without further effort (A: 36), or one who combines natural talent with a determination to study (C: 50). Apart from all these queries of piano teachers, the participants seem to conclude that all the elements are necessary to talent. These include musicality and dexterity combined with a student’s love and ‘passion’ for music itself and for its study (A: 12, C: 50, E: 80, 84, F: 147).

It appears from the definitions of a ‘talented’ student given by the teachers that the talents of a student influence the piano lesson in all the layers of musical knowledge development. More precisely a gifted student has above all an appropriate physical structure, such as a musical ear and suitable hands and skills. Such a student has less trouble in dealing with matters of technique (influencing the *materials* layer) (B: 10, C: 55). S/he can also deal with expressiveness, since s/he can distinguish more easily between quality of sounds (influencing the *expressive character* layer) (A: 89, 133). Moreover, s/he is usually good at sight-reading. This helps in the rapid reading of the score and consequently in learning a musical piece in a shorter time (influencing the *materials* layer) (A: 36, B: 246, C: 130, 132, E: 105, F: 131). A gifted person is better at recognising matters connected with musicality and the production of good-quality sound, which are related to the subsequent layer, the *expressive character* layer. This view of the teachers agrees with Brandstrom’s (1999) ‘absolute view of musicality’ which says that ‘musicality’ is innate. According to the participants, a talented pianist
can give the music meaning (A: 12, 36, B: 243), and handle better matters which concern control of the structure of a piece (influencing both the expressive character and the form layer). Indeed, abundant musicality can help talented students to improve technique by themselves, since their own sense of musicality guides them in providing solutions to technical matters (influencing both the materials and the expressive character layer) (A: 36). They can also produce remarkable performances when they become one with the music and really move their audience (influencing the value layer) (B: 243, C: 38, 50, 112). As ‘A’ says, a ‘gifted’ pianist is not just an industrious learner; s/he possesses that ‘extra something’ which makes all the difference (A: 14). It seems that talent instils in a pianist an instinctive love of music and ability to execute it with ‘passion’. These help in understanding, valuing, and presenting the meaning of a piece in an outstanding and spontaneous way, as if it were the pianist’s own composition and had a special meaning for him/herself (influencing the value layer) (A: 45, B: 48, 205, C: 50, E: 34, F: 147, G: 116).

The teachers generally accept that talented students can make a teacher’s task a lot more pleasant, whatever layer is being taught (C: 34). They go as far as to say that a ‘talented’ person can learn to play the piano and reach the highest point in musical knowledge even if the teacher is lacking in talent (B: 93). However, although all the teachers show a special appreciation for talent, they firmly believe in practice (A: 89, B: 10, D: 12, 26, E: 94, F: 6, G: 92). On the necessity of both talent and industriousness, research by Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993) concluded that talent and industriousness were so closely linked that one was the result of the other. In the same vein, the participating teachers affirm that there are frequent occasions when the study of all the matters which could be located in the four layers of musical knowledge development can conceal the natural weaknesses of a student (E: 92, 94). For example, a student’s persistent study of a piece and use of the ‘methodological secrets’ of the teachers can improve technique (influencing the materials layer). As ‘E’ claims, with special exercises even ‘defective’ hands can play much more difficult pieces than those for which they are suited. It is enough for the student to dedicate time to dealing with them (E: 80, 84, 92, 103) (influencing the materials layer).

On the other hand, students can develop their understanding of meaning by continually applying the advice of the teacher. They can listen at home on records to pieces with different interpretations, or attend different performances of the work studied. This will help them to distinguish between interpretations and to discover their own personal
styles (influencing the *expressive character* and *value* layers) (B: 211, C: 86). Also with the study of technical matters they can develop finger memorisation (influencing the *materials* layer) (B: 67) and approach more easily the layer of *expressive character*. In addition, industriousness enables them to reach the *form* layer. This is because exclusive study of the elements which constitute a piece will afterwards help students to combine them, give to the piece a coherent unity, and let it flow with natural harmonic progression for the audience. If they persist with some of the teachers’ ‘methodological secrets’ they can succeed in discovering the deeper meaning of a piece and be able to execute it as if it were their own. From the *form* layer they will then be able to transfer to the *value* layer. The teachers believe that everything can be taught (A: 109, B: 133, G: 38, 71, 78). Even the nervousness of a pianist can be dealt with. Even if it persists, the sound and atmosphere of a performance will not be affected (C: 14, F: 87, G: 60).

What the teachers expect of their students depends to a certain extent on students’ different characteristics (G: 100). For instance, teachers expect a little more from ‘talented’ students in developing a good career in music and other matters (D: 50, 60, 65, G: 98). Teachers believe, however, that proper teaching and hard work can help the other learners to do the same. The ultimate goal of all the teachers for every student remains the same, namely to search continuously for ‘musicality’ (C: 112, E: 8, 26, 94, F: 144, G: 38). Students must do whatever the four layers comprise, but always adhere to the composer’s aims (A: 4, C: 16, 118, D: 35). The students’ playing should have the right expressiveness. It should spring from their own ‘heart and soul’ devotion to music as if it were their own creation, in order to charm the audience and stir their feelings (A: 45, B: 48, 205, C: 50, E: 34, F: 147, G: 116). Even if they do not advance to higher levels of musical knowledge by devoting themselves to their task, the teachers think that the first step in piano learning is to consolidate and re-kindle whatever they have attained (B: 30, 34, 223, C: 112, E: 89, 91, F: 6, G: 94). Students are expected to be in a position to evaluate their knowledge and to pinpoint their weaknesses as well as their advantages (A: 84, E: 26, 94, F: 133, 141, G: 18, 56). This will help them to become to some extent independent. Then they will be able to study on their own, to decide for themselves about various subjects like technique or expressiveness, and to establish their own individual interpretation (A: 89, C: 16, 86, 140, D: 50, F: 149).

The benefits gained from studying the piano seem to be the same for everyone, whether they become professional musicians, or fail to complete their studies (A: 121, B: 113, D: 14, E: 49, F: 16). As ‘F’ says, ‘just to learn music is important’ (F: 135). In the long
run students become self-disciplined and get used to working hard, which greatly helps them in whatever they attempt in the future (A: 131, D: 17, E: 116, G: 104). According to the teachers, music can help students create or even change their personalities by improving their cultural outlook, or bringing them a little more out of themselves (B: 50, D: 17, 75, F: 50, 52). ‘G’ also claims that the consistent search for ‘perfection’ keeps a person who gets involved in music lively (G: 120). The teachers believe piano education should lead to full knowledge of the four layers. It should enable students, even at an elementary level, to play easy music pieces ‘musically’ (A: 2, 12, B: 60, C: 94, D: 86, E: 2, F: 47, 56, G: 38, 58). However, it appears to be sufficient for a person just to understand, love and enjoy music (A: 14, 131, B: 111, 113, D: 28, 79, F: 16, 135, G: 122).

Finally, the teachers are concerned about certain social factors influencing students negatively in piano studies. These include the heavy school curriculum, the fact that musical education does not offer a secure future vocation, and that the lifestyle and type of music which predominate in Greek society differ from those of students in a conservatory. The teachers are uneasy about the different policies in the conservatories, which can force teachers or students to reduce the quality of the piano lesson, and consequently of their studies, in accordance with the demands of the conservatory. For example, in conservatories with a more ‘relaxed’ policy students often study fewer pieces (influencing the materials layer) and do not cover the whole repertoire (influencing the expressive character and value layers). In the conservatories with a rather less ‘strict’ policy students often limit their expectations for a ‘good performance’. Sometimes they consider it sufficient to be correct technically, and sometimes musically, albeit with some wrong notes (influencing all the layers, and especially the value layer, which is connected with the preparations for a performance). Nevertheless, according to all the participating teachers, it rests ultimately with students whether their industriousness, talents and teachers’ guidance enable them to deal with even more difficult external conditions (B: 197, D: 103, E: 6, 74, G: 104).

### 6.2.3. The Conservatory

The seven teachers appeared to be uneasy about the variations between Athenian conservatories (A: 119, 121, B: 81, 89, C: 36, 154, D: 16, 101, E: 74, 100, F: 131, G: 88, 100, 102). However, from an official point of view, all the conservatories, regardless of their type (government subsidised, municipal, or private), have their own rules and
The degrees and diplomas which they offer are of equal value (B: 81, E: 99). According to the teachers, the conservatories differ in administrative policy, tuition fees, teachers’ salaries, prescribed assignments, rules and regulations, aims, examination assessment criteria, and attitudes towards music. They also differ in syllabuses and timetables for lessons, length of compulsory courses, students’ and guardians’ aims and expectations, and teacher-learner relationships (see Table 7, p. 128). These differences are widely known in Greek society, and this is the reason why the ‘conservatory’ is one of the issues in this study (see Chapter 1). Parents’ choice of a conservatory for their children depends on what they wish to get out of a musical education (D: 16, E: 74, G: 104).

These differences exist because, even though the conservatories theoretically function under the same rules set by the Ministry of Education, in reality every Greek conservatory is independent and autonomous as regards its programme and examinations (E: 74, 97, 101). The director of a Greek conservatory usually follows his/her own policy (A: 119, 123), which varies in strictness or leniency depending on the criteria for examination assessments, what is offered or demanded, the curriculum, aims, and teaching methods. The autonomy of the Greek conservatories would not be such a problem if there were other institutions in Greece to offer and at the same time certify studies in music. It must be remembered from the first chapter of this study that not even the special secondary music schools in Greece offer a certification for studies in music. The examination committees of the autonomous Greek conservatories, despite being appointed by the Ministry of Education, cannot be impartial when it comes to voting about their own students’ music diploma or degree examinations. Quite often most of the members of the examination board teach at the conservatories in which they act as examiners (B: 87, 89). Differences between Athenian conservatories concerning the curriculum and the procedures for students’ evaluation depend mainly on the type of conservatory (private, municipal or government subsidised). Differences also exist between conservatories of the same type, but situated in different areas of Athens. These differences can be explained by administrational and specific local criteria (F: 27).

In the private and municipal conservatories there is a more ‘relaxed’ policy, in contrast to the subsidised ones, like the COA (the ‘Conservatory of Athens’), where everything takes place in accordance with the regulations set by the Ministry of Education. The differences in method of payment for the teachers and in the fees for the students probably contribute further to this variation in policy. In private conservatories the fees
are usually greater and the teachers are paid in accordance with the number of students. In the subsidised conservatories the fees are lower and the teachers are paid by the month. Moreover, teachers in these conservatories are paid throughout the entire year, even in the summer when they do not work, regardless of the number of students they teach (E: 74, F: 22, 70). For this reason the director, and also the teachers, in the private conservatories want to keep all the students in the conservatory, regardless of their progress, in contrast to State-subsidised conservatories, like the COA. Here the teachers have fewer students but are given the same salary, however few they teach. So they have more time and can do their work better. Some conservatories, in order to attract more students, adapt the syllabus to suit the preferences of the young people and teach modern Greek popular music (E: 74, 91), whereas in other conservatories classical music and scales are taught exclusively (G: 88).

It is not uncommon for the piano teachers to work in two or more conservatories at the same time (E: 74, 101). As is natural, all teachers carry with them their own individual knowledge of music, and their own views and expectations about what constitutes a ‘good’ performance. Ultimately, however, teachers are sometimes compelled to adjust their requirements because of the conservatory where they teach (E: 74). The teachers who took part in the study stress that what they themselves try to do, when necessary, is only to change the topics in their teaching quantitatively, and never qualitatively. According to them, the meaning of a ‘good’ performance is always the same. It means to play ‘musically’ and to render the correct character of a piece (A: 92, 104, B: 253, C: 38, 94, D: 86, E: 24, 34, F: 149, G: 38). They do not change either their methods of teaching or their views about significant musical topics. However, in conservatories less strict in their demands for variety in repertoire, for fast tempo, for scales, or for high marks, the teachers adjust their teaching accordingly. There is also a difference in their toleration of official matters, such as how much time they allow a student to remain in a certain class, or in the conservatory. In ‘strict’ conservatories, like the COA, students who do not show sufficient progress are initially kept ‘under suspension’ for one year (E: 80), or are expelled completely (E: 74). Also forty five days prior to the entrance examinations for the ‘Intermediate’ or ‘Higher’ level in conservatories like the COA they assign an additional piece which they themselves have chosen for students to study (F: 20). Even if this happens in other conservatories such as the ‘Philippos Nakas’, they do not have any forty-day limit. This means that a student who studies in any other
conservatory can have up to four months to study a sonata. Consequently s/he can get the same grade as a student of the COA, but with different examination criteria.

At these conservatories assessment criteria, as well as examination criteria, differ from those of others. As ‘F’ says, a student of the COA with a ‘Very Good’ mark would have got a ‘Distinction’ and many prizes at any other conservatory (F: 131). In the entrance examinations of the COA this results in graduates of other conservatories being downgraded to a lower class to continue studies for a diploma (B: 81, C: 36, E: 91). Since the demands are greater in the ‘strict’ conservatories, the teachers themselves become more demanding, and pay more respect to all the rules and regulations. For example, in these conservatories they do not let a student be promoted to the next class if s/he has not covered the entire compulsory syllabus, which, moreover, in these conservatories is especially demanding (E: 74, 94). This is also the case if a student has not learnt to play all the scales which are compulsorily examined (B: 159, C: 36, E: 2, 74, 91, 94, G: 69). In contrast, in the more ‘lenient’ conservatories (E: 4, 74, 84), the syllabus is often adjusted to suit the preferences, abilities, or even the free time the student has available for studying the piano (C: 46, E: 74, 91). Consequently the same teacher becomes more lenient (E: 74).

These differences between the conservatories would not be so noteworthy if, as the teachers affirm, they did not influence to a significant degree the quality of the lessons. This influence seems to be apparent in what could be included also in the four layers of musical knowledge development. The teachers emphasise that students are forced to master each layer of musical knowledge in accordance with the differences in policy between the conservatories, which fluctuate between ‘relaxed’ and ‘strict’. As has already been mentioned, in ‘strict’ conservatories where learning scales is a prerequisite for promotion to the next class, students have to master all the scales at the fastest possible tempo. In this way students’ technique is markedly improved, and this ultimately affects the materials layer, since technique, as has been mentioned in previous sections, can be included in this layer. The same thing happens with the extensive variety in the repertoire compulsory in the ‘strict’ conservatories. It broadens the understanding, appreciation and abilities of the students, and so helps them perform pieces from different periods in the best possible way (influencing both the expressive character and the value layer).
In state-subsidised conservatories courses include harmony, history of music, and chamber music, which are not only compulsory in name, but also in reality. This means that there is a limit to the number of absences students are permitted. All this helps the students there, even more than in the more ‘lenient’ conservatories, to develop all the layers of musical knowledge (C: 36, 116). For example, ‘sight-reading’, which is taught at the COA as a compulsory course (F: 131), helps in the reading of a new piece (B: 247, C: 130, F: 78). As the teachers affirm, this in its turn improves technique (C: 132, E: 105) (influencing the materials layer). The ‘history of music’ helps in the understanding of the different periods in which the music taught in the conservatories was written. The periods in which composers lived can affect the meaning of the pieces composed. The students will thus be helped in presenting pieces of different types and periods in the best possible way, improving simultaneously the expressive character and the value layers. In the knowledge of ‘morphology’ course the students learn the differences between the characteristics of the different pieces according to their form (e.g., fugue, concerto, sonata, etc.). This promotes development of the form layer. The course in ‘chamber music’ helps students to understand how to interpret another kind of work that demands co-operation with musicians who play instruments other than the piano. It also helps in preparation for another kind of performance (influencing the value layer), as well as in understanding another form of music (influencing the expressive character layer). The ‘chamber music’ course contributes to the ability of a student to render phrases melodiously on the piano (influencing the expressive character layer). It also helps in following the melodies which fellow-musicians play on other instruments, and the entire harmonic progression of the piece. It does not distract attention from the contrasts in sound between the phrases played sometimes by the student and sometimes by the others. Besides learning the many different nuances in phrases occurring simultaneously but independently in the course of the piece, the student learns to play the piece as a coherent unity (influencing the form layer).

It seems from all the above-mentioned that in the conservatories with ‘strict’ policies everything is done with greater emphasis in all the layers of musical knowledge development. A person would imagine that in these conservatories greater attention would be needed in the higher layers. However, even in the more ‘lenient’ conservatories the students enrolled are not usually very familiar with classical music. The teacher therefore is often forced to dedicate a large percentage of teaching time to

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explaining its meaning, starting from the higher layer of musical knowledge, the *value*
layer.

The predominant music in Greek society is not classical. The conservatory teacher has
the difficult task of familiarising the students with the value of this type of music and
encouraging a positive attitude towards it. To assist students in playing musical pieces,
the teacher has to familiarise them with this kind of music and help them to understand
it. S/he also has to inculcate aesthetic views about what is ‘good’ in music. Moreover,
s/he must explain what is valuable in this particular kind of music, on which the whole
of their musical education will be based (A: 45, C: 8, D: 24, E: 4, F: 16). So the teacher
concentrates on matters related to the *value* layer, as well as to the *expressive character*
layer, to help them to understand the meaning of pieces which previously may have
been unknown to them. S/he has to explain every detail, including the moods of the
phrases, and explain what constitutes the good-quality sound at which they should
constantly aim.

These differences in attitudes and ambitions (C: 46, 152, D: 16, E: 74, G: 104) amongst
the students who choose to enrol in the conservatories lead to the following practice
observed in some of the lessons. A teacher from a less ‘strict’ conservatory very often
has to devote the whole lesson to the higher layer (the *value* layer). The COA is
considered the strictest in the whole of Greece (B: 81, C: 36, 78, 80, D: 101, 103, E: 6,
F: 20, G: 100, 102). A teacher there, however, will quite often give special importance
to the lower layer (the *materials* layer). This is to improve weaknesses in technique. The
students who choose conservatories like the COA already have an appreciation and
understanding of classical music (B: 175). What they chiefly need is ‘methodological
secrets’ which will help them to deal with the highest level of technique which some
pieces demand and which are required in these conservatories. In conservatories like the
COA there is polite competition between students and also between teachers (C: 32, E:
6, 34, 100, 101). It indeed results in greater progress for the students in the development
of *all* the layers of musical knowledge. This occurs because the students in these
conservatories, having mainly ‘good’ fellow-students, have the opportunity to listen to
many different, but successful, performances from them. So they develop the ability to
assess a performance and very early on to acquire their own personal views about what
is ‘good’ in piano playing. In this way there is a positive influence on the *value* layer,
since they learn to distinguish good execution and in preparations for performances try
to achieve the best possible results, full of musicality which will move the audience.
Their teachers also have a developed sense of polite competition and do everything to make their students better, or at least as worthy as those of their colleagues.

At this point it is worth mentioning a difference which exists between the conservatories in their views on the definition of a ‘good performance’. For example, at the COA, there is a great deal of competition between the students, since all of them are good pianists, and consequently difficult to grade. So the members of the committee have need of further criteria for deciding to which student they should give an ‘excellent’ grade, and in relation to him/her how to grade the others of the same level. Some pieces make fewer demands in matters of technique and are considered easier than others. Consequently they are not as suitable for playing in examinations at advanced levels and so are not sanctioned (E: 20, 94). A student, therefore, to be graded as ‘excellent’, must not only play without musical or technical faults, but also pieces more difficult than those played by fellow-students. Indeed some pieces, like those of Haydn or Mozart, are considered totally unsuitable for the ‘higher’ class, since they are technically easy, and for this reason are not included in the syllabus for this class (B: 137, E: 94). This influences the views of the teachers in the different conservatories in matters which relate to the value layer. Pieces like those of Haydn or Mozart, which to be performed well demand musicality of a high level, do not seem to be recognised as being of such practical value. There is also a difference between the views about what constitutes a ‘good’ performance; whether it is one with technical difficulties or one with musicality (E: 20). In the stricter conservatories they seem to value more highly a performance which, apart from musicality, demonstrates technical skills. Apart from these differences between the conservatories about what is ‘good’ in piano playing, one view is common to all the teachers of all the conservatories. Everyone respects really ‘musical’ playing which touches the heart of the listener, even though in some conservatories they want this to be combined with technical skills (B: 243, E: 20).

Teachers point out these differences between the conservatories and are uneasy about the condition of piano pedagogy in Greece. However, they wonder whether ultimately the conservatory influences the progress of the students in the piano as much as the students themselves do (E: 6, 74, 100). This is because the students, before enrolling in a conservatory, are well aware of the differences, and consequently choose the ones which match their ambitions and attitudes towards study (D: 16, E: 74, G: 104). For example, the students who choose to attend a piano course at the COA know beforehand that they will have to take a difficult entrance examination (E: 6). However, they are
determined to take it. On the one hand, they have a positive attitude towards music and to taking it up as a profession. On the other hand, they know that they have the ability to deal with it. So ultimately the more talented or ambitious students aim to go to the COA. As a result the ‘good’ students are usually to be found in the ‘good’ conservatories (B: 175, E: 6, 74, 100). These differences continue to exist because of the length of music courses, and because the students stay in the conservatories for several years. In the same way the conservatories more demanding on their students for impeccable performances (E: 20), and more ambitious for them to take up professional careers (E: 101), also select their students by means of entrance examinations (E: 6).

In the opinion of the teachers the fact that there are differences between the conservatories cannot be disputed, and these to some extent influence the quality of the lessons and generally of piano pedagogy in Greece. Nevertheless in their opinion, the variations between the different conservatories are not sufficient to prevent a good teacher from teaching music well (A: 123, 124, 128). Neither should they stop him/her from turning a talented and hard-working student into a good pianist (B: 221, G: 104). Positive proof of this view of theirs is the fact that Athenian conservatories (D: 16), regardless of their state, ultimately produce many good music graduates.

6.2.4. THE FAMILY

According to all the teachers, a learner’s family plays a very important role in piano learning (A: 130, C: 122, E: 8, 10, 49). Children usually start music at a very early age, dependent financially on their families, and relying heavily on them for their progress (F: 14, 50, G: 104). Parents’ attitudes towards music and music education influence their children’s attitudes and decisions about attending piano courses as well, especially when they are very young (B: 46, C: 36, 126, E: 10, F: 16, G: 100, 104). However, a family’s positive mentality towards classical piano education is not in itself sufficient if the family cannot financially support such a venture. Parents’ financial status influences their children greatly, since at conservatories, especially private ones, the piano courses are lengthy and the fees very high (F: 70), while buying a piano may be an unattainable dream for some parents. They dare not risk such a step, since they do not know whether their child will make enough progress in music (F: 67). Besides, parents’ expenses have increased because children nowadays take many other lessons, like those for foreign languages, ballet and swimming, as well as extra school subject tuition, to improve their performance at school (F: 70). In Greece the bond between parents and children is very
strong, so that children are much more dependent on the mentality (G: 104) and financial backing of their families (A: 87, B: 42, 46, E: 8, G: 53, 54). As ‘B’ says:

In Greece, children depend on their parents no matter what their age is. We still have cases where their parents are still supporting them even after many years of reaching maturity. It’s not like England where they have initiation at a very early age, even before leaving school (B: 42).

Whether they themselves have had a musical education or not, Greek parents encourage their children to learn the piano because they appreciate the value of musical education in gaining experience and social recognition (G: 104). They consider music to be a ‘kind of culture and a very good preoccupation’ (F: 50). However, according to the teachers, most Greek parents usually have little understanding of classical music (A: 39, F: 24, G: 104). As ‘F’ says, after leaving the piano lesson, they may even take their children to centres where there are other kinds of music besides classical (F: 24). Most of the parents do not know what exactly their child will be doing or how difficult and lengthy the course chosen might be (A: 130, F: 50). They think that getting piano diplomas or degrees comes naturally without much effort (F: 50) and that they are not much different from other university or college degrees considered more necessary in seeking employment (G: 104). They do not support their children with understanding whenever difficulties crop up. They consider failure to be a kind of irresponsibility on the part of both the teacher and the student and a negative response to their own expectations and financial sacrifices. The general view prevailing on the part of parents concerning this topic is seen from the following example given by ‘E’. Once the mother of one of her students said to her, ‘as she is not good at school, let her start studying the piano’ (E: 10). These views of parents also influence the teacher who cannot tell them that their children have no talent for the piano and so would be unable to get such a degree (G: 57). Moreover, as ‘F’ says, the children themselves think that, since all the notes are ready and right in front of you, the piano is more accessible than any other instrument for anyone willing to start a music course (F: 49).

Greek parents do not believe that music is much help for their children in finding a ‘secure’ vocation. They direct them towards other university courses (B: 40) or keep on the lookout for a great variety of subjects other than music (C: 150, E: 49, F: 27, 70). They generally want their children to collect as many qualifications as possible (E: 49). Such a negative attitude from the family background can become an obstacle to the progress of young people in music, and even prevent them taking up piano lessons. Even wrong treatment by parents who very much want their children to study music can
limit progress and even cause them to discontinue studies. Explaining the failure of one of her students in the examinations as due to the negative impact of his over-demanding parents, ‘E’ says, ‘He failed twice at his entrance exams for the Higher level, probably because of stress. His father had threatened to stop paying his fees and forced him to work as a waiter, so he made a mess of it’ (E: 8). Some parents put so much pressure on their children that, as ‘E’ says, the children begin to ‘hate music’ (E: 10). At this point she also gives as an example one of her students who gave up piano lessons on the eve of his diploma examinations. As he said to her, ‘I don’t like playing the piano. I like listening to others doing it. My parents pressed me so hard that now I don’t even want to look at it’ (E: 10).

On the other hand, however, according to all the teachers, parents with some musical knowledge can be a positive influence in helping a child to make progress. This agrees with Duke et. al. (1997) who, in their study on ‘Children who study the piano with excellent teachers in the United States’, reported that most of the participants came from families which had a tradition of listening to classical music. At this point ‘F’ gives as an example her daughter, who in the junior course does not make the same mistakes as other children, since she has as a model her own mother’s piano playing (F: 18). Even if she makes a mistake, her mother immediately corrects it. Moreover, ‘C’ claims that music stirs very strong feelings even in an embryo, since it is affected by sounds produced all around it. The kinds of music that the mother listens to might subsequently create relevant preferences and emotions (C: 124). ‘C’’s parents have been involved in classical music generally. Her mother is an experienced piano teacher and her father a member of a well-known Athenian music society. This may have helped her to absorb the sounds of this music instinctively, even in the womb. She states:

I grew up listening to classical pieces even before I was born. In my mother’s womb I listened to preludes by Chopin. And we now know that embryos listen to the same music as their mother. You can imagine what images I had when I was born, because they say that beauty comes out of those images. I had them even before I was born. Not only my mother, but my father as well, listened to classical music (C: 124).

In certain cases, however, ‘C’ claims that a parental background rich in musical experience may be a deterrent if some subtle balance of sentiment is not seriously considered. For instance, talented parents could indirectly cause awkward conditions for their offspring if the latter are (mostly unfavourably) compared with them. This could bring about an inferiority complex, thus causing a rebellious reaction on the child’s part.
Delinquency, rife among teenagers nowadays, will lead to attempts to undermine parental authority and, if the parents themselves are musicians, their profession will come under severe criticism from their sons or daughters (C: 124).

According to the teachers, most of the parents themselves have no direct relationship with music (F: 49). Usually they enrol their children in a conservatory to satisfy their own ambitions (C: 126), since they themselves, or someone else in the family, might once have studied the piano but given it up. So since there is a piano at home, they think it right for someone to continue the tradition (F: 14, 50), so as not to let such an expensive instrument be wasted. However, some parents who have no musical knowledge but do have a positive attitude towards piano lessons even enrol themselves with their children in order to be of some help to them (B: 113). Similarly they can help, especially at the junior level (F: 137). Here the children often do not take their own initiative in discussing with the teachers their own difficulties in their studies (F: 4), the amount they have studied, and their general behaviour at home (F: 137). So with the guidance of the teacher the parents can be particularly helpful, even if they do not understand music themselves. It is sufficient for them to know what corrections the children should make in their study at home (F: 137). Sloboda and Davidson (1996) similarly believe that parents are ‘committed supporters’ in piano learning even when they themselves have no idea about music. At this point ‘E’ refers to the case of a musically inexperienced parent who by attending the student’s conservatory lessons was able to give her a great deal of motivation. According to ‘E’, her daughter attributes all her positive progress in music to her mother’s help, despite the fact that she had come to ‘E’ from a less experienced teacher (E: 10). Although the mother had no special musical knowledge, she used to attend her daughter’s lessons at the conservatory. Since her mother knew what the teacher required her daughter to achieve in her study, she encouraged her at home to progress further. ‘Without pressing her hard she used to keep control over her from a distance in a gentle way, like a psychologist, a psychiatrist, or a music tutor. She was the perfect teacher for her child. That’s why the girl went on successfully. Her mother’s contribution to her progress was substantial’ (E: 10).

In conclusion, in the opinion of all the teachers, the parents influence piano learning both positively and negatively at all stages of its development. From the initial stage when they are still learning the notes up to the final stage, they appear to be influenced by their family background. For this reason, all the teachers ask for the parents’ cooperation. By attending their children’s lessons, they will understand exactly what their
children have to achieve in their studies according to the stage which they have reached (materials, expressive character, form or value). Their attitude to the music taught in the conservatories will also change. So they will be able to assist in their children’s study at home. Also they can influence their children in the acquisition of a suitable attitude towards the kind of music on which musical education in Greek conservatories is based (influencing the value layer).

6.2.5. SOCIETY

In the opinion of the seven teachers, Greek society plays a significant part in the whole course of piano learning, influencing each and every layer of musical knowledge (A: 39, 45, 113, B: 36, 40, 46, F: 14, 24). The quality of a piano lesson is influenced by the conceptions about musicianship which prevail in Greece and come into conflict with each other. On the one hand, the prevailing view is that music and music studies have value and ‘social recognition’ (G: 104) because music cultivates the spirit, a view with which the ancient Greeks were in sympathy (F: 49). Consequently it constitutes a necessary ingredient in an individual’s more general education (A: 130). On the other hand, many people think that other kinds of music besides classical, which is taught in the conservatories, are pleasanter (A: 130, G: 108). They believe that studying music does not lead a young person to a profitable career (D: 16, 18). These views are endorsed and promoted by the mass media, which depict a lifestyle where people enjoy music other than classical for entertainment, and follow careers other than those in music to earn a living (B: 36).

These conflicting conceptions result in Greek children being enrolled in conservatories at an early age, since studying music brings a certain prestige (G: 20, 50, 104). Nevertheless in the course of their studies they are compelled to take up other private lessons (C: 150, F: 70). Such lessons as those for ballet, foreign languages, or sports will better equip them to deal with the future. Others will help them get to university and find a vocation which will offer better prospects than a music course (C: 150, E: 49, F: 27, 49, G: 104). In this matter ‘C’ stresses a special characteristic of the Greek educational system. It favours the simultaneous attendance of piano students at courses for a variety of other subjects, so that they can better deal with the problem of unemployment and eventually find some kind of occupation. As she points out, the prevalent Greek mentality differs significantly from that in most European countries regarding full-time piano education. Unfortunately Greek society sees it as mandatory.
for employment reasons for young piano learners to engage in other courses concurrently (qualified pianists find it very hard to get even part-time employment). This is how she comments:

Everywhere, studying for most professions can lead to unemployment. Overseas, however, I think one is not often allowed to study on more than one course... Conservatories in Greece are not seen as academies. So in Greece, there are students who could become pianists, but they seem to be fond of their studies, for instance, at the School of Architecture, so they are compelled to study both (C: 120).

The teachers explain the need to take private lessons in order to get to university by referring to the difficulty of the Greek school syllabus. The recent changes in the educational system and the insecurity they have brought to students, drive them to take up private lessons. These will help them to reach the required standard of knowledge for school (F: 70), but will reduce time for piano study even more. The importance Greek society places on a tertiary degree, and the fact that public education is considered to be insufficient, compel the young to go to these private schools (‘frontistiria’). These help students to complete the required syllabus, but force them to make a choice between school and conservatory (C: 150). Indeed during the last two years at high school, where final preparation for university takes place, the children are usually forced to abandon their piano studies (F: 70). At best they adjust them to what little free time remains from the rest of their heavy programme, giving weight to the development of a restricted topic area, such as technique or musicality (F: 40). What ‘F’ says shows the general view of the teachers on this matter:

When I have a student who devotes most of his time to studying his Lyceum subjects and has not enough time for piano, he may say, ‘let me choose four pieces now that I am fond of, so that I can enjoy studying them’... He may choose a Mozart sonata that he likes more than another one. Otherwise he might come along next time and say, ‘I haven’t done anything. Let’s play the scales’. In order not to have this kind of situation we adopt these alternatives (F: 40).

Moreover the fact that in Greek society the predominant type of music is not classical makes students negatively disposed towards it, although it is the basis of musical education. Because of their heavy programme little stamina is left for studying this kind of music, which in reality leaves them indifferent. The prevailing view is that the acquisition of a degree or diploma in the piano is as feasible as obtaining a degree of any other kind. As ‘F’ (50) says, they think that it ‘comes naturally without much effort’ (E: 10, F: 50). The social background is the source of such lack of understanding
concerning the actual difficulty and demands upon a person’s dedication involved in a piano course, and it impels students very often to abandon their studies. Themselves influenced by this view, they often find it difficult to assess their own playing, and do not know what else the teacher requires, or why their studies have failed to bring success.

Consequently, according to the participants, without the appropriate ‘socio-emotional’ understanding and support of students – to the significance of which Manturzewska (1990) has referred (see Chapter 2) – the results for the quality of piano learning may be catastrophic. The students may even abandon music completely, while elsewhere the effects may be apparent in all the layers of musical knowledge development. More specifically the first layer of development of musical knowledge, which is that of materials, is influenced, according to the teachers, by the views of Greek society as follows. The students, having insufficient time to dedicate to the piano course, do not study the score carefully enough. Matters which improve technique, like the study of scales, etudes and exercises, are avoided. This is because students and teachers try to cope exclusively with the main body of the study programme for an examination at the end of the year or for a concert. They have to study three, or at most four, pieces to get promotion to the next class. In short, students, with the consent of teachers, limit their repertoire exclusively to compulsory pieces, or to those they simply like, even if they are not suitable for their progress.

The negative attitude of students towards classical music also influences the expressive character layer, making it more difficult for them to understand the meaning the composer wished to express. So the whole matter is left exclusively in the hands of the teacher, who must motivate students and help them to understand the deeper meaning of pieces (A: 26, 113). On the other hand, the fact that students do not have enough time at their disposal for study does not help them to deal with the works of composers of every period. So they may not develop all the knowledge necessary for understanding the meaning of different composers, as is required at this stage. The form is affected, according to the teachers, because students still find themselves at the stage of attempting to complete each separate phrase. Consequently they are unable to see how one phrase leads on to another or how to interweave them.

As far as value is concerned, the Greek mentality towards classical music alters students’ attitudes as well. A Greek outdoor lifestyle predominates especially among
young people and is consistently promoted by the mass media. It not only limits the free
time available for studying, but also affects their whole mentality and appreciation of
the kind of music taught in the conservatories. So the teachers in the conservatories are
the only people who try, not only to teach their students classical works, but also to
change their attitudes to these. The teachers help their students to develop an
appreciation of classical works (A: 113), and afterwards to present them to an audience
with as much understanding as if they themselves were the composers. Because of the
generally negative attitude of Greek society towards classical music, which deeply
influences the students’ attitudes, this understanding is often almost impossible to
realise. On other occasions, trying to cope with the demands of concerts or
examinations, students only play works of their own choice, and thus restrict their
teachers’ role to instruction in technique. Teachers no longer need to concern
themselves with conveying the value of the pieces, because the students are already
aware of this.

The reduced output of students in each one of these matters included in the four layers,
results in students of necessity breaking off their studies at some time or other, since
they are unable to cope with the subsequent stages. Teachers are advised not only to re-
activate students’ musical knowledge, continually revising things which they have
already mastered, but also to use one aspect of knowledge as a basis for another. So the
reduction in knowledge in the basic layers hinders the completion of the subsequent
layers, or even the approach to them. The teachers’ solution at this point seems to be to
reduce the curriculum in quantity, but never in quality. They consider that music should
be played musically. Consequently, if a student does not succeed in learning a difficult
piece, s/he should be taught an easier one (within his/her abilities), and should try to
learn it as well as possible. According to the teachers, musicality, which constitutes both
the immediate and final goal of their whole teaching, can be influenced by the dominant
conceptions of Greek society, as was mentioned previously. However, although they
restrict their students’ curriculum, they themselves never reduce the demands for it. So
regardless of the degree of musical knowledge found in their students, the teachers aim
to teach pieces within their students’ level of attainment (D: 28). Students will then be
able to perform them in the best possible way, working simultaneously on all the
matters that can be included in Swanwick’s four layers. The teachers’ ultimate goal is to
teach them how to play musically and to perfection, so that they can enjoy music just
for its own sake.
In conclusion, from the testimonies of the teachers themselves it appears that Greek society has a mainly negative effect on all the layers of piano learning. However, there is a positive side to the coin. Society itself believes that a musical education has some value in cultivating the personality. Consequently it should be studied at least to some extent. This attitude, together with the persistent quest of the teachers, whatever the level, the piece, or the age of the student, for good-quality playing full of musicality, both constitute encouraging signs for the future. Also they are themselves part of the reason why, in spite of so many obstacles afforded by society, piano education continues to survive in Greece. Moreover, it continues to produce a reputable number of successful pianists, even at an international level (D: 16).

6.3. CONCLUSIONS

In the fifth chapter, the first interview of teacher ‘A’ was analysed into categories to guide and facilitate the analysis of the remaining interviews. These categories were about the content and methods of teaching in Athenian conservatories. These include strict adherence to the score and its detailed reproduction, development of technique, musicality, music structure control, appreciation and comprehension, as well as presentation of the meaning of a music piece to an audience. The teachers also refer to variables which influence piano teaching and learning in a Greek context, such as teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society. As explained in the conclusions to the analysis of teacher ‘A’’s interview, what is taught in Athenian conservatories could be included in Swanwick’s four layers. So the seven interviews, that of ‘A’ and the other six, were analysed into: (a) ‘musicality’ variables (materials, expressive character, form and value), and (b) context variables (teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society). According to the teachers, these may affect the quality of piano learning in Athenian conservatories. In this chapter, the data from all the teachers was presented thematically, and an attempt was made to show the similarities and differences between these teachers in their views concerning pedagogic practice and its relation to musicality.

The participating teachers are all not only experienced but also influential in piano pedagogy in Greece. Since they are widely known throughout Greece, they all know each other. Nevertheless, they think that some of their attitudes conflict. They feel that they are isolated, and that consequently their views about piano learning are original and most probably differ from those of the others. In fact, however, as was revealed after the
study, they generally agree with each other. The fact that the participants in the study sample are all female is one more result of the influence which Greek society has on piano learning, as reported in the study. Not even nowadays is piano teaching considered a lucrative profession and consequently men do not choose it as their main occupation. When the participating teachers were at a suitable age for choosing a profession, very few men – especially talented performers – risked pursuing piano teaching as a career. Therefore, in Greece the majority of piano teachers are women. It is believed that the man should be the main support for the family, whereas the woman’s profession is merely regarded as a source of supplementary income. Consequently, the fact that the participating teachers are women is simply one more indication of Greek mentality and of how this can affect piano pedagogy. However, this factor has not influenced the results of the study.

In the analysis of the interviews with the seven teachers it appeared that all of them in their teaching continually look for ‘musicality’, whatever the student’s level of attainment. They seek it through what could be included in Swanwick’s four layers. For example, in the materials layer they insist on the strict adherence to whatever is written in the score and its detailed reproduction. It should be noted that in this layer the teachers appear to be almost exclusively on the manipulative side. They proceed straight to notation without involving the students in aural appreciation or experimentation with piano sound. Although they aim at a good-quality sound even from this first layer of piano learning, the lack of this element in their teaching may contribute to poor sound quality as well as affecting motivation to play the piano. In the expressive character layer the teachers emphasise that the piece should be interpreted in a musical way in accordance with the composer’s intentions. In this layer technique must have been developed to such a standard as to enable students to deal with the expressive character layer. In the form layer by giving the piece variety of phrases and sense of rhythm, they insist on a close follow-up in harmonic progression. This leads to a better control of musical structure, making the piece audible as a unity with continuity and coherence. In the value layer they try to help their students to understand and appreciate the value of music and of musical pieces for themselves, in order to bring out the best meaning and convey it to the audience.

The teachers also refer to certain context variables. These may affect the quality of a piano lesson, and consequently the development of ‘musicality’. They include teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society. A teacher’s personality, attitude to music,
methods, repertoire selection criteria, and relationship with students can make all the difference to learning, even in the case of talented students. A student’s personality and idiosyncrasies, abilities, talents, age, level of attainment, and musical background also influence piano learning. The variation between Athenian conservatories in matters like administrative policy, prescribed assignments, editions, rules and regulations, targets, examination assessment criteria, syllabus, length of compulsory courses, students’ and guardians’ aims, and expectations may also affect learning. Parents’ attitudes towards music and music education may influence their children’s attitudes and decisions about attending piano courses, especially when they are very young. In Greece the bond between parents and children is very strong, and the children are very much dependent on their family’s encouragement and financial support. Finally, the dominant perception in Greek society that classical music is not as pleasant as other forms, and the fact that music by itself does not always guarantee a future vocation, both affect piano learning. So, according to the teachers, ‘musicality’ is what should be taught and developed in their lessons. In their opinion ‘musicality’ can be acquired, when not innate, and its development can be influenced by the student’s environment (see Table 1, p. 46, ‘The components of musicality’, from Brandstrom, 1999). The next chapter, Discussion, contains the most significant of the general matters which are the common concern of the seven teachers.
7.1. MUSICALITY: A WORD WITH MANY MEANINGS

As was stated in the Introduction of the current work, this thesis represents a rich account from seven experienced Greek piano teachers of their perceptions of musicality and the context of teaching and learning the piano in the Athenian conservatories. From a methodological point of view, there were three necessary conditions to satisfy for the successful completion of the thesis. Firstly, the teachers should feel free to explain their own behaviour and give meaning to their actions. This was achieved by selecting a number of extracts from 200 hours of teaching and arranging semi-structured interviews. Should teachers' answers be different if different extracts were selected? The answer is 'probably yes' but that would only apply to a number of peripheral issues and not to the heart of the findings. Different extracts and different teachers would probably generate different answers. However, they would not change the most significant finding: the transferability of Swanwicks' theory for the development of a person's musical self has been verified in another situation within the field of music education. Teachers' ideas can be understood in the framework of Swanwick's developmental theory.

Another condition that had to be satisfied for this study to be successful was for the researcher to have specific knowledge of the musical instrument in focus and a broader knowledge of learning theories. This was because during the course of the interviews the discussion unavoidably dealt with specific technical issues concerning the piano, like use of the pedal, sight-reading, and fingering skills. The teachers who participated in the study were seven of the most respected pianists in Greece. So, obviously, the researcher herself had to be a good pianist also in order to find a welcome in this private 'club'. Normally piano teachers in Athens do not give interviews and do not allow anyone else into their world of teaching. This is because the 'market' is very small and
everyone knows everyone else. Methodological secrets for the piano remain ‘secrets’ and only pass from the teachers to their students.

The third condition to be satisfied in order to enhance the validity characteristics of the thesis was for the researcher not to suggest to teachers’ minds the theory she herself had in mind. This is a very dangerous trap for every researcher, especially for those who prefer to collect qualitative information. In the context of free discussions with the participants – in fact semi-structured interviews – the current researcher did not use words that might ‘push’ the teachers in one direction or another. The questions were not leading ones and were kept as simple as possible. Teachers were asked to explain their actions and clarify their ideas. The real analysis of the interviews took place later, when all the seven interviews had been transcribed. It was a very hard task indeed.

From the analysis of the interviews it was found that teachers perceive musicality in ways that correspond closely with Swanwick’s four layers of musical knowledge development (the materials, the expressive character, the form and the value). These teachers also explained how five contextual variables – teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society – influence the quality of piano pedagogy in the Greek context. In addition, they described their views about significant aspects of piano teaching and learning in Athenian conservatories. For the seven teachers who participated in this study, musicality constitutes the focus of their teaching, regardless of the level of the student or the difficulty of the pieces taught.

From the very beginning, even from when the student learns the first notes, as well as throughout the whole piano course, teachers aim to get students to play expressively (as they say with ‘musicality’). This is in order to satisfy the inner world of the listeners and move them inwardly. In short teachers seek something more than simply playing the correct notes or playing skilfully. In this search they use terms like ‘perfection’, ‘beauty’, ‘inner intensity’, ‘professionalism’, ‘melodiousness’, ‘expressiveness’, ‘spontaneousness’, and ‘sensitivity’. In the interviews as well as the observations of the teachers’ lessons it seems that the meaning they give to musicality is almost synonymous with the authentic presentation and transmission of the meaning of the piece as the composer would have wished it.

Piano teachers believe playing ‘musically’ means ‘respecting the music score’. From the first moment when students start to play a new piece, teachers seek the faithful presentation of all the score symbols. In order to be certain that these symbols are in fact
authentic, teachers ask students to buy original editions. They prefer these editions even when they do not have sufficient helpful remarks. Teachers try to show what the composer may have wished to hear, in accordance with their knowledge of the period, feelings, and experience of the composer, as well as of the nature of the instrument of that time. Although, in their opinion, the meaning of ‘musicality’ and ‘authentic interpretation’ seem to be almost the same, they expect a personal interpretation from the student within the limits of the composer’s style.

‘Musical’ piano playing, according to the teachers, seems to derive primarily from the student’s instincts. As one of the teachers describes it, ‘musicality’ is an inner need making the pianist want to hear the music in a perfect way and to strive hard to realise this desire (A: 36). At this point, the same teacher takes as an example one of her students. She says that it is the student’s ‘musicality’ which leads her to solutions for any technical problems she has, and to the kind of melodious playing which she has already created in her own mind. On the other hand, when ‘musicality’ does not constitute part of the talents of a student, the teachers believe it can be taught (A: 109, B: 133). The teachers therefore identify the notion of ‘musicality’ with the notion of musical ‘talent’. You either have ‘musicality’ (talent) or you do not. In the latter case, you can always ‘develop’ it with the help of the right teacher and the right environment. This is of course a logical paradox. Teachers themselves require ‘musicality’ during the whole course of piano lessons from the start of a music course, and even when a person has reached the advanced levels. As stated in the previous paragraph, ‘musicality’ can be achieved primarily through attention to matters contained in a score. Students are instructed how to work on a number of matters, such as quality of sound, dynamics of notes, independence amongst ‘voices’, clarity of melody and accompaniment, building of musical phrases, interweaving of notes, note and pause duration, balance of rhythm and tempo, and understanding of the ‘character’ or the ‘meaning’ of a piece.

Musicality, as a central idea in teachers’ views, is an end in itself and pervades all the layers of musical knowledge development simultaneously. It is required in the materials layer, when the student is learning the notes. In an effort to find the correct note, s/he aims to play it also in the correct way. For the teachers each note needs its own intensity and quality of sound, while at the same time it should not be played in a monotonous way (F: 108). Musicality is also sought in the expressive character layer when the pianist aims to render the meaning the composer would have wished to give to a piece. In the form layer it is also required simultaneously with control of the structure of a
piece and the attempt to give it a coherent unity. Musicality is the chief aim also in the 
value layer, when the pianist tries to make the meaning of the piece his/her own and to 
convey it in the best possible way to the audience. In this layer the teachers talk about 
‘authenticity’, ‘love’, ‘affection’, ‘personal involvement’, and ‘contentment’, to 
describe attitudes and emotions that students should acquire. The student having 
understood and appreciated the value of a piece should be able to be carried along with 
the music. The student should become one with it. At this point the teachers look for 
that ‘extra something’ from their students. This helps them to enjoy the piece 
themselves as if it were their own, as well as to convey this meaning to others in the 
proper way (A: 14).

According to the teachers, there is no upper limit to ‘musicality’. There are no limits, 
says teacher ‘C’, to how well or how musically a person can play the piano (C: 88). For 
this reason a teacher never seems satisfied with a student’s playing. The teacher 
continually aims at something better, helping the student to play more and more 
‘musically’. According to the participating teachers, students can improve their own 
techniques by themselves with patient study. The point at which the help of a teacher is 
particularly needed is in developing ‘musicality’, which is something different from 
‘technique’ and the other ‘low-level’ skills. The path towards musicality is a very hard 
one and therefore teachers are needed as guides to lead students into music’s world of 
wonders. The piano teacher, as a person possessing the ‘magic keys’ to an imaginary 
musical kingdom, has all the ability and knowledge required to enable the student to 
convey ‘musicality’ (E: 2, 49). On the other hand, the student who plays the piano must 
also have – at least to a minor but significant degree – a musical nature. This will enable 
him/her through the teacher’s instructions to understand the meaning of the music and 
the vision of the composer. This means that the desire to project the composer’s 
meaning must well out from within, as if it were personal ‘feeling’. The teachers never 
remain satisfied until they distinguish in their students’ playing this authenticity and 
sensitivity, which will stir the spirits of the listeners, truly move their hearts, and make 
their imaginations soar.

Teachers’ belief that musicality can be taught brings to all their efforts a serious sense 
of responsibility about conveying such knowledge of musicality to their students. They 
use various methods. These include demonstration of the piece by teachers themselves, 
explanation of its meaning, and encouraging students to go to concerts or to listen on 
CDs to different interpretations by great performers of the pieces which they are
studying. These are some of the ways of motivating students to get to know, understand and value a piece of music. Teachers believe that musicality is acquired when the student has so fully understood and appreciated a piece that s/he is able to do more than simply play the correct notes.

As has already been stated, the significance teachers give to musical expression is greater than that which they give to piano technique. Even if a piece is played at a slower tempo with some wrong notes, provided that it has 'musicality', it can stand in its own right and move an audience (E: 12, 20, F: 86, 87). According to the teachers, technique constitutes merely the basis for musicality and upon this foundation the pianist, free from technical difficulties, can express a deeper meaning (E: 20). That is, although musical expression begins in the first piano lesson simultaneously with the learning of technique, in reality it is a more complex idea requiring for its acquisition constant dedication. In practice expression has a much broader scope than technique, since it is shared by the audience, while continually subject to influence and improvement.

Musicality is understood by the teachers to be a social experience, common to both the pianist and the listener, and expressing feelings through a unique and mutually appreciated language. On the one hand, the teachers say that the student has a certain background in personal experiences and an attitude towards music resulting from this. On the other hand, the composer, having composed the piece in a particular epoch, may have personal experiences that differ. In order to empathise with the musical world of the composer, the student has to relate to the teacher’s personal experience. This experience will be mediated to the student (A: 113, E: 4, 14) by the teacher’s ‘system of values’ and attitude towards music. So for a pianist to play ‘musically’ s/he should embrace the three different worlds of composer, teacher, and pianist him/herself. This will be so, if the student and the teacher through special study of the composer’s life and period have developed a complete understanding and reverence for the feelings and notions the composer wished to convey. Subsequently, pianists should share this experience unaltered with the audience, as if they themselves were simply transparent mediums between the composer and the listener (C: 118). For this reason musicality appears to constitute a complex aim requiring great effort on the part of the student and the teacher, even in cases where it is instinctive in the pianist. Because of its complicated nature, musicality is exposed to the influence of external variables, such as family background, conservatory policy, and social environment.
In their efforts to describe ‘musicality’ the teachers compare the characteristics of speech with the symbols of music (C: 50, D: 67, F: 2, 125). However, musicality itself seems to be difficult to describe in words. Musicality and musical symbols are what truly convey to the audience experiences originating with the composer, elaborated by the interpreter, and touching almost automatically the listeners’ hearts. Nevertheless the feelings and the emotion stirred by musicality are only conveyed by the music itself, and not by any other human language. In the teachers’ efforts to describe the intense emotion aroused by musicality they borrow from these human languages the ideal words approximating to certain feelings in human nature. These include words like ‘pleasure’, ‘emotion’, ‘enjoyment’, and ‘full contentment’.

The attempt of teachers to guide their students towards its acquisition also incidentally help them to achieve certain goals which relate to Swanwick’s four layers of musical development. First of all they insist on matters which they consider basic and which could be included in the materials layer, such as the comprehension and presentation of whatever is in the score, and the handling of the piano. Practical issues to which teachers give weight in the materials layer include information and exercises related to the correct reading of the score, as well as matters concerning correct handling of the piano for the most musical effect. These include muscle looseness, position of hands, body posture when sitting at the piano, and secrets of effective study for improving technique. Teachers also draw students’ attention to matters peculiar to the piano as an instrument. These include the use of the pedal and complete control of the sound, which help even more in handling the piano (see Figure 6, p. 192).

At this point reference should be made to the significance the piano teachers give to technique development throughout the materials layer. Dealing with the problems of practical technique helps the pianist to reproduce the score musically and melodiously. To improve technique, teachers suggest to students certain methodological ‘secrets’. These include slow study, successive study increasing in tempo from slow to medium and afterwards to fast, with both or with separate hands, repetition, perseverance in difficult points, sight-reading, practising memorisation and practising away from the piano, studying scales, etudes, and exercises.

After the matters that could be included in the materials layer, the teachers seek expression of the character and notions of the piece as the composer would have wished to present them. ‘Musicality’ is first and foremost attained through the proper selection
of score editions, and afterwards the strict adherence to matters like tempo, rhythm, note or sound quality (see Figure 6, p. 192). The study of music books is recommended to students to help them to understand the spirit of the composer, to familiarise themselves with the mentality of his/her time and the reason why the piece was composed. In the expressive character layer teachers also appear to distinguish between what the composer wished to express and how the performer interprets it. A number of matters have to be investigated and thoroughly comprehended by the performer. Having overcome all the technical difficulties, a learner will be able to create his/her own forms of expression in a very authentic and natural way, while remaining true to the wishes of the composer.

Next in turn is the form layer, where the teachers insist on the music being comprehended and played as a unit. Music has been characterised by teacher ‘D’ as a journey through time (D: 67). The musical progression is unpredictable for the listener unless the performer understands the piece as a whole and does not put too much particular emphasis on every single note. To help their students to understand how to control the structure of a piece better, all the teachers usually compare music to a building or a speech. Unity is the main identifying feature, as in music. Just as a building constructor needs to build the foundations before the other parts (D: 2), so the pianist has to present the harmonic progression of the piece before dealing with each particular note. It is the same, they all say, in everyday speech, where accenting every syllable is not enough to make the context understood. A speaker should have in mind the main points before making a speech. S/he can then take care of all the varieties of intonation in the phrases, depending on the emotions s/he intends to convey. The same rule applies to music, where strict adherence to tempo and rhythm, variety of dynamics, sound accentuation and intonation, multiple phrase expression, harmonic progression, and so on, lead to an ultimate coherence (see Figure 6, p. 192).

Finally in the value layer, the teachers’ objective is to help their students to appreciate a piece as deeply as if they themselves were the composers. The teacher’s authentic attitude towards the true merit of a piece helps students succeed in presenting its subtle nuances. The student’s own attitude to hard work and disciplined elaboration of the teacher’s suggestions helps as well. Explaining the composer’s background, and the mentality and values of the society s/he lived in, is the best way for the teachers to help their students to understand and handle a piece, and to fully appreciate the composer’s notions. In this layer the teachers place a lot of emphasis on preparation for public
performance. For the teachers, the ingredients for perfect piano playing include authentic reproduction and conveyance of the meaning of the piece, as if the performer had become the composer in person. This is achieved mostly by heart- and soul involvement, assisted by previous hard work on the details of every piece. Only then does a performer get beyond personality or ambition, overcome nervousness before an audience, and become able to play everything with total dedication to the music itself. Figure 6 presents an overview of how teachers perceive the development of musicality in relation to Swanwicks’ theory of musical development.

Figure 6 Piano learning (Developmental spiral of musical Knowledge: from Swanwick and Tillman, 1986)

7.2. DEVELOPING MUSICALITY FROM LAYER TO LAYER

The teaching observation and subsequent interviews with the teachers show that to pass from one layer of musical knowledge to another, a pianist must first have acquired certain kinds of dexterity. It should also be observed that, while natural individual abilities form the basis of musical development, superior skills must gradually be developed to enable the pianist to do what is normally difficult. The views of the
teachers seem to show that, to pass from each layer to the next and to play ‘musically’, pianists have to master a significant point at each transition. So to obtain the required knowledge for the materials layer, a person must adhere strictly to the score and reproduce it in detail. This is achieved through the development of good technique and piano handling dexterity. Here, at the climax of the materials layer and the point of transition to the expressive character layer, the teachers talk about the acquisition of certain special skills, which they locate immediately after the mastering of technique. So they speak about a kind of ‘automatism’ and ‘memorisation’ of movements of the body and the fingers (A: 76, B: 67). This helps pianists to free themselves from the score and their own bodies in order to be carried along with the music and to begin to express and feel its meaning.

Next, aiming to understand the meaning of a piece in the expressive character layer, and to express it ‘musically’, teachers seek the acquisition of skills which relate to mental cognition and concentration (B: 48, E: 57, F: 52). The pianist at this stage, while seeming to have to interpret feelings first of all, actually has first to master the music in the mind (C: 102). Having learnt how to get the fingers to move automatically, pianists must be able to make them do their own will and stop at whatever point they wish, and be in a position to continue from that point on. The knowledge of music must be elaborated in the mind, and whatever is written in the score imprinted in the memory in every detail. When students reach this stage, they are in a position to pass on from the expressive character layer to the form layer. In this layer they will have to control simultaneously the particular notes they are executing, and have lodged in the mind their relation to those preceding and following. That is, at every moment they must be well aware of where they are, how they got there, and where they intend to finish. The development of the pianist’s thinking in the form layer aims at the complete control of harmonic progression, and at providing unity and coherence for the piece. This knowledge must be mastered and could be described in other terms as an ability of the pianist to control, not simply the piece, but also the time itself in which the music will evolve. To deal with the form layer, and enable the listener to understand this progression, namely where each phrase is leading, pianists must develop special mental abilities. They must control the whole piece and give it unity and identity. Thus the point of transition to the form layer could be termed, according to the teachers, mental cognition of what happens, not only at any given moment in a musical piece, but in the entire work. It will provide a basis for the work in the form layer (B: 115, F: 68).
Subsequently in order to pass on from the *form* layer to the *value* layer, it seems from the interviews with the teachers that normal human abilities are insufficient. Although the teachers often affirm that everything can be taught, at the point of transition to the advanced layer of musical knowledge development they speak about the elimination of the 'ego' and 'personality' of a pianist (D: 34). As one of the teachers says, 'when you are involved in the piece you must forget all about yourself... Your own personality disappears' (D: 35). The pianist should become 'dematerialised'. Pianists in the *value* layer aim at appreciating, and comprehending a piece so that it has meaning for themselves and they can convey this meaning to an audience with themselves as mediators between the composer and the public. Freed from stress and nervousness about their own personal worthiness, they will be able to play before an audience and give expression to the composer's wishes, rather than their own. Only then will they be able to dedicate themselves to the art of music, playing only for the sake of the music itself (A: 8, B: 109, E: 18, F: 143). This is the ultimate aim of the *value* layer and of piano learning as a whole.

7.3. EPILOGUE

The two central themes of the current work are Greek piano teachers' perceptions of 'musicality', and their ideas about the context of piano teaching and learning in Greece. Teachers' ideas about the influence of family, conservatory, and society are to some extent contained in their ideas about musicality. It is obvious that different conservatory policies, different relations of parents towards the efforts of their children in music, as well as Greek society's eastern cultural character, are all variables which influence the teaching and learning transaction. However, conservatory policy, family support and societal values are issues peripheral to teachers' beliefs. Variables playing a significant role in piano teaching and learning in Greece could be investigated in a sociological or psychological study. However, due to the considerable interaction between the different explanatory contextual variables, it is extremely difficult to draw conclusions about how the seven widely recognised piano teachers who participated in the study have come to hold these particular views.

This study is phenomenological in nature because participants' narratives were employed. These 'narratives' were shown by the current author to be fragments of an as yet unintegrated theory – or perhaps many theories – of 'musicality'. Swanwick's framework of musical development was used to analyse teachers' views. The main idea
in Swanwick’s theory is that musical development can be found in four commensurate layers, given the names: ‘materials’, ‘expressive character’, ‘form’, and ‘value’. These four layers interweave in a continuous spiral-like movement. Swanwick’s theory was used here as an epistemological framework and students’ musical development was associated with teachers’ ideas of musicality. Thus, the present thesis verified Swanwick’s theory in another cultural environment and in another musical mode. From one point of view, this study adds another element of ‘context specificity’ to the epistemological framework proposed by Swanwick some years ago.

The validity and credibility of the ideas emerging from the interviews with the teachers are two themes which must be examined, but not in relation to the ‘representativeness’ of ‘sample’ or the ‘correctness’ of the opinions expressed. Instead, the validity and credibility of the current study is based (a) on the status of the ‘informants’, i.e. the influence that these seven teachers have in the world of piano teaching and learning in Greece, and (b) the depth of the analysis that followed the detailed transcription of the teachers’ ideas. The views expressed by the piano teachers in their interviews are reliable, but not in the sense the term ‘reliability’ has in quantitative studies. The ideas found here should be seen projected into other contexts and situations rather than ‘generalised’ from a quantitative point of view. The current researcher is not drawing a line between quantitative and qualitative studies. Qualitative and quantitative data are both useful but for different purposes. In qualitative studies the main aim is illumination rather than generalisation. The main aim of the current author was to build up a theory and not to verify a pre-existing set of propositions. The most important theories in the field of psychology and didactics have been developed by observing the behaviour demonstrated by three or four people. The teachers who participated in the current work are among the most prominent piano teachers and performers in Greece, and for that reason their opinions have special importance.

Apart from the presentation of teachers’ ideas, this study contains necessary information about teaching and learning the piano in Greece. More specifically, after the introductory section, the current author presented a collection of presidential decrees, state laws, prospectuses, and other material. These introduce the readers to the world of the Greek conservatories and the kind of piano education they promote. In this way, the readers of the current work can understand the general characteristics of music teaching in Greece. In the second chapter of this work the literature on piano performance has been reviewed in order to familiarise the readers with (a) the psychological aspects of
music performance, and (b) the piano as a musical instrument. It showed that from the
second decade of the twentieth century psychological research has identified a number
of characteristics and models regarding piano performance and practice.

In the third chapter, the current author presented a number of theories of musical
development. Such musical development is related to abilities people develop
throughout their lives, including perceiving, composing, and playing music.
Swanwick’s theory of musical development seemed appropriate for analysing teachers’
ideas of musicality. Not only has this theory been verified in a number of social and
musical contexts, but it has also been verified in various musical modalities.
Swanwick’s theory has the advantage of dealing with musical activities and does not
need the mediation of secondary symbolic systems like the notion of audiation.

In the fourth chapter, the methodological steps of the study are presented in detail. Next,
the fifth chapter of the thesis contains the analysis of a single interview, enabling the
current researcher to investigate the degree of commensurability between the views of
teacher ‘A’ and the key concepts in Swanwick’s developmental theory. In this analysis,
the current author attempted to find major categories representing teachers’ perceptions
about ‘musicality’ and its contexts, the quality of teacher-learner transactions, and the
contextual variables. The analysis of teacher ‘A’ s interview showed that her views,
ideas, and practices could be understood within the epistemological framework of
Swanwick’s four successive layers. In this first analysis it was also revealed that five
variables play the most important role in piano teaching and learning in Greece: teacher,
learner, conservatory policy, family, and society. In the sixth chapter, all the interviews
(including the first one) were analysed under the headings of the four layers and their
interrelations, and of the five context variables the participants think influence the
quality of piano lessons in the Athenian conservatories.

The contribution of this thesis to music education has significance, because the Greek
world of piano teaching and learning has been described for the first time. For the first
time, a number of specific Greek variables influencing the quality of piano lessons
(teacher, learner, conservatory, family, and society) have been investigated and
described. It is also the first time Swanwick’s framework has been applied to the new
unexplored context of Greece. In terms of literature review, the readers of the current
work can find a collection of publications on piano practice and performance. With this
study I hope to contribute towards the improvement of standards in piano education in
Greece by increasing the level of epistemological awareness of Greek piano teachers and scholars of Music Education. As a piano teacher and performer I hope to help other teachers and colleagues to make their profession as congenial and successful as possible. I have revealed some secrets and I have opened the book. Deep down I would like to believe that other Greek researchers would continue to write the story from the point where I left off and not simply repeat points I have already made. For any academic researcher this would be the equivalent of the audience’s applause after the final note in a piano recital.
REFERENCES


