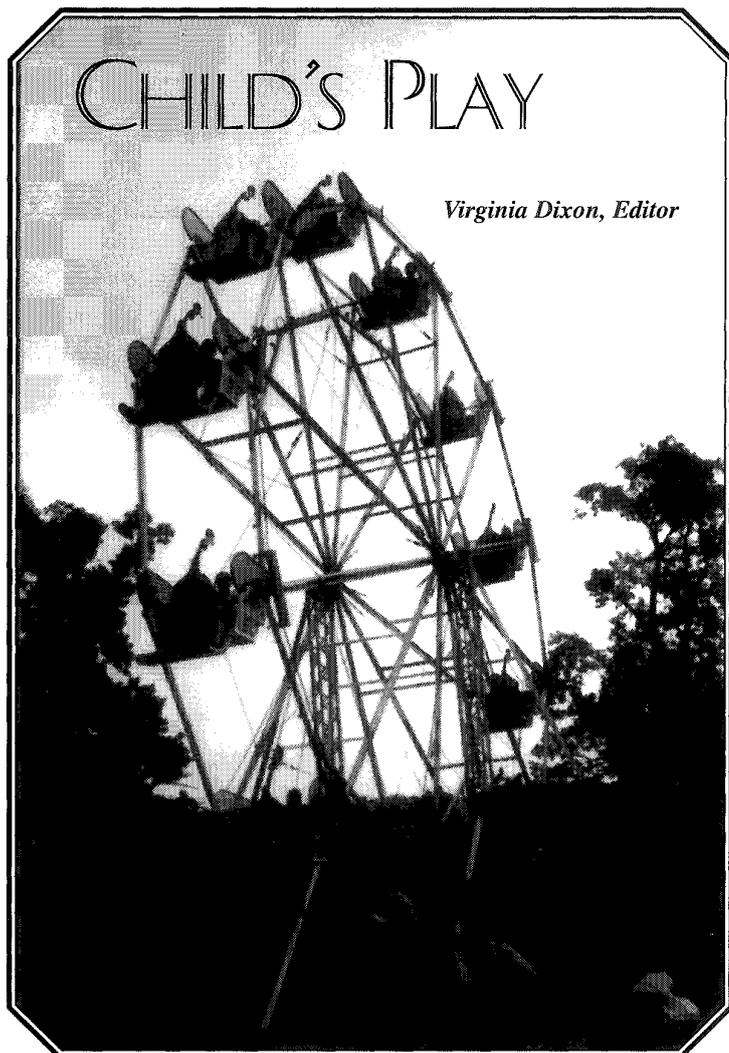


CHILD'S PLAY

Virginia Dixon, Editor



Michael Klinghoffer surprised us in his masterclass at the June 1999 convention in Iowa City when he used a nonmusical exercise to markedly improve a student's playing. First the student performed his piece from memory. Then he was asked to play it again while reading unrelated written material silently to himself. Next he was asked to paraphrase some of that text to the audience. When he performed the piece again, it was much more secure, much more beautiful. We felt we had witnessed magic! Here are more of Michael's wonderful ideas.

EXPLORING RELATED AREAS OF LEARNING

By Michael Klinghoffer

Pedagogy is one of my favorite classes to teach. I tell my students that although I have never had a pedagogy class in the formal sense of the word, I have gathered a lot of ideas from my studies with Gary Karr. Diana Gannett and Yoan Goilav have also been major influences on my playing and teaching.

pected connections. My student Tal said, "When I prepared the presentation and was working on the first exercise of the Ninjitsu warm up, I suddenly had a revelation about the movement of the bow arm. I went to the bass, and it really worked."

Much has been written about Howard Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligence* in his famous book *Frames of Mind* (Basic Books, 1993). Gardner describes seven intelligences: linguistic, musical, logical, mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic and personal intelligences. My own interpretation and application of Gardner's theory, is that some problems in music may be dealt with by professionals in other, related areas.

As we returned from winter break into the second semester, my students at both schools in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem had to present their assignments: a short presentation, 20-30 minutes long, on any subject, so long as they could relate it to playing or teaching the bass. One student lectured about the French philosopher Henry Bergson and his view of time perception. Another presentation was about Heriggel's famous book *Zen in the Art of Archery*. One student taught the whole class a Ninjitsu warm-up. We also had presentations about the development of the bass in the orchestra and about jazz bassist Slam Stuart. Proper bass stuff!

I have always felt that real learning happens through strange and unex-

pected connections. For example, in order to be a good performer, it is not enough to have a strong musical intelligence. One also needs to know how to work with his or her body. If a bass student is experiencing difficulty with the physical aspects of playing, maybe an Alexander teacher or a Tai-chi teacher can help more than a double bass specialist. Thus many issues that we encounter could be addressed through other disciplines.

Years ago, I had an experience that got me interested in the whole subject of areas of learning related to music. When I was young, I was never able to draw anything. One day I saw the book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, by Betty Edwards. I doubted that it would help, but I gave it a try. There was

one exercise where I had to copy Picasso's drawing of Stravinsky, while looking at the painting upside down. The drawing came out well, and I still have it. Later on, I did a portrait of one of our politicians. I did not think that it was so great, but everyone knew immediately who it was. I have realized that there are things for which the analytical approach is not strong enough.

In his wonderful work *Music As A Language: A New Philosophy of Music Education* (Winds, 1993), Sir David Whitwell discusses and quotes some of the research about left and right sides of the brain: "The left hemisphere is specialized to perform rational, linear, digital functions. The right cerebral hemisphere performs intuitive, metaphoric analog and functions." Much of our study in school is addressed to our left hemisphere. And not only in school! An article published in *The Economist* on February 12, 2000, *The Biology of Music*, shows that interval perception (relative pitch) is a left hemisphere activity, whereas pitch recognition (perfect pitch), is a right hemisphere one. Don't our ear training classes deal mostly with relative pitch? Developing our right side abilities is developing our intuitive process, which is many times

hindered by too much thinking (and ego).

Lately in our class we have been doing a lot of work that has to do with ear training and its connection to playing. We have developed a series of exercises. Results were evident to me in most cases. I was most pleased when students noticed change:

- We have been playing the melodies in Lars Edlund's book *Modus Novus* (Ed. Wilhelm Stockholm). These are very short atonal melodies that sound great on the bass in any octave.
- Playing songs and improvising.
- Playing a series of arpeggios in the following sequence starting on the same note: Major, Minor, Major 1st inversion, Minor 1st inversion, Major 2nd inversion, Minor 2nd inversion, Diminished 7 chord, Dominant 7th, Dominant 1st, 2nd and 3rd inversions. We emphasize starting this sequence on every pitch, first in one, then two, then three octaves, making sure that we name the notes as we go, in order to increase awareness of absolute pitch and

lessen awareness of patterns. Many times we stop the bow, in order to eliminate an audible glissando, do the shift, and then resume playing. Most of the time our instincts are right. Our hand knows where to go.

You might ask what these things have to do with intuition and right hemisphere? Michael Jordan doesn't have time to calculate the distance, speed and other such parameters of the ball for every shot that he takes. Just as he does, I think that we should practice trusting our instincts, as well as encourage our students to trust their heart and to follow their inner voice. To do it we must always trust our instinct, even though we know that sometimes it might be wrong. I would enjoy further discussing these issues with anyone at Klinghof@netmedia.net.il.

Michael Klinghoffer is a faculty member of the Jerusalem Academy for Music and Dance, the Israel Music Academy and Tel Aviv University, and resident conductor of the Academy Symphony Orchestra. His latest CD is 19th Century Pop Music.

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