

What does playing a musical instrument and being an artist really entail? And above all where can you learn? Not always at conservatoires which, because of inflexible ministerial syllabi, provide, more often than not, rather academic courses that lack imagination and offer little in the way of practical experience. I believe that, from a certain age onwards, one should change one's ways of learning and, consequently, one's ways of teaching. The starting point should no longer be exams, competitions or lessons, but the need for self-reflection, if one wants to acquire the critical capacity to say what is beautiful according to one's own ideas and experiences. It is precisely this ability to transmit one's own experiences to others that makes us artists. I think we spend one half of our lives trying to communicate something to others, and the other half, usually, giving up the attempt.

The problem is that there is always someone ready to teach us how to live (and therefore as far as music is concerned how to play, how to phrase, how to vibrate, how to do these things and how not to etc) and who, however, doesn't ask you (and often do not ask THEMSELVES) why and above all whether you agree with them or not.

I would like to see a musical agora, in which people confront one another in a Socratic way. Socrates was one of the most important exponents of Western philosophy and his teachings are based on dialogue, dialectics and debates which involve everyone, irrespective of social position or cultural differences, with the aim of capturing the essence of things and the knowledge of ourselves. He would walk about the agora, in the heart of the city, and talk to everyone he met, from the merchant to the philosopher, always adapting his approach according to his interlocutor and not because he wanted to teach them something but because he wanted to understand and reflect over the ideas other people had.

During the year there will be three meetings where all participants, regardless of musical competence, experience or age will meet on equal terms and exchange their ideas and emotions rather than their views on intonation or fingering. in a kind of laboratory where there will no longer be a single teacher, but where everyone, myself included, will be students and teachers at the same time. I would like to see everyone be given the chance to develop their own critical faculties.

Besides this I will also try and invite guests who will be able to help us to further expand our knowledge (pianists, violinists, composers, poets, journalists, musicologists, actors etc)

The lessons will be held either in the mornings or the afternoons and several topics will be dealt with each time and at various levels: you will be able to play, express your own opinions on whatever happens, or bring along a CD you are particularly fond of and which you feel may open up a debate. There will be total freedom in what we do.

I realise this is a new, ambitious and even a rather risky project.

But why don't we give it a try?

Umberto Clerici

Conditions of the course

The lessons will be organised in **8 monthly meetings** between March and November 2009.

Every meeting will be spread out in 2 successive days (for a total of 16 days): the second day will be reserved for traditional individual lessons while the first day will be a laboratory where various ideas and themes will be developed each time. There will be individual and group lessons on technique, confrontations, meetings with guests and teachers, concerts in class so as to become familiar with playing in public and parallel lessons given by the “students” themselves.

And the Socratic meetings.

The course has been created with certain set ideas but is extremely open to ideas from anyone to be discussed in a kind of laboratory in progress.

Conditions and facilities

A pianist accompanist will be available for students.

For those in need of accommodation this is available at the *Ostello della gioventu* (youth hostel) in Biella which has been recently renewed and is situated exactly opposite the Academy. Prices range from 20 to 40 euros a day including breakfast.

Where possible compulsory attendance will be requested for both days.

Free use of a recording studio that the Academy is preparing for producing CDs and DVDs for study and promotional purposes (competitions, YouTube etc) will also be possible.

Besides concerts given in group there will also be 2 public concerts during the year: a traditional one and one with a cello orchestra formed by all the students.

Grants will also be available to help reduce costs and facilitate attendance of the course.

Any lessons that are missed may, within reason, be made up for.

For Italian students a 1st level diploma from a Conservatoire is required, apart from exceptional cases pre-arranged with the director of the Academy.

Costs

700€ for 8 double lessons for a total of 16 days (8 single individual + 8 “experimental”) + 100€ for application.

Suggested dates (these may alter during the course of the year)

March 30 – 31
April 30 – 1 May
May To be decided
June 15 -16

September to be decided according to the Academy Festival (between 15 and 29).
October 15 -16
November 16 -17
December 10 - 11

For information on accommodation and registration; www.accademiaperosi.org
Tel Academy: 015 29040

For other information (for example pupils who do not yet have a diploma) write to:
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www.umbertoclerici.it
<http://umbertoclerici.myblog.it>