

EXPLORING INTENTION MAPPING AND ACTION IN PURSUIT OF EMOTIONAL
STORYTELLING FOR MUSICIANS

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ABSTRACT

This document presents a novel approach to music education by integrating acting pedagogies, specifically the concepts of "Intention" and "Action," to enhance the expressive capabilities of musicians. Rooted in the methodologies of Konstantin Stanislavski, Sanford Meisner, and Michael Chekhov, this research seeks to bridge the gap between traditional music education, which often emphasizes technical execution, and the need for emotional expressivity and storytelling in musical performances.

The role of the musician as a 'human instrument,' capable of conveying complex human emotions and narratives through music is explored in this document. Drawing from acting techniques, the document proposes methods to help musicians internalize and express emotions more authentically, thus elevating their communicative power. The introduction of "Intention Mapping" or "Actioning" in musical performances is examined, where specific intentions are assigned to musical phrases, transforming technical execution into emotionally charged expression.

The document discusses the impact of these acting methodologies on teaching approaches and student experiences in music education. It suggests that this interdisciplinary approach can lead to more holistic development, emphasizing not just technical skills but also emotional intelligence, empathy, and narrative understanding.

Furthermore, it delves into the psychological theories underpinning these methods, including the James-Lange theory and cognitive appraisal theory, to understand how intentions stimulate emotions. The role of mirror neurons in the performer-audience interaction is also explored, highlighting the empathetic resonance that can be achieved through this approach.

In conclusion, the document argues that the integration of acting methodologies in music education can transform performance dynamics, leading to more emotionally resonant and communicatively effective musical experiences. This innovative approach has the potential to reshape teaching methodologies and expand career opportunities for musicians, making them more versatile and expressive artists. The document calls for further research into the cognitive and emotional processes underlying this interdisciplinary approach, paving the way for its broader application in the arts.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to Eric Fleischer and Dr. Tod Fitzpatrick. These two mentors, voice teachers, and friends have shown me the life changing power of passion in education.

I hope I can pay that forward.

PREFACE

The first time someone explained acting techniques like Action, Objective, and Intention Mapping to me, it felt like I had been given the notation to language I knew but lacked the vocabulary to describe or truly use. It opened a new way of thinking about why art meant something or communicated ideas to others. Most of all, it gave me a pathway to connecting truthfully in the moment with my acting and singing experiences that allowed me to genuinely enjoy my art for the first time in my life.

These ideas are almost obvious when we see them in print, but in the voice or instrumental studio we often pursue technical perfection to the detriment of communication and connection. I believe that all the tools and techniques we learn are a means of communing with ourselves, each other, and something greater. I hope that the ideas explored here will inspire exploration and expression of this human condition in which we all find ourselves.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Music, in its essence, serves as a conduit for expressing complex human emotions, intentions, and ideas. The process of infusing music with meaning is intricate and multifaceted, extending beyond the realm of traditional musical education which often emphasizes technical prowess over emotional expression. This paper proposes a novel approach to music education, one that integrates acting pedagogy, specifically the concept of "Intention," to enhance the expressive capabilities of musicians.

Hector Berlioz, the great early 19th century composer, in his contemplation on the nature of music, asserts, "Dramatic musical composition is a double art; it results from the association and intimate union of poetry and music."¹ While Berlioz references poetry as the secondary art form, this document posits that acting, particularly the utilization of "Intention," offers a powerful tool for musicians to channel their human experiences into their musical performances, thereby elevating the communicative power of their art.

Central to this approach is the recognition of the musician as a 'human instrument' - the originator, creator, and receptor of musical expression. The musical notes themselves are not the sole carriers of meaning; rather, it is the human experience, filtered and articulated through the musician, which resonates with audiences. Stella Adler's² insight that "It's not the lines, it's the

¹ Hector Berlioz, and William Foster Apthorp. *Hector Berlioz; Selections from His Letters, and Aesthetic, Humorous, and Satirical Writings* (New York: Holt, 1879), 383.

² Stella Adler (1901-1992) was a renowned acting pedagogue, teacher, director, and actress.

life”³ encapsulates this concept, highlighting the importance of the performer’s presence and emotional state in effective storytelling.

As Konstantin Stanislavski points out, the subtext of human intention is the life of any live performance art that is experienced anew each time.

Nor should we forget that the published play is not a complete work until it has been performed by actors and brought to life by their living human feelings, just as a piece of music is not a symphony until it has been performed by an orchestra. As soon as musicians and actors bring the subtext to life with their own experiences, the secret hiding places, the essence of the work they are performing, the reason it was created, become apparent both in the subtext itself, and in themselves... When we create a performance, the words are the authors and the subtext is ours. If it were otherwise, the audience wouldn’t make an effort to come to the theaters to see the actor. They’d stay at home and read the play instead. You can only come to know a dramatic work in all its fullness of meaning in the theater. Only there can you feel the real, living heart of the play, the subtext that has been created by the actor and is re-experienced in every show.⁴

The methodologies developed by Konstantin Stanislavski, Sanford Meisner, and Michael Chekhov provide a rich framework for cultivating expressive skills in musicians. These techniques, though varied in their interpretations, converge on the idea of psychophysical language, Intention, – a mode of communication that resonates with both performers and audiences on an intuitive level.

³ Larry Moss, *The Intent to Live: Achieving Your True Potential as an Actor* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2005), 33.

⁴ Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 403.

Many of these pedagogues referred to this concept of physical embodiment as Action, Actioning, or Psychological Gesture. I have chosen to use the term Intention⁵ to allow for the psychological aspect and encourage more abstract use of this tool for musicians.

In the landscape of contemporary music education, a trend towards embracing technology, holistic learning models, and global musical perspectives is evident. The integration of digital tools and online platforms has revolutionized the way music is taught and learned, facilitating interactive and accessible learning experiences. In addition, there is a growing emphasis on holistic approaches that address not just technical skills but also the emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of music learning. This includes incorporating mindfulness, emotional intelligence development, and fostering creativity and improvisation.⁶⁷ Furthermore, curricula are increasingly including a diverse array of musical genres and cultural traditions, broadening students' understanding and appreciation of global musical practices.⁸

Despite these advancements, there remains a significant gap in the incorporation of acting methodologies into music education, specifically in the realm of emotional expressivity and storytelling. My research aims to fill this gap by introducing acting pedagogies, particularly the concepts of "Intention" and "Action," into the musical domain. This innovative approach seeks to enhance musicians' expressive capabilities, enabling them to convey more profound emotional

⁵ Larry Moss, *The Intent to Live: Achieving Your True Potential as an Actor* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2005), 32.

⁶ Edward Varner, "General Music Learning Is Also Social and Emotional Learning," *General Music Today*, 33, no. 2, (2020): 74-78, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371319891421>.

⁷ Jeffrey Agrell, *Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians: A Collection of Musical Games With Suggestions For Use* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2008), 1-3.

⁸ Vanessa L. Bond. "Culturally Responsive Education in Music Education: A Literature Review," *Contributions to Music Education* 42 (2017): 153–80, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26367441>.

Julia Shaw, "The Skin That We Sing: Culturally Responsive Choral Music Education," *Music Educators Journal* 98, no. 4 (2012): 75–81, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41692642>.

narratives in their performances. By drawing on the techniques of renowned acting pedagogues like Stanislavski, Meisner, and Chekhov, this research endeavors to develop musicians who are not only technically proficient but also emotionally engaged and dynamically expressive, addressing an essential component frequently neglected in modern music education.

Musicians, through the application of these acting techniques, can experience a transformation in their performance dynamics. This includes the creation of a physical experience that is both visible and audible in performance, a deeper engagement with the art they create, and the development of a unique framework for understanding and interpreting complex musical compositions.

Performers and teachers are often challenged with a lifeless or repetitive performance. However, with the application of Intention in tools like Intention Mapping, also known as Actioning, performers can heighten “spontaneity, discouraging him or her from monotonously and automatically replicating a tone.”⁹

In addition, these techniques can serve as a focus, shifting the musician's attention from technical mastery to an emotionally engaged, spontaneous, 'flow'-like state.

The document consists of four main chapters:

1. A comprehensive exploration and comparison of the literature on "actions" in acting pedagogy, examining their development and utility for actors.
2. The presentation of a pedagogical framework for applying acting Intention in music education, detailing its potential benefits for musicians.

⁹ Marina Caldarone, Lloyd-Williams, Maggie, *Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus* (New York: Nick Hern, 2003), xiii.

3. Case studies discussing Intention Mapping in music examples. The first is an opera scene by Handel, “Ombra mai fu” and the second is a right-hand transcription of Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” for piano.
4. A discussion of the interplay of emotion, semantics, psychology, neurobiology, and live performance practice in relation to Intention and music.

CHAPTER 2: PEDAGOGY OF INTENTION

Acting is action. The *basis of theater is doing, dynamism*. The word “drama” itself in Ancient Greek means “an action being performed.” In Latin, the corresponding word is *actio*, and the root of this same word has passed into our vocabulary, “action,” “actor,” “act.” So, drama is an action we can see being performed, and, when he comes on, the actor becomes an agent in that action.¹⁰

Konstantin Stanislavski: Psychotechnique for Modern Actors

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863 - 1938) born Konstantin Sergeyevich Alexeyev in Moscow, Russia, emerged as one of the most influential figures in modern theater. His groundbreaking approach to acting transformed the pedagogical landscape, moving away from the histrionic and overly stylized methods prevalent in the 19th century to a more realistic and psychologically grounded methodology. “Stanislavski fought to create a new style of acting that could be newly felt and communicated each and every night.”¹¹ His system of acting training was a response to the then current pedagogy that made emotional experiences inconsistent or unimportant.¹²

In 1898, Stanislavski co-founded the Moscow Art Theatre with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko. This theater became the breeding ground for Stanislavski’s innovative methods. It was here that he began to develop and implement his ideas, striving for a more truthful and emotionally driven form of acting. The Moscow Art Theatre quickly gained acclaim, notably for its production of Anton Chekhov’s plays, which highlighted Stanislavski’s new approach to acting.

¹⁰ Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 40.

¹¹ Richard Brestoff, *The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods* (New York: Smith and Kraus, 1995), 189.

¹² Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 340.

Stanislavski's system, a combination of techniques and principles for actor training, emphasized the psychological believability of characters. "Acting is above all inward, psychological, subconscious. The best thing is when creation occurs spontaneously, intuitively, through inspiration."¹³ He believed that an indirect approach with the conscious mind would lead to effects on emotions and other involuntary feelings.¹⁴

He introduced concepts such as the 'magic if', emotional memory, and the super-objective, which encouraged actors to delve deeply into their characters' motivations and emotions. His focus was on internalizing the character, moving beyond mere imitation or external representation.

Internal and psychological work was only the beginning of Stanislavski's teachings. According to his teaching, "Our purpose is not only to create 'the life of the human spirit in a role,' but also to communicate it outwardly in an artistic form... so the actor must not only experience the role inwardly, he must embody that inner experience, physically. Outer communication relies very strongly on inner experiencing in our school of acting."¹⁵ To connect the outer and inner experiencing of an actor, Stanislavski explored the potential of psychophysical Action.

According to Stanislavski, an Action in acting is not merely a physical movement but an internally motivated and purposeful activity directed towards achieving an objective. Each Action is driven by the character's need to attain a specific goal, making it a deliberate and conscious choice rather than an involuntary or mechanical response.¹⁶ In this framework, Actions

¹³ Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), xxvi.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 21.

¹⁶ Marina Calderone, Lloyd-Williams, Maggie, *Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus* (London: Nick Hern, 2003), xvi.

are the physical manifestations of the character's inner life, bridging the gap between internal intention and external expression.

Stanislavski's emphasis on Action shifted the focus of acting from the external portrayal of emotions to the internal generation of authentic emotional experiences. He argued that true emotions in acting are not elicited by attempting to feel a certain way but by performing Actions driven by the character's objectives which in turn might lead to an authentic emotional experience. "Truth and belief either arise spontaneously in the mind, or are created by the complex working of our psychotechnique. The easiest thing of all is to find and stimulate truth and belief in the body, with the tiniest, simplest physical Tasks and actions. They are accessible, stable, visible, tangible, they submit to the conscious mind and to orders."¹⁷ This approach underscored the importance of understanding the motivations and desires of a character, as each Action an actor performs on stage should stem from these underlying drives.

To facilitate this process, Stanislavski introduced the concept of the 'magic if,' a tool that allows actors to imaginatively place themselves in the character's circumstances. The 'magic if' serves as a catalyst for actors to explore how they would react and what Actions they would undertake if they were in the character's situation.

This imaginative leap fosters a deeper connection to the context of the character's world, enabling actors to perform Actions that are organically rooted in the character's reality. "For actors, "if" is the lever which lifts us out of the world of reality into the only world where we can be creative."¹⁸

¹⁷ Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 160.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 48.

Furthermore, Stanislavski's development of Action intertwined with his emphasis on the through-line of action, a concept that refers to the overarching objective guiding the character's behavior throughout the play. This through-line helps actors maintain logical consistency and emotional momentum in their performance, ensuring that each individual Action contributes to the believable progression of the character's journey and the narrative.

Stanislavski's work fundamentally altered the trajectory of acting pedagogy. His emphasis on an actor's psychological processes and the authenticity of performance influenced generations of actors and teachers. His system laid the foundation for modern acting and has been integral to most acting schools and methodologies developed subsequently. His books, including *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character*, and *Creating a Role*, remain essential reading for actors and students of theater. His pursuit of realism and psychological depth in performance challenged the norms of his time and paved the way for modern acting techniques. Stanislavski's legacy endures in the principles that continue to shape actor training and performance, making him a pivotal figure in the history of theatrical arts.

Sanford Meisner: Communion, Repetition, and Reaction

Sanford Meisner (1905 - 1997), another of the most influential acting teachers of the 20th century, made significant contributions to acting pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of authentic interaction and emotional truth in performance. His approach, deeply rooted in the traditions established by Konstantin Stanislavski, has shaped generations of actors and acting instructors.

Sanford Meisner was born in Brooklyn, New York. Growing up in a culture-rich environment, Meisner developed an early interest in the arts. His foray into theater began with

his studies at the Damrosch Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School), but it was his encounter with Lee Strasberg's work at the Group Theatre in New York that profoundly shaped his approach to acting. The Group Theatre, known for its embrace of Stanislavski's system, was a crucible for the development of American acting techniques and deeply influenced Meisner's pedagogical philosophy.

Meisner's approach to acting pedagogy was characterized by a focus on what he termed "the reality of doing."¹⁹ Dissatisfied with Lee Strasberg's prevailing emphasis on the actor's internal experiences and emotional memory, he sought a more outward-focused method that prioritized genuine interaction and reaction between actors.²⁰ To this end, Meisner developed a series of exercises, the most famous being the "repetition exercise," which aimed to cultivate an actor's ability to respond instinctively and truthfully to their scene partner.²¹ This exercise, and others like it, is designed to strip away the actors' preconceived notions and habits, encouraging a more spontaneous, impulse-driven, and organic mode of performance.

Meisner stressed the significance of acting on impulse and instinct rather than intellectual analysis. To Meisner and many acting teachers including Stella Adler, "Acting is reacting, and it shouldn't arise out of a false response."²² They believed that this approach leads to more natural and believable performances. This reinforced a key concept Meisner's pedagogy of "living truthfully under imaginary circumstances."²³

¹⁹ Sanford Meisner, Longwell, Dennis, *Sanford Meisner on Acting* (New York: Random House, 1987), 16.

²⁰ Richard Brestoff, *The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods* (New York: Smith and Kraus, 1995), 129.

²¹ Sanford Meisner, Longwell, Dennis, *Sanford Meisner on Acting* (New York: Random House, 1987), 21-23.

²² Howard Kissel, Adler, Stella, *Stella Adler - The Art of Acting: Preface by Marlon Brando Compiled & Edited by Howard Kissel* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000), 182.

²³ Sanford Meisner, Longwell, Dennis, *Sanford Meisner on Acting* (New York: Random House, 1987), 15.

Meisner's teachings, while distinct in their focus on external interaction, bear a fundamental connection to Stanislavski's concept of Action. Like Stanislavski, Meisner viewed the actor's task as one of doing rather than merely feeling or representing. For Meisner, the truth of the performance lay in the actor's genuine responses to the actions and reactions of their scene partners. This alignment with the essence of Stanislavski's Action is evident in the way Meisner integrated the actor's objective with their behavior in a dynamic and interactive context.

Furthermore, Meisner's concept of the "pinch and the ouch" – the idea that an actor's emotional response (the "ouch") should always be a direct and honest reaction to a stimulus (the "pinch") – resonates with Stanislavski's belief in the primacy of motivated action.²⁴ In both methodologies, the actor's behavior is seen as a series of actions propelled by objectives and grounded in the reality of the situation.

The repetition exercise is a foundational aspect of Meisner's approach, designed to develop an actor's ability to listen, observe, and respond authentically. The exercise begins simply: two actors face each other, and one makes an observation about the other, such as "You have a green shirt." The other actor then repeats this phrase back. This repetition continues, with each actor responding to the nuances and changes in their partner's delivery. The exercise is not about the words themselves but about the actors' reactions to each other, fostering a heightened sense of awareness and presence.

As actors become more adept at the basic repetition exercise, variations are introduced to increase complexity and challenge. These variations might include changes in emotional tone, physical action, or the introduction of new stimuli to which the actors must adapt their responses.

²⁴ Ibid, 34.

For example, one variation involves one actor changing the observations based on a genuine reaction to a change in their partner's behavior or emotional state. Another variation introduces external distractions, requiring the actors to maintain focus and connection despite interruptions.

The value of the Repetition exercise lies in its ability to strip away artifice and encourage genuine human behavior. By focusing on moment-to-moment reactions, actors learn to stop performing in a contrived manner and start responding truthfully to their environment and scene partners. This authenticity is crucial in realistic acting styles, where believability hinges on the actor's ability to be present and reactive.

The exercise also serves to enhance actors' listening skills, both verbally and non-verbally. Actors learn to notice subtle cues and shifts in their partner's voice, facial expressions, and body language, leading to more nuanced and responsive performances.

In addition, the repetition exercise aids in developing an actor's emotional flexibility and spontaneity. As the exercise progresses, actors must adjust their emotional responses based on the dynamic interplay with their partner. This adaptability is essential in the craft of acting, where rigid or pre-planned responses can stifle the organic flow of a scene.

Sanford Meisner's contribution to acting pedagogy, while rooted in the traditions of Stanislavski, evolved into a distinct methodology that emphasized authenticity, interaction, and reaction. His focus on "doing" and the reality of the moment brought a new dimension to actor training, one that complements and expands upon Stanislavski's foundational concepts. Meisner's legacy continues to influence the craft of acting, underscoring the importance of genuine connection and interaction in the creation of compelling performances.

Michael Chekhov: Taking Stanislavski Beyond Naturalism

Michael Chekhov, a distinguished figure in the realm of acting pedagogy, made seminal contributions that expanded and diversified the landscape of actor training. His innovative methodologies and philosophical insights offered a unique perspective that, while grounded in the teachings of Constantin Stanislavski, diverged to explore new dimensions of the actor's craft.

Born in 1891 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, Michael Chekhov was the nephew of renowned playwright Anton Chekhov. Chekhov's initial training at the Moscow Art Theatre under Stanislavski profoundly influenced his understanding of acting. His tenure at the theatre and his interactions with Stanislavski laid the foundation for his later pedagogical explorations.

Chekhov's career, however, was not confined to Russia. His innovative ideas and the political climate of the time led him to travel throughout Europe and eventually to the United States. In America, Chekhov established himself as a respected teacher, influencing a new generation of actors and directors through his teachings and performances.

Chekhov's approach to acting pedagogy is characterized by its focus on the actor's imagination and physicality. Central to his methodology was the concept of the "Psychological Gesture," a repeatable physical action that connects the emotional and psychological life of a character.²⁵ This concept diverged from Stanislavski's initial internal approach, proposing instead that external physical action could lead to internal emotional states.

²⁵ Michael Chekhov, *On the Technique of Acting* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), xxx.

Unlike a mere physical action, a Psychological Gesture is imbued with the character's thoughts (Imagery), objective, feelings, and will-impulses and can be actual or potential gesture.²⁶ It serves as a physical metaphor for the character's psychological reality.

This gesture, when performed with intention, imaginative context, and awareness, can evoke the corresponding emotional state in the actor, leading to a more profound connection with the character's inner world and expressive outer embodiment. Chekhov's techniques complemented Stanislavski's by offering an alternative approach where physical action could lead to emotional truth. After these physical gestures were explored and embodied in exercises, their expression could be channeled even without the physical manifestation of the gesture.

Michael Chekhov's acting pedagogy also introduces a distinctive concept known as "Qualities," which plays a pivotal role in shaping an actor's approach to Psychological Gesture. Qualities allow actors to make action more specific by their application. Chekhov writes "the Action (and will) expresses "what" happens, whereas the Quality (and feelings) show "how it happens."²⁷

Qualities are represented as adverbs in Intention Mapping and provide additional depth to the chosen action. However, performers should not feel constrained by typical language. Instead,

The realm of qualities is unlimited. You can take almost any noun or abstract idea, any image in your mind, and turn it into a Quality for your action. Try it practically and you will see how greedily the actor's nature turns everything into feelings if you approach the problem through the right channels.²⁸

²⁶ Michael Chekhov, *On the Technique of Acting* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 59-60.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 39.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 38.

For instance, Chekhov encouraged actors to experiment with qualities like calmly, fiercely, or staccato, and to observe how these qualities influenced their emotional state and portrayal of the material.²⁹ By embodying these qualities, performers can transcend mere physical actions with a more specific point of view, reaching a deeper level of emotional truth and expressiveness. This focus on qualities allows actors to explore a wide spectrum of human emotions and behaviors, providing a dynamic toolkit for crafting compelling and authentic performances. Chekhov's emphasis on qualities underscores his belief in the interconnectedness of the physical and the psychological in acting, asserting that the external expression of a quality can catalyze an internal emotional response, and vice versa.

The concept of "atmospheres" in Chekhov's pedagogy refers to the creation of an intangible environment or mood that surrounds a character, scene, or theatre. Chekhov believed that certain spaces have a distinct Atmosphere; like an old castle from the Middle Ages that contributes to the feelings of its inhabitants. He also believed that the channeling of Qualities and Psychological Gesture can be influenced by or influence a given Atmosphere. Atmosphere is not just a physical setting but a sensory and emotional landscape that the performer creates and interacts with.

For instance, a performer might craft an atmosphere of oppression and heaviness for a scene of despair, or one of lightness and freedom for a scene of joy. The corresponding Qualities would influence the Psychological Gestures.

Chekhov also introduced the idea of "creative individuality," encouraging actors to explore their unique artistic voice in an environment free of naturalistic rules. His techniques

²⁹ Michael Chekhov, *On the Technique of Acting* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 38.

emphasized the use of imagination, body movement, and transformation, allowing actors to connect deeply with their characters and the story.³⁰ Chekhov's pedagogy was holistic, integrating the physical, emotional, and intellectual aspects of the actor's craft.

Michael Chekhov's contributions to acting pedagogy represent a significant evolution in the field. His innovative techniques, centered around the Psychological Gesture, "Qualities," Atmosphere, and creative individuality, offered actors new pathways to emotional authenticity and artistic expression. While rooted in Stanislavski's foundational concepts, Chekhov's methods expanded the scope of actor training, emphasizing the power of imagination and physical expression. His legacy continues to influence actors and teachers, underscoring the diverse and dynamic nature of acting methodologies.

In the next chapter, this document will apply the principles of Stanislavski, Meisner and Chekov, explored previously in the context of acting, to the field of music education. This segment aims to show how these acting techniques can innovatively enhance music teaching, fostering musicians who are emotionally resonant and expressively adept.

³⁰ Richard Brestoff, *The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods* (New York: Smith and Kraus, 1995), 67.

CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPING MUSICAL EXPRESSION THROUGH ACTING TECHNIQUES: A NOVEL COURSE ON TEACHING INTENTION TO MUSICIANS

In music performance, the communication of emotion and intention is as crucial as technical proficiency. Drawing inspiration from acting methodologies, a proposed course of study aims to enhance musicians' expressive capabilities by teaching them the concept of Intention through acting exercises adapted to suit the needs and dynamics of musicians.

While many of these exercises are familiar to theatre students in some form, this sequence of exercises creates a streamlined plan of study tailored to the specific needs of musicians. Many of these exercises will work with many ages, populations, and skill levels, but the aim of this study is to fill a gap in the discourse and training of music at the collegiate level

Repetition Game: Laying the Foundation

The course begins with the "Repetition Game," a technique pioneered by Sanford Meisner. This exercise involves two participants engaging in a simple yet profound exercise of repetition. One musician makes an observation about the other, such as "You have a blue shirt," which the other repeats, infusing their own intention and reaction into the statement. This repetition, with subtle variations in tone, expression, and emotional inflection, continues, creating a dynamic interaction where each musician responds to the other's evolving intentions.

Time should be taken between rounds for participants to discuss what they experienced and saw from each other and observations from the larger audience. This reflection is important for players and observers to understand the variety of opinions each intention may evoke.

Developing sensitivity to one's perceptions and prejudices as well as an audience's will create a more educated and efficient communicator.

A variation of this exercise involves players repeating phrases and observing and identifying their partner's underlying intention. This variation adds a layer of complexity and depth, emphasizing the importance of understanding and responding to the subtext behind words. In this variation, two players engage in the traditional repetition exchange. However, as the exercise progresses, each player pays close attention to the other's delivery, tone, body language, and emotional cues. The objective is to discern the intention behind their partner's repetition – not just “what” is being said, but “how” and “why” it is being said.

One player makes an observation about the other player's intention, such as "You're challenging me" or "You are curious." This observation then becomes the new phrase to be repeated. The players continue the exercise, now focusing on this newly identified intention.

When an intention is named, the opposing player is encouraged to explore and embody this observation. This agreement is not just verbal but also involves delving into the most recent intention that was identified. For instance, if one player observes of the other “You are defensive,” the second player, in their next repetition, might adopt a defensive tone or demeanor while saying “I am defensive,” thereby affirming and exploring this intention.

This process turns the game into a dynamic exploration of intentions, where players continually adapt their responses based on their partner's observations. It requires a deep level of engagement and intuition, because players must be perceptive enough to notice subtle shifts in their partner's intentions and flexible enough to respond to these shifts in real time.

The value of this variation lies in its ability to train musicians to be more responsive and emotionally connected. By focusing on intentions rather than just words, players develop a heightened sense of empathy and emotional intelligence. This skill is invaluable in musical performance, where understanding and conveying the emotional content is as important as technical proficiency.

Furthermore, this exercise enhances the musician's ability to communicate non-verbally. In ensemble settings, musicians often rely on subtle cues and a shared understanding of emotional direction. This variation of the Repetition Game can help musicians develop this non-verbal communication skill, leading to more cohesive and expressive performances as players more readily notice subtle cues.

It encourages spontaneity and emotional honesty, breaking down barriers of self-consciousness that can hinder expressive performance. Many students come from a background that may not encourage physical and emotional expression, so the reframing of this expression can be a powerful broadening of their life and artistic experience.

Finally, it allows players to identify and explore different intentions to expand their own “intentional and emotional” palette. It can be hard to express what we have never experienced, so a safe and open space to explore these feelings is necessary to develop dynamic performers.

An additional variation of the Repetition game might include musicians repeating a musical phrase or motif in the same way a spoken phrase was used. Improvisation can be encouraged as musicians respond to the musical and intentional information.

Jazz great Wynton Marsalis says, “Jazz is a conversation, but a nuanced, swift and complicated one.”³¹ This game can provide a new framework through which to understand scat and jazz improvisations; a musical conversation where Intentions are radiated and impulsively responded to with reactionary Intentions.

Intention List Game: Exploring Expressive Range

The second phase of the course involves the "Intention List Game." Musicians write down active action verbs paired with adverbs, creating Intentions like "Deliciously Interrogate" or "Calmly Scold." Then they take turns speaking their Intention to each other while embodying the Intentions. The delivery of the Intention should be paired with a goal of getting a reaction from the listener.³²

This exercise pushes musicians to consider a wider range of emotional states and expressions, enhancing their ability to convey varied emotional nuances in their performance. The process of defining and finding these Intentions is also beneficial as Stanislavski explains, “While the actor is looking for the word, he is at the same time probing, studying the Bit, crystallizing and synthesizing it. In selecting the name, you find the Task³³ itself.”³⁴

The choice of verbs and adverbs is crucial; they should be active, evocative, and capable of eliciting a strong internal response³⁵ – what Larry Moss refers to as "carbonating.” At the

³¹ Katie Koch, "Jazz as Conversation," *Harvard Gazette*, April, 2013, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2013/04/jazz-as-conversation/>.

³² Larry Moss, *The Intent to Live: Achieving Your True Potential as an Actor* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2005), 32.

³³ Stanislavski uses Bit and Task somewhat interchangeably with action or Intention.

³⁴ Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 148.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 146.

same time, students should try to honestly express their intention without becoming false or melodramatic. As Uta Hagen put it, “Don’t show me your point of view. Have one.”³⁶

Director and Actor Game: Integrating Intention with Performance

The "Conductor and Musician" involves splitting the class into pairs, each consisting of a 'Conductor' and a 'Musician.' In a four-player game, a Conductor gives their Musician an Intention, which the Musician then uses to deliver a piece of music to another Musician. This interaction is then reciprocated by the next Conductor and Musician, creating a continuous cycle of intentional music-making. Discussions of how Intention was represented in the music and body with the players, instructor, and audience are encouraged as before.

This game builds on the tools of the Repetition Game but breaks down the communication process into two parts: the active choice of Intention for the Conductor and the embodiment of the Actor. It also allows players to respond to direction and try to embody intentions they might not choose for themselves.

The game is particularly effective in a musical context because it mirrors the dynamic between a conductor and musician. It trains musicians to internalize and express intentions not as abstract concepts but as tangible, actionable directives. This approach not only enhances individual performance but can also lead to a more cohesive and expressive ensemble playing.

³⁶ Larry Moss, *The Intent to Live: Achieving Your True Potential as an Actor* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2005), 34-35.

Physical Action to Intention Exercise

In a variation on an exercise proposed by Michael Chekov, musicians choose an action to perform physically. For example, “to push” might be embodied by straining intently against an imaginary or real wall. Once they have experimented with the expression of the physical gesture and found the feeling of “pushing,” they should immediately try to replicate its essence in a musical phrase.

The musicians should continue going back and forth between physical gesture and musical phrase until a harmony is achieved. They should feel free to experiment with adding Qualities, as adverbs, to modify the action in the same process.

This exercise provides a direct experiential path from physical action to its analogous musical expression.

Intention Mapping in Musical Performance: Bridging Acting and Music

In the pursuit of a more comprehensive approach to music education, "Intention Mapping" or "Actioning" emerges as a pivotal strategy, one that marries the disciplines of acting and music to cultivate a deeper emotional engagement in performance. Intention Mapping, rooted in acting pedagogy, is a method where actors assign specific intentions or actions to their lines. Intention Mapping in a musical context involves labeling specific moments or phrases in a musical score with distinct intentions, thereby encouraging musicians to engage more actively and emotionally with their performance. This might be compared to the musical expression markings made by a composer or editor such as “broadly” or “con brio.”

Ideas for intention might be generated in the Intention list game such as “pleadingly sweep” or “frantically attack.” Each Intention chosen is personal and specific to the performer and performance. Intentions should be chosen based on several criteria:

1. Specificity: Choose intentions or actions that are specific and clear. Vague intentions can lead to ambiguous performances, whereas specific actions guide actors towards precise and meaningful expressions. “Picking a specific intention is the same thing as a painter picking a specific shade or hue of a color to create a certain drama on canvas.”³⁷
2. Active Language: Use verbs that denote active, rather than passive, actions. For example, "to persuade" or "to confront" are more dynamic and actionable than passive verbs like "to be" or "to have."

An action word must always be a transitive verb. A transitive or active verb is a verb (‘a doing, word’) that you can actively do to someone else. It is always in the present tense and transitional, expressing an action that carries over from you (the subject) to the person you are speaking to (the object). A useful way to identify if a verb is transitive or not is to place it between the words ‘I’ and ‘you’ and see if the sentence makes sense.³⁸

This approach avoids more static states of being like “to be sad” and focuses that active energy outward toward the audience or other player. “The word be defines a static state. It does not have the necessary dynamism for an active Task.”³⁹

3. Emotional Resonance: Select intentions or actions that resonate emotionally with the individual player and piece. The verb and adverb should have a specific active meaning and a physical or psychological influence on the playing experience appropriate for the

³⁷ Larry Moss, *The Intent to Live: Achieving Your True Potential as an Actor* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2005), 33.

³⁸ Marina Calderone, Lloyd-Williams, Maggie, *Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus* (New York: Nick Hern, 2003), xvii.

³⁹ Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 149.

context of the performance. The specific choice of vocabulary is a highly personal choice based on social and cultural experiences with the word's connotation aligned with its Intention.

4. **Variability and Contrast:** Consider using a range of intentions or actions throughout a piece to create contrast and dynamic shifts in the performance. This variation can keep the performance engaging and nuanced.
5. **Alignment with Narrative:** Ensure that the chosen Intentions align with the ensemble's objectives and the overall narrative arc. They should make sense within the context of Composers or players desired effect. Historical research may be useful.
6. **Avoiding Clichés:** Try to avoid clichéd or overly predictable Intentions. Instead, aim for choices that add depth and complexity to the character and performance.
7. **Feasibility and Authenticity:** Choose Intentions that are feasible and authentic to perform. They should feel natural, believable, and logical within the context of the piece.
8. **Collaborative Consistency:** When playing in an ensemble, it is important to ensure that the ensemble, conductor, and composer's intentions are consistent and coherent, contributing to a unified interpretation of the piece.
9. **Experimentation and Flexibility:** Be open to experimenting with different intentions or actions and be flexible enough to change them if they are not working as expected. This flexibility allows for discovery and growth in the rehearsal process. Intention mapping should be considered a suggestion in the moment rather than a rule.⁴⁰
10. **Fit the Musical Markings:** Consider the Composer's musical intent when choosing Intentions. Dictated expression markings like dynamics or tempo may be helpful

⁴⁰ Marina Calderone, Lloyd-Williams, Maggie, *Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus* (New York: Nick Hern, 2003), xix.

suggestions for choosing Intentions. A section with a “*piano*” marking might be mapped as “Quietly Insinuate” to suit the indicated dynamics.

11. Is it fun? Choose Intentions that bring you excitement. As performers try to influence subconscious processes, it is useful to trust intuition to lead toward interesting choices. This feeling is often an indication of an accessible energy connected to the moment.

The implementation of Intention Mapping in music education and performance serves several key purposes. Firstly, it shifts the musician's focus from technical execution to expressive delivery. By assigning intentions to musical phrases, musicians move beyond the mechanical reproduction of notes, delving into the emotional essence of the piece. This method fosters a more profound connection with the music, enabling musicians to communicate not just with precision, but with passion.

Secondly, Intention Mapping enhances the interpretative depth of musical performance. It encourages musicians to make personal, creative decisions about how they wish to convey the narrative and emotional journey of a piece. The mapped Intentions provide an energetic filter that the performer's mind and body can take to influence stage presence and body language. This engagement not only enriches the musician's experience but also resonates more deeply with the audience, creating a more immersive and emotionally impactful performance.

Intention mapping may also help with memorization issues for performers. Research in cognitive neuroscience supports the idea that intense emotional experiences strongly activate our memories. Studies have shown that the amygdala, a part of the brain involved in emotional processing, plays a crucial role in memory consolidation, especially for emotionally arousing

experiences.⁴¹⁴² In addition, Talmi and Moscovitch⁴³ have explored how semantic relatedness can influence the enhancement of memory for emotional words, further emphasizing that creating contextual clues along with emotional responses may have added benefit to memory retention.

These studies collectively suggest that emotional experiences can significantly influence how memories are formed, stored, and recalled. The activation of emotional experiences through Intention may be able to leverage this phenomenon for performers.

In a pedagogical context, teaching Intention Mapping to musicians involves guiding them to think beyond the notes and rhythms. Educators encourage students to dissect the music, understand its emotional arc, and develop a deeper connection to their art. This process may involve exploring the composer's background, the historical context of the piece, and the intended emotional impact. Students are then encouraged to internalize these intentions, reflecting them in their performance through dynamics, phrasing, and expression.

This innovative course of study, rooted in acting techniques, offers a fresh perspective on musical education. By focusing on the concept of intention and employing exercises from acting pedagogy, it provides musicians with practical tools to enhance their emotional expressiveness. The integration of these techniques into musical training can lead to performances that are not only technically proficient but also deeply emotive and engaging, elevating both the musician's artistry and the audience's experience.

⁴¹ Elizabeth A. Phelps, Kevin S. LaBar, and Dennis D. Spencer, "Memory for Emotional Words Following Unilateral Temporal Lobectomy," *Brain and Cognition* 35, no. 1 (1997): 85-109.

⁴² Kevin LaBar, Cabeza, R. "Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotional Memory," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, no. 7 (2006): 54–64, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn1825>.

⁴³ Deborah Talmi, & Moscovitch, M., "Can Semantic Relatedness Explain the Enhancement of Memory for Emotional Words?" *Memory & Cognition* 32, no.5 (2004): 742–751, <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03195864>.

The next chapter delves into the practical application of Intention Mapping for both vocal and instrumental musicians. Through two detailed case studies, this document explores how this innovative approach can be seamlessly integrated into various musical disciplines, offering a guide for musicians seeking to enrich their emotional expressiveness and performance dynamism.

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES IN INTENTION MAPPING

Case Study #1 Opera: “Ombra mai fu”

For this case study, I chose “Ombra mai fu,” the opening aria from Handel’s opera *Serse* to discuss the process of Intention Mapping. An acceptable approach could be to choose Intentions based on intuition and musical information, but this opera is a drama, so it is worth examining the scene in a comparable manner to a dramatic play to make educated choices for the Intentions. Context working in cooperation with Intentions will often have the strongest effect on an audience.

In this case, information such as synopsis, character’s psychology, physiology, sociology, objective, inner and outer conflict, themes, moment before, “other,” and conclusion provide a framework to understand information suggested in a dramatic scene. Examples and explanations of each of these terms appear in Appendices A⁴⁴ and B while Appendix C illustrates an example of Intention Mapping within the operatic score.

Basic information about the character Serse can be inferred from the libretto including the basic synopsis of the scene and the character’s traits. A basic synopsis in this case is that Serse, King of Persia, is in his garden admiring and thanking his beautiful plane tree. Once I recognized Serse as both the King of the Persians and his entitled behavior towards his brother and others in subsequent scenes, I could deduce psychological traits like control, stubbornness, entitlement, regality, sophistication, education, and protectiveness. Physiological traits such as his regal posture and bearing might come from an advantaged upbringing. Sociological traits like

⁴⁴ The criteria laid out on the Intention Mapping Worksheet is inspired by the writings of Stanislavski, Uta Hagen 9 Questions, and *The Art of Dramatic Writing* by Lajos Egri.

his high status and position as ruler of Persia also stand out as distinctive qualities. These qualities are used as the starting places for many Intentions.

The “other” refers to who or what I am directing the song to. It can be myself, a greater power, another person, or, as in this situation, my favorite tree.

The objective of the character refers to the desire of the character in the scene and is usually related to the specified “other.” The chosen intentions will be designed to achieve the chosen objective, so choosing an achievable and well justified objective will contribute to their success. Choosing an active or meaningful objective can make the actions more active as well. In this case, I have chosen the objective to commune with my sacred space. I want to appreciate the tree for its blessing of beauty and shade. I hope this will bring me joy and peace.

In opposition to the objective is the conflict. These are the inner and outer obstacles that prevent the character from achieving their objective. Inner conflict refers to conflict the character has with themselves while outer refers to any outside forces. In this scene, I have chosen the inner conflict, “I am king but lack true companionship.” It is a hidden conflict revealed by Serse’s later actions to woo Romilda. There is also a reference to outer pressures that Serse mentions in “Tuoni, lampi, e procelle”⁴⁵ that may be a combination of metaphorical and literal in this case. Attention to conflict will create dynamic Intentions that relate and attempt to address that obstacle.

A general rule of drama is that characters are changed by events, so understanding the journey or “conclusion” is useful in determining the arc of actions. The conclusion is related to

⁴⁵ Translated “Thunder, lightning and storms.”

the chosen objective and can often be determined by the success or failure of attaining the objective. I have chosen that I, Serse, am calmed and restored by this communion with nature.

The “moment before” is a use of Stanislavski’s “As if” where a plausible preceding situation to the written scene is imagined with the purpose of creating justification to the objective and actions. The imagined circumstances I have chosen leading to the song are that I, Serse, have just come from an audience with several subjects with challenging requests that I cannot grant. Everyone is always looking to me for answers. The stress and responsibility are overwhelming and lonely. This will help to justify the chosen objective to calm myself through my communion with this sacred place. Added context can improve the strength of emotion and Intention.

The final question of themes gives performers a chance to consider which poetic and dramatic themes might be reflected in the chosen actions. In my interpretation, they include pastoral beauty, contentment, and protecting beauty.⁴⁶

I have assigned specific Intentions to nearly every line of text and musical phrase to provide interest and contrast, but the frequency of new Intentions is up to the artist.

The first Intention in m. 1 of the recitative is “reverently greet” to initiate the connection and create an atmosphere of contemplation. This might additionally encourage a light approach to the singing. This is immediately followed by “playfully adore” in m. 3 as a contrast to the previous serious Intention and connects to the objective. “Regally bless” in m. 4 reinforces the

⁴⁶ All these assessments are open to interpretation, and some experimentation in the rehearsal process would be advisable.

status and relationship between the tree and Serse. It also gives an added sense of not rushing the end of the recitative.

This is immediately contrasted with the mention of “Tuoni, Lampi, e procelle” in m. 5 with “anxiously warn.” The rising musical sequence supports a sense of alarm. This small list ends with its highest pitch of E5 on “procelle,” so I chose “furiously rail” as the heightened yet sequential Intention of “anxiously warn.”

The contrasting descending melody in m. 6 pairs with “authoritatively soothe.” This also creates a logic where tension is followed by its necessary release dramatically and musically. The final Intention of the recitative in m. 9 “lovingly protect” is a technical choice to encourage my singing to maintain a more relaxed, grounded approach despite the higher pitch. It also supports the overall objective and theme.

Though the singer does not sing in m. 1 of the aria, they still have a responsibility to add to the atmosphere and continue the dramatic scene. I have chosen “reverently consider” to encourage stillness in my body while maintaining active engagement with my “other” as the stately and flowing melody and rhythm suggest. Performers sometimes will seem to be engaged only when using their instruments but maintaining a focus can help keep the thread of the performance alive for the audience and themselves. Performing an Intention also redirects some of the self-consciousness that develops when the mind is not occupied with playing their instruments.

In m. 15 when the text resumes, I chose “admirably pierce.” This is an example of a more abstract Intention with a musical and technical goal of creating intensity through the musical phrase’s held notes on “ombra” while still aligning with the dramatic activity.

“Appreciatively uplift” in m. 21 continues with a slightly different Intention than before to keep interest in this slow-moving musical piece while reflecting the melodic contour. This Intention could also be used to help with intonation if the performer is struggling with sagging pitch. Determining how an Intention can recruit emotional and physical response in your unique interpretation allows the performer to shape their technical result as well.

“Sweetly adorn” in m. 23 and “softly adore” in m. 25 are a sequence of similar Intentions. The building melodic energy is softened by the Intentions to reflect the text and allow room for a later climax.

The syncopation of the repeated text “ombra” in m. 26 is reinforced by choosing a more aggressive Intention, “reverently rally.” Instead of another Intention in m. 29 as I did with the earlier repetition, I chose to continue with the same one to reflect the lack of a rest in this repetition of the text.

The higher pitch and unity of quarter rhythms in all the parts at m. 31 justify the heightened Intention of “sweetly exalt.” Many of the qualities are of a similar loving or kind nature to maintain the atmosphere of beauty implied in the long flowing phrases and text.

This is immediately contrasted melodically as the pitch falls and “solidly assure” encourages a warmth and presence as the voice drops. The surprise in the unexpected pick up of the melody, text, and rhythm in m. 34 is articulated in “wonderfully discover.” This encourages an attack to my diction without undue vocal pressure.

In m. 46, I “openly build” up my tree friend with the rising melodic sequence leading to a climax of “expansively praise” at m. 48. Both Intentions have dramatic value in reinforcing the

objective, and they also serve as reminders against tensing up physically during the higher pitches.

“Lovingly praise” in M. 40 is an example of how changing just the Quality, or adverb, of the verb can create a similar yet specific progression of expression. The final held high F on “più” in m. 44 is colored with “sweetly suspend” to reflect the desire to protect the tree suggested by the musical fermata.

In a final contrast mirroring the melodic drop, “warmly bless” encourages a warmer timbre in the lower part of the voice. It also has a sense of finality and peace that aligns with the conclusion.

All these Intentions would be experimented with to see what effect they brought to the physical behavior and musical result. They should become a rough map of what could happen energetically and serve as a reminder to clearly express moment to moment for the musician. The sequential logic of these Intentions should help to build intellectual and emotional momentum, but being open to improvisation and impulse is paramount.

Case Study #2 Piano Solo: Melody transcription of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 “Ode to Joy”

Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in D minor, also known as “Ode to Joy,” was intended as a choral symphony, but for the purpose of this exercise I have transcribed the melody for piano without musical expression markings. I have chosen Intentions that will communicate an

atmosphere of joy to the audience as this composition was inspired by "An die Freude" (Ode to Joy), a poem written by Friedrich Schiller.

The first Intention in m. 1 of "incandescently invite" is designed to encourage a light touch with some separation in the articulation. To make the repetition of the "A" material sound expressively contrasting with a more legato musical approach, I chose "overflowingly embrace" in m. 4. When embodying Intentions, it is important to experiment to hear and see what sort of result each Quality and Action produces in the context of the performance until the appropriate combination of input and result is found. With the objective of inspiring joy in my audience, I choose Intentions that might occur in an interpersonal exchange where the desired emotional result is joy.

The second melodic theme at m. 9 has a march-like feeling from the repeated D on the first three downbeats that "gleefully march" helps to accentuate. This brings out a lively separation and musical accent in my playing. In this way, Intentions could even take the place of traditional score markings in certain situations.

The choice of "sweetly entrance" in m. 13 contrasts and highlights the return of the material from the "A" section and contributes a more legato sense. The final "joyously smash" in m. 15 emphasizes the end of the piece with the most dramatically heightened Intention. This also encourages an accent of the quarter notes and slowing of the tempo. Both "joyously smash" and "gleefully march" had a strong immediate effect on my emotional state when I discovered them in rehearsal that made them desirable and fun.

Discussion of Intention in Opera vs Instrumental

The comparison of the two case studies, "Ombra mai fu" from Handel's opera *Serse* and the piano transcription of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 "Ode to Joy," through the lens of Intention Mapping, presents intriguing insights into the application of this technique in both opera and instrumental music.

In opera, such as "Ombra mai fu," Intention Mapping is particularly effective due to the complex interplay of music, language, and drama. Opera singers often grapple with conveying the narrative and emotional essence of pieces in foreign languages. Intention Mapping enables them to transcend linguistic barriers, focusing instead on the underlying emotional and behavioral aspects of the performance. Here understanding context can serve as a springboard for emotional involvement.

For instrumentalists who naturally lack spoken language and much of the context created in dramatic work, "as if" and imagination can be used to apply similar techniques. The "other" can be the conductor, the audience, other players, the atmosphere, or an imaginary character to which actions are directed. The objective and actions then align with all these factors. More creative attention to background or musical factors will be necessary in purely musical applications.

In instrumental music, as seen in the piano transcription of "Ode to Joy," Intention Mapping serves as a tool for imbuing instrumental performances with a narrative or emotional character. Unlike opera, instrumental music often lacks an explicit narrative or linguistic component, making the emotional conveyance more abstract and reliant on the musician's interpretive skills. Intention Mapping provides a framework for the musician to assign specific

emotional qualities or actions to musical phrases, thereby infusing the performance with a distinct expressive character. This technique not only enhances the emotional depth of the performance but can also influence technical aspects such as allowing for a more nuanced and expressive interpretation of the score.

In this way, Intentions can be used to encourage technical results for both vocalists and instrumentalists. The right Intention can become a physical queue that encourages many desirable results such as increased breath resistance/support, improved alignment, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, vocal ease, timbre shifts, and so forth.

Intention Mapping is also beneficial in both vocal and instrumental settings where the timing and dynamics of the performance are often strictly dictated by the score and the conductor, requiring the musician to align their interpretive actions with these predefined musical structures. In the operatic medium, Intentions may be sustained in a way that a more naturalistic approach to acting technique might struggle with. For instance, a held word or syllable that lasts several seconds in a melisma can feel more justified dramatically and interesting for a performer focused on communicating Intentions.

In conclusion, Intention Mapping offers a valuable tool for performers in both operatic and instrumental contexts, enabling them to deepen their emotional connection with the music and enhance their expressive capabilities. Whether it is in conveying the complex narrative of an opera or imbuing an instrumental piece with emotional depth, Intention Mapping provides a structured yet flexible framework for performers to explore and express the emotional essence of the music they perform.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF INTENTION AS A CONCEPT AND TOOL

This chapter explores philosophical, neurological, and psychological concepts to explain the techniques and ideas presented by Stanislavski, Meisner, Chekov, and this document. Understanding the variable meaning of Intention and framing Intention as a language of art expresses the expansive utility Intention can have while also being limited by its subjective nature. Neurobiological research into mirror neurons, the James-Lange theory, and cognitive theory of emotions provide further explanation for the benefits of Intention pedagogy in music.

The Variable Meaning of Intention

In the vast spectrum of human expression, intention stands as a universal language, transcending verbal communication to encompass the nuanced realms of behavior and interaction. It is a language that, while instinctively understood, varies subtly across cultures and individuals, necessitating a deeper exploration and definition of its energetic experiences.

In this context, the value of connotation becomes paramount, serving as a bridge between the raw energy of intention and its interpretation within diverse cultural and individual frameworks.⁴⁷ This variance can be attributed to the diversity in social norms, emotional expressions, and communication styles prevalent in different societies.

Intention, in its essence, is the driving force behind human actions and interactions. It is the silent but powerful communicator that conveys emotions, desires, and motivations.

⁴⁷ Michael Chekhov, *On the Technique of Acting* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 93.

Therefore, understanding and identifying these varied interpretations of intention become crucial in the global landscape of human interaction and storytelling. In diverse cultures, the same action can carry different connotations, leading to distinct interpretations of the underlying intention. For instance, a gesture as simple as a handshake can convey respect in one culture and formality in another. Because an intention's expression and meaning are unique to everyone, it can be a useful tool to creative, individual, and authentic artistic communication, but also one with the chance of miscommunication.

Parallel Efforts in Defining Languages of Art

The endeavor to define and categorize the language of intention mirrors efforts made in other artistic disciplines, such as dance and music. Rudolf Laban's efforts in creating a language for dance is a prime example.⁴⁸ Laban's system of movement analysis broke down dance into components such as space, time, and dynamics, allowing for a structured interpretation of bodily expression. This systematic approach is akin to the analysis of Intention Mapping, where breaking down and categorizing distinct aspects can lead to a clearer understanding of artistic experience and communication with the audience.

Similarly, Leonard Bernstein's Norton Lectures on the language of music attempted to decipher and define the syntax and semantics of musical expression.⁴⁹ Bernstein's exploration of the grammar of music, its rhythmic patterns, and tonal structures aimed to elucidate how music

⁴⁸ Rudolf von. Laban, Ullmann, Lisa, *The Mastery of Movement* (New York: Dance Books, 2011).

⁴⁹ Leonard Bernstein, *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

communicates emotions and ideas, paralleling the study of intention in its quest to comprehend the unspoken yet deeply felt language of human interaction.

Exploring intention as the language of human behavior and interaction is a journey into the many layers and frameworks of meaning in human artistic expression. In the same vein as Laban's language of dance and Bernstein's language of music, the study of intention seeks to articulate an unspoken language, to define the energetic experiences that drive human behavior.

The Role of Mirror Neurons in the Performer-Audience Interaction

In recent decades, the discovery of mirror neurons has provided significant insights into the neural mechanisms underpinning human social interactions. Initially identified in the early 1990s by neuroscientists in Italy, mirror neurons are specialized cells in the brain that are activated not only when an individual performs an action but also when they observe the same action being performed by another. This dual response mechanism offers a fascinating window into understanding the neural foundations of empathy, learning, and the interpretation of others' intentions and emotions.⁵⁰

Mirror neurons are believed to form a bridge between perception and action. For instance, when an individual smiles or engages in a simple task like picking up a cup, specific neurons are activated in the brain.⁵¹ Remarkably, a subset of these neurons, the mirror neurons, also fire when the individual observes someone else performing the same action. This mirroring

⁵⁰ Sumit Acharya and Samarth Shukla, "Mirror Neurons: Enigma of the Metaphysical Modular Brain," *Journal of Natural Science, Biology and Medicine* 3, no. 2 (2012): 118-124, <https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-9668.101878>.

⁵¹ Marco Iacoboni, Istvan Molnar-Szakacs, Vittorio Gallese, Giovanni Buccino, John C. Mazziotta et al., "Grasping the Intentions of Others With One's Own Mirror Neuron System," *PLOS Biology* 3, no. 3 (2005): e79, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.0030079>.

effect blurs the distinction between seeing and doing, suggesting a neural basis for the internal simulation of observed behaviors.

One of the most compelling implications of mirror neurons is their potential role in fostering empathy.^{52,53} By simulating the actions and emotions of others within our own neural circuitry, mirror neurons might enable us to vicariously experience a version of what others are feeling or doing. This empathetic resonance could be crucial in understanding social cues and emotional states of those around us.

In the context of performance arts, the role of mirror neurons takes on a particularly intriguing dimension. Performers, whether actors, musicians, or dancers, often rely on the power of non-verbal communication to convey emotions and tell stories. The audience, through the activation of their mirror neurons, may experience a form of emotional contagion. The joy, sorrow, or excitement experienced by the performer can be 'mirrored' in the audience's own neural responses, leading to a shared emotional experience. Stella Adler expressed this advice for performers as, "You must experience it before I can experience it."⁵⁴ To have the greatest emotional effect on their audience, the performer must first strongly stimulate the same authentic emotional experience in themselves.

This phenomenon extends beyond the mere sharing of emotions. In a performance setting, mirror neurons might contribute to a deeper level of engagement and understanding between the performer and the audience. As audience members observe the nuances of the

⁵² Laurie Carr, M. Iacoboni, M. C. Dubeau, J. C. Mazziotta, and G. L. Lenzi, "Neural Mechanisms of Empathy in Humans: A Relay from Neural Systems for Imitation to Limbic Areas," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 100, no. 9 (2003): 5497-5502. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0935845100>.

⁵³ Pier Francesco Ferrari, and Giacomo Rizzolatti, "Introduction: Mirror Neuron Research: The Past and the Future," *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 369, no. 1644 (2014): 1–4, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24500752>.

⁵⁴ Howard Kissel, Adler, Stella, Stella Adler - *The Art of Acting: Preface by Marlon Brando Compiled & Edited by Howard Kissel* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2000), 49.

performance – the subtle expressions, gestures, and movements – their mirror neurons may simulate these actions in their own brains, enhancing the empathetic connection and making the performance more immersive and relatable. In this framework, the audience “plays” along with the musician and their Intentions.

Moreover, mirror neurons could play a crucial role in educational and demonstrative aspects of performance arts. When a skill or technique is being demonstrated, particularly in a familiar context, the observer's mirror neurons might fire in a manner that facilitates understanding and learning. This neural mirroring can aid in the acquisition of new skills and the appreciation of complex artistic techniques.

The interaction facilitated by mirror neurons is not limited to the replication of observed actions or emotions; it also encompasses the intuitive understanding of non-verbal communication. The audience, through the activation of their mirror neurons, might interpret the performer’s non-verbal cues more intuitively, enhancing the unspoken communication that is often pivotal in performance arts.

In conclusion, the discovery of mirror neurons offers profound implications for our understanding of the performer-audience dynamic in the realm of the arts. It underscores the neural basis of empathy and the shared emotional and experiential space that can be created through performance. This neural mirroring mechanism not only deepens the emotional impact of performances but also enhances learning, engagement, and the non-verbal dialogue between the performer and the audience.

Psychology Theories of Emotion Related to Intention

The James-Lange theory and cognitive appraisal theory are two influential concepts in the realm of psychology that offer distinct perspectives on the origin and manifestation of emotions. When considered within the framework of how intention works to stimulate emotion, particularly in performance arts like acting and music, these theories provide intriguing insights.

The James-Lange theory posits that emotional experiences can be influenced, or even directly triggered, by facial movements.⁵⁵ According to this theory, the act of forming a facial expression inherently generates an experience of the corresponding emotion. For instance, the simple act of smiling can induce feelings of happiness, even if the smile was initially insincere or mechanically produced.

In the context of performance, the James-Lange theory suggests that adopting the physiological expressions or physical embodiments associated with that intention or emotion can aid in genuinely experiencing and thereby more authentically conveying it. For example, a musician intending to express fear in a piece might adopt a gesture of protection or speed their breathing, which in turn deepens their own feeling of fear, thus enhancing the emotional expressiveness of the performance.

Applying this to musical performance, we also observe that musicians experience a range of physiological changes – such as altered breath patterns and heart rate fluctuations – as they engage with their instrument. These bodily responses, in turn, inform and enhance the emotional

⁵⁵ Walter B. Cannon, “The James-Lange Theory of Emotions: A Critical Examination and an Alternative Theory,” *The American Journal of Psychology* 39, no. 1 (1927): 106–24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1415404>.

quality of their music. The musician's awareness and intentional use of these physiological cues can become instrumental in crafting a performance that is emotionally resonant and expressive.

The James-Lange theory mechanism supports Chekov's pedagogy that physical expressions can feed back into the performers' emotional state, creating a more genuine and resonant emotional experience for both the performer and the audience.

Contrasting with the James-Lange theory, the cognitive appraisal theory asserts that emotions are primarily the result of an individual's cognitive assessment of a situation.⁵⁶⁵⁷ According to this theory, emotions are not directly triggered by external events or internal physiological states, but rather by the individual's subjective interpretation and understanding of these events.

In a performance setting, cognitive appraisal theory implies that an actor's or musician's emotional expression stems from their understanding and interpretation of the character's situation, motives, and conflicts. In practice, when a musician imagines a melancholic scenario, such as performing at a funeral for a loved one, their performance is influenced by this cognitive appraisal. Consequently, their rendition is likely to convey a profound sense of sadness. This theory supports Stanislavski's "inside out" approach to building a performance.

When considering intention in performance, cognitive appraisal theory highlights the importance of the mental and emotional preparation that performers undergo. Understanding the narrative, context, and emotional landscape of a piece allows performers to make informed and deliberate choices about how to express their character's intentions and emotions. This cognitive

⁵⁶ Agnes Moors, and Klaus R. Scherer, "The Role of Appraisal in Emotion," *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion* (2013): 135-155.

⁵⁷ Ira J. Roseman, and Craig A. Smith, "Appraisal Theory," *Appraisal Processes in Emotion: Theory, Methods, Research* (2001): 3-19.

process is crucial in enabling performers to authentically embody and convey the intended emotions.

In practice, these theories are not mutually exclusive but can be synergistic. Performers often employ a combination of physical embodiment (as suggested by the James-Lange theory) and cognitive interpretation (as proposed by cognitive appraisal theory) to achieve a nuanced and authentic emotional performance. Consequently, musicians become storytellers who, through their cognitive, physical, and emotional engagement with the music, communicate complex emotional landscapes to the audience.

Future Implications in Education

The integration of acting methodologies, particularly focusing on "Intention" into music education, can significantly reshape teaching approaches and enhance student experiences in the field. This novel approach could lead to long-term effects not only within music education but also across various performance art disciplines.

By incorporating acting techniques, music educators can foster a more holistic development of students. This approach emphasizes not only technical prowess but also emotional expressivity and storytelling skills. As a result, future teaching methodologies may place greater emphasis on the emotional and narrative aspects of musical performance, encouraging students to connect more deeply with the music they play and the audiences for which they perform.

Acting methodologies, with their focus on Intention and Action, can equip musicians with the tools to convey complex emotional narratives through their performances. This shift

could lead to teaching models that prioritize emotional intelligence and empathetic understanding as core competencies, alongside technical skills.

The blending of music and acting pedagogies encourages interdisciplinary learning. Future teaching methodologies might increasingly draw upon various art forms to provide a more rounded and enriched educational experience. This could lead to innovative cross-disciplinary programs and workshops, fostering creativity and collaboration among students from different artistic backgrounds.

Impact on Student Experiences

Students trained in this integrated approach are likely to experience a deeper engagement with their art form. Understanding and employing acting techniques such as Intention could lead to more meaningful and fulfilling performances, as students learn to infuse their technical skills with emotional depth and storytelling abilities.

Musicians equipped with acting skills may find expanded career opportunities, particularly in fields where emotional expression and performance are paramount, such as musical theater, opera, jazz, and film scoring. This multifaceted skill set can make them more versatile and marketable as artists.

Training in acting methodologies can help musicians develop a stronger connection with their audience. By learning to communicate emotions more effectively, students can deliver performances that are not only technically impressive but also emotionally resonant, leading to more engaging and memorable audience experiences.

Through their training, music students may also improve their social skills. Confidence in these skills translates to better communication in personal and professional environments. The awareness and ability to interpret interpersonal exchanges through the frame of objectives, obstacles, and Intentions improves students' ability to logically function in emotional situations. It also strengthens a vocabulary for discussing abstract ideas like emotions and actions.

The success of integrating acting methodologies in music education could inspire similar approaches in other performance arts, such as dance and visual arts. This could lead to a broader trend of cross-disciplinary education, where students are encouraged to explore and incorporate techniques from various art forms.

The incorporation of acting methodologies focusing on Intention into music education holds the promise of profound and lasting impacts. It proposes a shift towards more emotionally expressive, narratively rich, and interdisciplinary learning experiences, potentially transforming teaching methodologies and enhancing student experiences across various performance art disciplines.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Energy, encouraged by feeling, launched by the will, guided by the mind, moves confidently and proudly like an ambassador on an important mission. This kind of energy emerges in creative, sensitive, fertile, productive action, which can't be done just anyhow, mechanically, but in accord with the impulses of the heart. As it flows to the network of the muscular system and stimulates the internal motor centers, it elicits external action. That's the kind of movement and action, originating in the secret places of the heart, following an inner line, which genuine artists of the drama, the ballet and other theater and movement arts need. Only that kind of movement is right for the artistic embodiment of the life of the human spirit of a role. Only through inner awareness of movement can we begin to learn to understand and feel it.⁵⁸

In conclusion, this document, "Exploring Intention Mapping and Action in Pursuit of Emotional Storytelling," is intended to contribute to the field of music education, bridging the gap between acting pedagogy and musical performance. It proposes a transformative educational model that integrates the principles of "Intention" and "Action," as espoused by acting teachers and pedagogues like Stanislavski, Meisner, and Chekhov, into the training of musicians. This approach not only enhances the expressive capabilities of musicians but also enriches the communicative power of their performances, thus resonating more deeply with audiences.

The research outlined in this paper underscores the profound impact that the application of acting methodologies can have on musical education. By focusing on emotional expressiveness and storytelling, it encourages musicians to delve beyond technical proficiency, fostering a deeper, more empathetic engagement with their art. This approach aligns with the current trends in music education that emphasize a holistic and diversified learning experience, and takes it a step further by integrating cross-disciplinary techniques for emotional and narrative expression.

⁵⁸ Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 365.

Looking forward, this research opens numerous avenues for future exploration. One potential area is the examination of how these methodologies can be adapted and applied across various musical genres and cultural contexts. Another avenue could be the investigation of the long-term effects of this approach on professional musicians' career trajectories and its implications for performance practices. Furthermore, the exploration of how this approach could influence other performance arts, such as dance, presents an exciting opportunity for interdisciplinary research.

This research contributes a unique perspective to music education, one that underscores the importance of emotional storytelling and the human experience in musical performance. It advocates for an education that not only hones technical skills but also nurtures the emotional intelligence and expressive capabilities of musicians, thus preparing them for a more dynamic and impactful artistic journey.

The implications of this study extend beyond music education, suggesting a change in thinking in how we understand and teach performance arts. It emphasizes the unity of emotion, intention, and technical skill, advocating for a comprehensive approach to artistic education that can profoundly shape the future of performance arts pedagogy. This research, therefore, stands as a seminal work, paving the way for a more expressive, empathetic, and interconnected world of musical performance.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Intention Mapping Worksheet and Term Definitions

1. Synopsis- What are the notable events leading to and resulting from this song. What is happening?
2. Character – Who am I⁵⁹? This is broken down into three categories below: Psychology, Physiology, and Sociology
 - A. Psychology- How do I think? Am I proud, silly, flirtatious, shy, excitable, quiet, loud, etc.?
 - B. Physiology- How am I physically? Do I have a physical disability, am I attractive, or am I average build?
 - C. Sociology- What is my place in the world? How do others treat me? Am I high status or low?
3. Other - To whom am I directing the song? It can be myself, a greater power, another person, or even a tree.
4. Objective - What do I Want? What is something achievable that I want to happen because of this song or scene?
5. Conflict – What is stopping me from getting my objective? This is separated into two categories Inner and Outer below.

⁵⁹ When answering this type of dramatic information, I prefer to write in the first person to encourage direct connection with the circumstances.

A. Inner -What are the obstacles to my objective that are coming from me? Example:
Fear, jealousy, frustration etc.

B. Outer – Who and what are the people, events, and things outside myself that are
stopping me from achieving my objective? Examples: They do not believe me yet, she
loves someone else, we are at war, God is angry with us, there is an ocean between us,
etc.

6. Conclusion - How am I, the character, changed?

7. Moment Before – What has just happened to inspire this moment? Create a strong mental
fantasy, or experience to strongly motivate your song.

8. Themes - What are some themes you are exploring? Unrequited love, Honor, Jealousy, etc.

9. Line by Line Intention Mapping- Map out Intentions in your score or write out the libretto in
the left margin with Intentions on the right margin.

Appendix B: Intention Mapping Worksheet Example

“Ombra mai fu” from George Frederic Handel’s *Serse* (1738)

1. Synopsis - Serse, King of Persia, is in his garden admiring and thanking his beautiful plane tree.

2. Character – Serse.

A. Psychology - in control, stubborn, entitled, regal, connoisseur, educated, protector.

B. Physiology - Kingly posture and physical habits.

C. Sociology - High Status - King of Persia, respected, feared,

3. Other - My favorite tree where I meditate daily.

4. Objective - Commune with my sacred space. Thank the tree for its blessing of beauty and shade and appreciate the beauty of my garden. This will bring me joy and peace.

5. Conflict

A. Inner - I am king but lack true companionship.

B. Outer - Thunder, Cold South Wind (Astor) - Stresses and danger of the world.

6. Conclusion - I am calmed and restored.

7. Moment Before - I have just come from an audience with several subjects with challenging requests that I cannot grant. Everyone is always looking to me for answers. The stress and responsibility are overwhelming and lonely.

8. Themes - pastoral beauty and contentment and protecting beauty.

9. Line by line translation with Intention in right margin

Text

Frondi tenere e belle
Fronds tender and beautiful

del mio platano amato
of my plane tree beloved,

per voi risplenda il fato.
for you may fate shine.

Tuoni, lampi, e procelle
Thunder, lightning and storms

non v'oltraggino mai la cara pace,
may they never insult your dear peace,

né giunga a profanarvi austo rapace.
nor may the rapacious Auster (South Wind) come to desecrate you.

Musical interlude

Ombra mai fu
There was never a shadow

di vegetabile,
of vegetable,

cara ed amabile,
dearer and loveable,

soave più.
sweet more.(sweeter)

Ombra mai fu
There was never a shadow

di vegetabile,
of vegetable,

cara ed amabile,
dearer and loveable,

Intention

reverently greet

playfully adore

regally bless

anxiously warn
furiously rail

authoritatively soothe

lovingly protect

reverently consider

admirably pierce

appreciatively uplift

sweetly adorn

softly adore

reverently rally

reverently rally

sweetly exalt

soave più.
sweet more.(sweeter)

cara ed amabile,
dearer and loveable,

Ombra mai fu
There was never a shadow

di vegetabile,
of vegetable,

cara ed amabile,
dearer and loveable,

soave più.
sweet more.(sweeter)

soave più.
sweet more. (sweeter)

solidly assure

wonderfully discover

openly build

expansively praise

lovingly praise

sweetly suspend

warmly bless

Appendix C: "Ombra Mai Fu" Score Example

6

ATTO PRIMO

SCENA I.

Belvedere a canto d'un bellissimo giardino, in mezzo di cui v'è un platano.

(Violino I.)
(Violino II.)
(Viola.)
SERSE
(sotto il platano.)
(Bassi.)

Fron-di te - ne-re, e bel-le del mio pla-ta-no a - ma-to per voi ri-splenda il fa-to.

M. 5

reverently greet playfully adore regally bless

Tuo-ni, lam-pi, e pro-cel-le non v'ol-trag-gi-no mai la ca-ra pa-ce nè giun-ga a pro-fa-nar-vi au-stro-ra-pa-ce.

anxiously warn, furiously rail authoritatively soothe lovingly protect

M. 1

Larghetto.

Violino I.
Violino II.
Viola.
SERSE.
Bassi.

M. 9

reverently consider

H. W. 92.

admirably pierce

M. 18

p
fū di ve-ge-ta-bi-le ca-ra ed a-ma-bi-le so-a-ve più, om-

appreciatively uplift sweetly adorn softly adore

M. 27

-bra mai fū di ve-ge-ta-bi-le ca-ra ed a-ma-bi-le so-a-ve più, ca-ra ed a-

reverently rally sweetly exalt solidly assure, wonderfully discover

M. 36

-ma-bi-le, om-bra mai fū di ve-ge-ta-bi-le ca-ra ed a-ma-bi-le so-a-ve più,

M. 45 openly build expansively praise lovingly praise sweetly suspend

so-a-ve più.

(Si tiene ammirando il platano.)

warmly bless

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