

# *The Dissonant Duet: An Autoethnography of a Music Teacher-Student Relationship*

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## **Abstract:**

It is difficult to describe the socioemotional aspects of music learning using traditional research methods. Many aspects of music learning move beyond explanations found in quantitative and realist-styled studies concerned with the efficacy of learning techniques, learning outcomes, evaluation, motivation, literacy, and technical competency. While we began our inquiry with an interest in studying traditional piano pedagogy, a complex journey led us to autoethnography as a way to share and demystify a taboo tale from the piano studio. Ours is a sensitive story to tell, and the risks involved in discussing this topic in pedagogical contexts have kept many music learners silenced for decades. Through this process, we have learned that when autoethnography is considered as a form of pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 2000; Gouzouasis & Ryu, 2015; Gouzouasis & Leggo, 2016), it is an evocative way to reveal and describe crucial aspects of learning.

**Keywords:** piano pedagogy; music teacher-student relationships; story telling; socioemotional; autoethnography; creative non-fiction; taboo tale

The intimate nature of music making assumes a close relationship between the teacher and student. Mutual understanding and good communication between a teacher and learner are prerequisites for the future success of a music student. While our focus is on music, these ideals also apply to other one-on-one learning across all arts disciplines and any private tutoring situations. A unique, working relationship requires open, trusting communication between the student and mentor. As such, teacher-learner interactions shape the ways that students learn, and impact learning opportunities (Rostvall & West, 2003, p. 16) that involve spiritual introspection and soulful moments in the music making experience.

Most research in the study of instrumental music learning is either quantitative in nature (Regelski, 1996; Upitis, 2000) or written as scientific tales (Sparkes, 2002). That inhibits researchers from capturing the complicated nuances of human relationships (Gouzuouasis, et al. 2014).<sup>1</sup> Since the 1960s, music researchers have concentrated on the factors leading to musical achievement and instrumental skills acquisition with an apparent disinterest in research that addresses or focuses on the “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of interpersonal relationships in individual instrumental lessons. Aside from the notion that “success of one-to-one tuition can be mixed: sometimes it works fantastically well, sometimes problems develop” (Gaunt, 2011, p. 161), we also know that teacher-student relationships can be complex (pp. 174-176). Existing research provides very little information about how instrumental teachers, particularly piano teachers, actually interact with their students on personal levels. Moreover, less seems to be known regarding the implications, qualities, and impact of their teaching methods and interactions, on the synergies that exist between learners and teachers, and the impact of those complexities on learning music, enjoyment of music, and overall satisfaction with music (Creech & Hallam, 2003, p. 29).

The music teacher-student relationship is an affective and dynamic process. It is very difficult to measure subjective issues such as socioemotional well-being, passion for music and performing, comfort, friendships, nurture, and interpersonal bonding. Since the vast landscape of over 50 years of research in music education is predominantly positivist in nature, there is a need for qualitative studies that provide rich, descriptive analyses that enable us to enhance understandings of the teacher-student relationships in individual music lessons, particularly from the learner perspective (see Smithrim, 2003).

### **The Method and Purpose of our Inquiry**

Writing about personal experiences is not only egoism, solipsism, unseemly confession, boring prattling, and salacious revelation. We need to write personally because we live personally, and our personal living is always braided with our other ways of living—professional, academic, administrative, artistic, social, and political. (Leggo, 2008, p. 5)

Aspects of the teacher-student relationship—such as rapport, motivation, and personal emotional experiences—are readily explored through narrative autoethnography built on introspection (Ellis, 1991, p. 30) and a thorough exegesis of the authors’ thoughts and feelings. With those concepts in mind, we are able to use life story in music studio settings to look more deeply at “self-other interactions” (p. 46). Introspection enhances the tale we share in the present paper because it enables us to explore emotions that would be difficult to communicate otherwise.

In the history of contemporary qualitative research, the importance of telling stories about our experiences has been documented by a number of prominent researchers. Connelly & Clandinin (2006) observe that people's lives emerged in stories: "People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful" (p. 479). We are all "storying" ourselves throughout life (Eakin, 2008). Leggo (2008) notes that we live autobiographically on daily basis and make sense of our lives through stories. He believes it is through an engaging narrative that we can relate to the experiences lived by others and learn from them. For Ellis (2004), good story is both theoretical and analytical. As Leggo (2008) states, "we need to tell our stories more, and we need to tell more stories" (p. 21).

Leggo (2008) also compares a storyteller to a person who is putting a jigsaw puzzle together with most pieces missing and no longer recoverable (p. 20). In our storied situation of the present paper, the focus is on the pieces of the puzzle that are available and not on the ones that are missing. For the musician, it is similar to learning a piece of music when the notes and annotations are written on the page, but the artist then proceeds to create his or her own interpretation and meaning by reconstructing what he or she thinks was originally intended by a composer. Metaphorically speaking, the factual accuracy of the story is not the most important ingredient in the reading of it, as the accuracy of the notation is not the most important ingredient in the performance of the music composition. Similarly, absolute fact is not the most important ingredient in getting to the truth in storytelling (Gouzouasis, 2008a & 2008b). As always in the creative process, it is important to reflect on the lived experience and to create new meanings that go beyond one specific instance or encounter. In that way, all life and art evolves and progresses. As Schindler (2009) wrote, "by telling the stories, such as our own, we are able to reflect on those events and characteristics which have shaped our professional identities as well as our pedagogical culture and teaching strategies" (p. 181).

Barone and Eisner (2011), as well as Gouzouasis (2008a, 2008b), reveal how complex, intermingled notions of fact and fiction play a role in writing research and telling stories. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) support those ideas with the notion that "self-narrative, autobiography has a great deal in common with fiction" (p. 16). Leggo (2008) believes that all autobiographies are fictions, stories that we make up. He proposes, "Much of the autobiographical writing is about remembering the past" (p. 7). Parallel to that idea, Pinar (1975) believes that the biographic past contributes to the biographic present, while eloquently reminding us, "One is in the past while in the present" (p. 7). We write autobiographically to observe the past because the past is frequently ignored, but never absent. Our pasts have a tremendous influence on our decision-making processes and life in the present (Pinar, 1975). Influenced by those constructs, our story is based on experiences, told and untold, as recreated from the experiences of both authors.

We initially started an inquiry to determine patterns of interactions between the teacher and the student that may have an effect, both negative and positive, on a student's decision to pursue studies in piano performance at a professional level. Our journey began from a traditional perspective rooted in the mainstream music education literature. As we reflected on the writing styles and research methods used in the current literature, and on our personal experiences, we began to consider stories whispered to us by students and teachers from piano studios. We decided to explore a credible, evocative, empowering research methodology, i.e., autoethnography, that would enable us to bring this difficult topic into the open. Through the autoethnographic process, we seek to develop

understandings of the critical importance of shared trust and respect in student-teacher relationships.

Our tale is an account of a relationship between a student and her piano teacher written in a creative non-fictional style (see Ellis, 2004). We write about the working relationship, and the unfolding of the personal relationship between the student and teacher.<sup>2</sup> A duet that approaches reconciliation emerges in the closing segment. Overall, our story illustrates how this “music as life experience” shaped a personal identity and understanding of the teacher-student relationship, as well as how it projects onto, and into, the relationships with our own students—including the relationships that have emerged between the writers and their students from engaging in a reflexive research process.<sup>3</sup>

Through autoethnography, as a form of living inquiry<sup>4</sup> (Meyer, 2006 & 2010) and a form of pedagogy (Banks and Banks, 2000), we aim to become keenly aware of and sensitive to the holistic, delicate, socioemotional, relational dynamic between teachers and students. As such, we share our tale with the hope that it will enable teachers to develop a deeper and more informed perspective about the importance of a personal relationship with their students that is built on empathy, mutual trust, respect, and deep understanding, and not built on power. Throughout this autoethnographic process, we questioned our practices, our actions, our humanity, and our intentions in the delicate social relationship between teacher and learner.<sup>5</sup>

### The Piano Lesson: Turning Points

I walked to my piano lesson. The sunshine felt very warm against my face. Autumn is my favourite time of year. Not summer hot, but the kind of weather made for my favourite dresses. That day I wore one of my beautiful, diaphanous, floral dresses, and tall brown leather boots. My long, wavy, brown hair floated down my back, and I could feel it bounce as I walked.

Just a little over a year ago when I turned fifteen, I made the decision to pursue a career in music. Music has always been a major part of my life because of my older sister. My sister, Sveta, fourteen years my senior, pursued a piano performance degree at the local music college. As a consequence, I grew up listening to her practicing every day for hours on end. She became my first piano teacher. Our lessons together were part of my daily routine from the age of four.

A sheepish smile crossed my face as I reminisced how our lessons were always student-directed. In my childish stubbornness, I insisted on my own method of learning, not allowing her to teach me any other way. I learned by imitation and improvisation. That way of knowing interested me the most at the time. I asked her to *show me* a song on the piano and I refused to read music notation. She kept a diary of our lessons together and shared it with me when I grew up. It described my idiosyncrasies, behaviours, and the music making that we did together.

“Diana sat by the piano with me today and would not let me play to the end of the song, always taking my hands away from the keyboard and playing it herself. She thinks that she knows it already, even before I finish showing it to her. I feel like I’m getting in the way and should just let her do what she wants.”

Always sensitive to my moods and behaviours, Sveta never asked me to do something that did not interest me. I never felt bored during my piano lessons. Instead, I *wanted* to play the piano. I *wanted* to learn. Various creative activities during my lessons made studying music just as interesting and important to me as playing outdoors, rolling in the snow, climbing trees, and playing hide and seek.

At an early age I called myself "a musician." I enrolled in arts school in addition to my regular school to continue studies in piano, solfeggio, music theory, music history, chamber ensemble, choir, choreography, and drawing.

After graduation, I had a choice between studying either music or medicine. In other words, following the footsteps of my sister and mother, respectively. My mother, who was a doctor, used to comment how doctors received the same salary as musicians in post-Soviet countries. I viewed music as an important and respected profession. I chose to become a professional musician.

As I approached the former Jewish synagogue converted into a concert hall after World War II, where I had my piano lessons, I thought about my new teacher and our lessons together. I remembered the first time we met at the end of September, almost one year ago. I looked well put together in my favourite light blue dress with wide belt and brown leather boots. My long hair in French braids was neatly wrapped around my head. He approached me at the doors of the music building and introduced himself as my piano teacher. Dressed in a formal suit with a large messenger bag slung across his shoulder, only a head taller than me, he looked young and handsome. He had dark, curly hair. I studied his deep blue eyes for a brief moment and he smiled at me. I wondered what he thought of me.

"It is very nice to meet you," I said to him with a warm smile.

"Yes, very nice to meet you as well. I look forward to our lessons together," he replied.

And so our lessons began. He had a very interactive, unique, teaching style. He approached my education and professional development very seriously.

"I have this interesting book for you to read. Please read it by next lesson and then we will talk about it. Make some notes. It is a very rare book and I want to share it with you."

He would lend me many great books, including some real treasures that were no longer published and nearly impossible to find.

"It is very important that you read this and approach it as a researcher. Try to summarize the information and understand why it is important to you," he would say in his Polish accent as he handed the book to me, "and when you graduate and begin teaching, you have to make sure that you will continue to learn on your own. Read as many books as possible on piano pedagogy and music in general. It will inform your teaching and will help you to find your own teaching style."

He always sang and paced the room during our lessons. He even sang when he played. When I queried him on this he replied, "It's a habit. Did you ever notice that

sometimes pianists might tap the rhythm with their feet when they are performing? When I play, I sing and it happens automatically. It helps me to be more expressive in my performance. Did you notice that when *you* play, your breathing pattern changes?”

It was an accurate observation. A friend had already pointed out to me, that when I am engaged with the music, I start to *play* with my nose, heavily breathing in and out as I develop the musical phrases.

“Yes, I noticed that I do that. It is also automatic,” I responded with a smile and girlish chuckle.

“You should try singing as well next time you practice at home,” he said, lightly tapping my shoulder.

He used touch extensively to demonstrate his point during our lessons. He frequently placed both his hands on my shoulders. It made me blush. I did not want to reveal it to him, often hiding what I felt behind a big smile.

“Why are you smiling?”

My only response I could muster would be, “Just, ah, nothing,” turning beet red, and hoping that he wouldn’t notice.

“I like your smile, Diana. It makes you even more beautiful.”

This would make me blush more. Early on, I sensed that aspect of our gender difference definitely had an effect on my learning and our relationship.

Another week of intensive practice led to another lesson. I walked up the stairs and down the long corridor leading to the stage where he was playing my Chopin *Trois Nouvelles Etudes No.1 in f-minor* while waiting for me. I admired his performance, filled with strong emotions—love, fire, passion—and perfect technique.

“You are late,” he said.

“I’m sorry, I walked all the way from home. It is beautiful outside,” I responded.

I sat down at the piano beside him. He looked worried. I began to play the Chopin, and he interrupted me mid-phrase.

“You are rushing today, *slow* down and *embrace* every sound, especially in your left hand.”

He got up, circled behind me and placed his hands on my shoulders.

“Close your eyes and imagine the sensuous sound that you want to produce before you play it,” he said, now gently touching my shoulders. I closed my eyes and attempted to concentrate on aurally conceptualizing the sound that I needed to produce.

I suddenly felt his face right next to mine. Within a moment, his hands brushed across my chest and closed around my body. A moment felt as though it lasted an eternity as I tried to gently push his hands away and look into his face. His eyes looked strange to me. I didn't recognize him. I felt my face slowly turning red and I hated that feeling. I lowered my head, trying to hide my face in my long hair.

"What time is it?" I asked with a trembling voice. He repositioned his body, removed his arms from around my waist, and reached into his pocket for his watch. I abruptly stood up, grabbed my bag, and walked directly to the door.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"I just realised that I have a chamber music rehearsal and I am actually late," I replied, barely able to talk and feeling breathless. I felt like every single minute standing beside him lasted forever. He placed his hand on the door, preventing me from leaving.

"What are you doing?" I anxiously implored, as he attempted to embrace me yet again.

"I need to go!" I pushed him away from the door, opening it and running down the hall and down the stairs, skipping three or four steps at a time. Within moments, pearl-sized tears began to pour down my face as I sobbed uncontrollably.

My emotions were churning. Most of all, I felt betrayed.

What was he doing? I couldn't understand what had happened or why. It felt very wrong. He didn't look like himself. Not the kind, encouraging teacher I knew. His aura had blackened—he had turned into somebody else.

I needed to talk to someone, and rushed out of the building into the sunlight. In a very strange coincidence, I saw my father waiting for me outside the building. I told him what had happened.

"*What* happened? *Who* did *what*? Your piano teacher did *what*? He's married, isn't he?" were the barrage of questions my father fired at me, trying to make sense of my panic-stricken exhortations. I started sobbing.

"What would you like me to do? Shall I go talk to him?" he asked.

"Please don't. I don't want to see him, *ever* again. I want you to help me transfer to another teacher. Please. I have to do it today. And please, father, keep it private. I don't want anyone to know," I pleaded, my voice rising and falling in dynamics as if I were emulating the Chopin etude.

I didn't waste any time making the decision. With my father's help, the very next morning I transferred to another piano teacher. I felt as though I had just lost something very important in my life. The thought of seeing my teacher again frightened me. Yet, I wanted to see him. I knew in my heart that he would come to talk to me, and he did.

The following Monday morning, I sat in the library and read one of the books he lent me. I noticed him walking toward me. He looked concerned.

"Diana, I need to speak with you," he said.

I got up and slowly walked out into the hallway, full of students. We walked a few steps and stopped by a window. The sunlight streamed in, illuminating our faces.

"Why you did not come to your lesson on Saturday?" he asked in a low, troubled voice.

"I didn't come because I began studying with someone else last Friday," I replied.

He looked very surprised.

"What happened, Diana?" He paused for a few moments, and then spoke quietly. "I did *not mean* to hurt you."

He looked at me through his deep blue eyes with care and sincerity. I felt overwhelmed with emotions. I could neither describe nor understand what I felt, but realised that no matter what he'd say would make me change my decision.

"But you *did* hurt me, you *did*," I said, choking back my emotions and tears. I turned around and walked away from him. I felt like I wanted to say much more to him, but could not.

I spent the rest of my second year trying to regroup, refocus, and rebuild the motivation to continue my path of becoming a concert pianist. At that time, I was not mature enough to understand what had happened. I grew wiser because of that episode. Seeing him in the hallways, watching his students perform, I thought about what would have happened if I had reacted differently that fateful day. Would I still be studying with him? Would I be a better pianist?

To this day, I still have lingering question that resurface. What should I have done differently? Would I talk to him differently? Should I have listened to what he had to say? Would I be his lover?

### **Return to a Challenging Duet: Etude on a Virtual Piano Bench**

"Dear teacher, I was a student of yours many years ago. I would like to talk to you. Please let me know when would be a good time to call you, and also send me your phone number. I look forward to our conversation. Diana."

His reply came the following morning.

"Diana, I am going to be out of town the next few days but I will be back on Monday. Please write to the following personal email address."

"He ignored my question about the phone number," I thought. So I emailed him again and asked him to include his phone number. His response came a few days after our initial contact.



"Diana, I should have said this in my prior email. I want to apologize. Profoundly. Profusely. It should never have happened. It was wrong. I didn't want to hurt you. I am so very sorry."

As I read the words I held back my tears. He apologized. I felt my unsettled thoughts of being betrayed slowly fade away. I felt more open toward him and willing to listen to his story.

So, feeling emboldened, I emailed him again.

"How did you feel toward me? Did you feel that you had become much more than just a teacher? Can you talk openly about it with me?"

I took a risk by offering to start a discussion about what happened that day we had our last lesson. He responded later that day.

"Diana, I was just over 30 then. I felt alone in the world. We shared such a powerful bond wrapped up in music. I never intended to allow myself to get carried away and forget my role as a teacher. I am so very sorry I betrayed your trust in me as a teacher, but . . . you were more beautiful, inside and out, than any woman I'd ever known. I became intoxicated—with the passion of our music making, the setting, our shared understanding of the Chopin, and . . . with you."

"And, I fell in love."

I didn't expect hearing that from him. I didn't know what or how to reply. It felt like walking on eggshells. I have to be careful about what I say, not to interrupt the openness that had just emerged.

I then realized he might have gotten into trouble because of what happened that day. The result of the incident affected him just as much as it affected me.

"I would like to know more about what you felt then," I daringly wrote to him.

Things took an unexpected turn. In the next email he sent me pictures of his old notebook pages with hand written poems that he had composed when I studied with him. The outpouring and openness provided no excuse for what he did, but I could see how his heart ached. Through a handful of artefacts, I saw how it had happened. It must have been agonizing to work so closely, so intimately with me, to be so expressive with the music but to withhold his emotions toward me.

I recognized his handwriting. At first, I didn't appreciate any of his words. After reading them over and over again, I started to feel how every word pulsed with the heartfelt passion and despair of an unrequited love. Every single letter of his poems brought memories and tears. I saw everything through his eyes but it didn't make it better, and it didn't make it right.

*every day I say the words addressed to you*

*some days I play the melodies we share*

*senses are charged and passions flow*

*words that I cannot speak or write*

*words forbidden*

*I only touch the keys now*

*as melodies took place*

*many years ago*

### **Exegesis**

We seriously considered introducing our story with a discussion on the plethora of refereed research papers that address different forms of violence and abuse in our society, but that's not exactly what happened in our story. That said, some readers may interpret any inappropriate advance as one step away from a potentially abusive—mentally or physically—violent act.

While hand searching through the articles of one prominent qualitative research journal from 1995 to 2014, we found that most of the studies relating to violence and abuse have focused on the methodological issues, challenges, and complexities of conducting qualitative research (Bosworth, Hoyle & Dempsey, 2011; Giorgio, 2009; Goldstein, Gray, Salisbury & Snell, 2014; Herman, 2005; Murray, Pushor & Renihan, 2012; Sikes, 2008). In more recent years, scholars have begun to examine the lived experiences and stories of violence and abuse. For example, one of the most recurring topics in the research literature relate to the sexual abuse of women (Day, 2010a; Dougherty & Atkinson, 2006; Elsgray, 2014; Koelsch & Knudson, 2009; Mackie, 2009; Martin, 2011; Minge & Zimmerman, 2009; Sandoval, 2014) and children (Gilgun, 2004; Sethi, 2011; Staller, 2007; Thaller, 2012). Other studies have focused on the domestic violence (Bhattacharya, 2009; Ben-Ari, 2008; Jager & Carolan, 2009; Enosh & Buchbinder, 2005), domestic sexual abuse (Kirkland, 2004), abuse at workplaces (Vickers, 2002), and gender violence (Adams, 2006; Flecha, Pulido & Christou, 2011; Day, 2010b; Aubert, Melgar & Valls, 2011; Pelias, 2007; Rosiek & Heffernan, 2014). Taking the forms, contexts, and content of these studies into consideration, we believe we have captured ways of writing about teacher-learner relationships in music as well as a crucial aspect of teacher-student relationship that has been missing from the both music teaching literature and curriculum and pedagogy readings.

This autoethnographic exploration informed Diana's own teaching as she more fully understood how much the student-teacher relationship depends on the teacher and his or her ability to effectively communicate with the student. It also brought back strong memories in Peter's past—hearing many whispered stories in practice rooms, studios, and back hallways of music conservatories—where he also found himself placed in compromising situations by teachers who put personal designs and gains over his music development. In light of our parallel experiences, we are highly aware and careful with our students, observing their feelings, behaviours, and attitudes toward us as teachers and responsible adults.

We are also always cognisant of the importance of our professional role as a teacher in one-on-one tutoring. In such an intimate setting, the teacher becomes more than just a *teacher*. From our experiences, we understand that children of all ages often feel a deep attraction to, and admiration of, their teacher—in private music studios and general classroom settings—and it is vitally important to be sensitive and aware of their feelings. The teacher is largely responsible for nurturing a quality learning process and ideal setting as well as the development of a kind, generous, safe, and mindful personal relationship. As we reflect on our story and the literature, all factors in consideration seem equally important.

One cannot teach competently without simultaneously being aware of the teacher's impact on the socioemotional development of the learner. A teacher will always be a role model for the student, and students make meaning from their teacher's behaviour, lifestyle, and professional qualities. They frequently transfer those qualities onto their own experiences in music, including making life-changing decisions about their aspirations in music as a profession. Ideally, teachers inspire, encourage, and nurture students to achieve to the best of their capabilities. Teachers should use appropriate forms of touch to demonstrate how the body needs to work to achieve the best technical and musical skills. They should employ professional descriptions of how fingers, hands, arms, shoulders, torso, breathing, and the entire body needs to be coordinated to optimally function to perform music. Teachers should use professional terminology to communicate music elements and concepts that connect to the kinaesthetic components of music making.

Teachers are also models of moral excellence. There are huge differences between appropriate healing touch, pedagogical touch, and inappropriate touch. We may 'lead the child' through pedagogy, but in no way does that imply that we must lead in a physical, let alone sensual, manner. Attending to this story, in process and product, further attuned our practice and (re)shaped our teaching styles and philosophies. We hope that sharing this story will contribute to better understandings of the central importance of the teacher-student relationship in one-on-one settings as well as to broader notions of pedagogy.

Autoethnography was a *vessel* that enabled us to write about experiences and feelings and create new meanings, new understandings, and of lived experiences through story. Of course, there are many kinds of vessels—various containers (e.g., pressurized, nuclear, open-top, bowls, pouring), biological parts (e.g., blood vessels), and watercraft (e.g., floats and boats). Metaphorically speaking, the story functioned for us in all those ways. We were vessels for a story that needed to be poured to the page. This story is also a journey of "becoming pedagogical" (Gouzouasis, 2011; Gouzouasis, Irwin, Miles, & Gordon, 2013)—of becoming mindful of what is required by our profession and of teachers on personal levels—and we recognize the impact and complexity of the teacher-student relationship in one-on-one setting. Our story creates a virtual world for the reader and has the capacity to evoke interest and open up a serious discussion. It is crucial in addressing issues that are vital to a holistic notion of successful music teaching and learning. It highlights the importance of a trusting teacher-student relationship that depends on the moral character of the teacher, yet is often taken for granted and assumed to be a basic teacher competence.<sup>6</sup>

Many educators recognize autoethnography as a tool whereby adults can broaden their perspectives about themselves and even to enact healing. Karpiak (2010) shares, "my experience deepened my appreciation of the worth of writing about the significant, signal or traumatic events in our life" (p. 49). Although the writing itself cannot change a past event, it can take some "poison" out of it (Gebler, 2001, p. 405). Revisiting the past enabled us to

look at the present inquiry from a different perspective, a different place in our lives and learn from it. We accepted the events and consequences, and became stronger and wiser as a result of the experience. This kind of process can help put everything into perspective in an effort to find a balance between one's positive and negative experiences (Karpiak, 2010). For us, writing this story helped finalize healing on a number of levels.

We are aware that stories similar to ours have happened thousands of times in various music studios, and for that matter, across the arts and other areas of learning (Douglas & Carless, 2009; Ellis, 2007; Etherington, 2007) and in a variety of teacher-student relationships and settings. There are many ways these tales have played out over the centuries since the advent of private lute and virginal<sup>7</sup> lessons of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The 19<sup>th</sup> century romanticist tale could end with the student and teacher falling in love,<sup>8</sup> an older and younger student falling in love (e.g., Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck), or with an unrequited love that drove the teacher to despair and inspired great music for the rest of his life (e.g., Ludwig von Beethoven and Antonie Brentano). The 20<sup>th</sup> century motion picture tale could end in tragedy, with either the teacher, student, or both dying for love, one or the other dying in shame (see John Garfield and Priscilla Lane in *Four Daughters*), or the patron-lover diving off a cliff (see John Garfield and Joan Crawford in *Humoresque*). None of those romantic notions make it right or more palpable. The 21<sup>st</sup> century reality—as reported in numerous newspaper articles and television broadcasts,<sup>9</sup> and in formal teacher misconduct complaints (see Mototsune, 2015; Jaffe, Straatman, Harris, Georges, Vink, & Reif, 2013)—is that the teacher would be reported, disciplined, and left to live with the memories of shame, humiliation, and a career that likely ended in ruins.

While many “researchers are silenced by the invitation to criticism contained in the expression of voice,” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 423), the more we considered the impact this story had on us and select colleagues who read different versions during the writing process, the more we knew it needed to be told. By bringing this discussion out of the shadows of music studios and conservatories, we hope to open new ways of thinking and writing about teaching and pedagogy (see Gouzouasis & Ryu, 2015) that goes beyond measurement and realist representations that some researchers believe solely informs music practice. Most important, we entreat the reader to be more mindful, sensitive, and empathetic to the personal safety and welfare of their students, because anything less is unacceptable.

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> See the following papers on this topic, and the rich references that provide a historical perspective of music education research, by Asmus, 1986; Creech and Hallam, 2009, 2011; Costa-Giomi, Flowers & Sasaki, 2005; Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, and Howe, 1998; Hallam, 1998; Kurkul, 2007; Levasseur, 1994; Mackworth-Young, 1990; Nagel, 1999, 2009; Ryan & Costa-Giomi, 2004; Siebenaler, 1997; Triantafyllaki, 2005; Zhukov, 2012.
- <sup>2</sup> While Peter was not the piano teacher in the story that follows, his role in writing the story is metaphorically akin to the relationship between George Gershwin and fellow American composer Ferd Grofé. Gershwin studied orchestration with Grofé, who not only wrote *Grand Canyon Suite* but also composed and orchestrated numerous compositions for Paul Whiteman's Orchestra from 1920-1932. Gershwin's original version of *Rhapsody in Blue* (written in three weeks and completed January 7, 1924) was originally for two pianos. Within five weeks Grofé rewrote and orchestrated it, and Gershwin performed it with Whiteman's group on February 12, 1924. A 1926 version was composed and re-orchestrated for pit orchestra. At one point, to Gershwin's dismay, Grofé listed himself as the composer of the *Rhapsody* with ASCAP. While Gershwin died in 1937, Grofé's 1942 version of the *Rhapsody* for full orchestra is most frequently performed. For additional details, see liner notes from RCA Victor LPV-555 Vintage Series, *Paul Whiteman Volume 1* (1968). The April 21, 1927 electrical studio recording is on that LP (originally released as Victor 35822; Peter owns the 1968 vinyl reissue from which this information was paraphrased).
- <sup>3</sup> The Greek word "auto" (αὐτὸ, pronounced *aftò*) means "self" but depending upon the context it can also mean "this, that, those, him, her, and other" (see Gouzouasis & Ryu, 2015; Gouzouasis & Regier, 2015). The term "ethno" is derived from two words — "ethos" and "eethos" — the former referring to "place and culture" and the later, "character of an individual" (for a detailed discussion see Gouzouasis, 2013). With those expanded definitions in mind, when two or more people write an autoethnography, the boundaries between writer identities and personalities become blurred. The writers not only share personal experiences that are being composed, they share both the writing and the ideas about the writing.

- <sup>4</sup> For us, Meyer's notions of living inquiry are yet another way of theoretically framing the writing of our selves with an awareness of both "being" and "becoming" in the world and of learning from life's ongoing experiences—musically, interpersonally, and intrapersonally.
- <sup>5</sup> At this point in the inquiry, we purposely omit a discussion of the story before it is read because we want it to be as much a surprise, and even shock to the reader, as it was to Diana, Peter, and anyone who has had a similar experience. In that way, the life experience is re-lived in a storied experience. A critical discussion of (1) the additional related literature, (2) an enhanced autoethnographic perspective, and (3) new pedagogical understandings in light of our experiences, follows our story.
- <sup>6</sup> Those of us who have had similar experiences know that this discussion, a careful reading of the present paper, and resultant ethical understanding needs to be at the core of "Piano Pedagogy 101."
- <sup>7</sup> We find it perplexing that the first book of collected music composed and published for the virginal, a plucked keyboard instrument, was titled *Parthenia*. In Greek, *parthena* (παρθένα) refers to a young maiden virgin. The implication is that keyboard lessons were meant for young virgins of the aristocracy. Of course, the goddess Athena was also a virgin, and the famous Temple of Athena in Athens is the *Parthenon*.
- <sup>8</sup> Oddly, these kinds of relationships seem to be glorified on a "music education" www site <http://musiced.about.com/od/famousmusicians1/tp/loveaffairs.htm>
- <sup>9</sup> An Internet search using the keywords "teachers, students, sexual abuse" revealed 3,710,000 results.