

University of Denver

Digital Commons @ DU

Musicology and Ethnomusicology: Student
Scholarship

Musicology and Ethnomusicology

11-2020

Comparing Memorization Strategies: How Do We Approach Teaching to Perform from Memory

University of Denver

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.du.edu/musicology_student



Part of the [Musicology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

University of Denver, "Comparing Memorization Strategies: How Do We Approach Teaching to Perform from Memory" (2020). *Musicology and Ethnomusicology: Student Scholarship*. 71.

https://digitalcommons.du.edu/musicology_student/71



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

This Bibliography is brought to you for free and open access by the Musicology and Ethnomusicology at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Musicology and Ethnomusicology: Student Scholarship by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu, dig-commons@du.edu.

Comparing Memorization Strategies: How Do We Approach Teaching to Perform from Memory

Comparing Memorization Strategies: How do we Approach Teaching to Perform from Memory

Bernardi, Nicolò Francesco, Alexander Schories, Hans-Christian Jabusch, Barbara Colombo, and Eckart Altenmüller. "Mental Practice in Music Memorization: An Ecological-Empirical Study." *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 30, no. 3 (2013): 275-90. Accessed November 3, 2020. doi:10.1525/mp.2012.30.3.275.

The study examines how different mental practice strategies affect a musician's ability to memorize. The study also looked at what parts of a performance were most affected by mental practice such as pitch, articulation and phrasing, and dynamics and expression. This differs slightly from other studies in that it breaks the actual music or performance down into more categories. It also takes a much more in depth look at one strategy rather than comparing a bunch. Most of the authors are music psychology professors at various universities giving them authority both in music and psychology.

Chaffin, Roger, Alexander P. Demos, Topher R. Logan. "Performing from Memory." *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*. Edited by Susan Hallam, Ian Cross, and Michael Thaut. Accessed November 3, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198722946.013.34>

Chaffin, Demos, and Logan examine how memorization structures, such as associative chains and content addresses affect how a performer is able to get through a performance from memory. They identify the problem with associative chains being that you have to start from the beginning for them to work which is not a very effective tool for performances as it is difficult to get back on once you get off. The study also discusses different types of memory such as motor, structural, emotional, and visual memory and how they make it possible for musicians to memorize music. This tells us where memory can fail during a performance and how to avoid it. The authors are all professors of music psychology.

Dakon, Jacob Michael. "The Effects of Aural and Visual Strategies on the Memorization of Beginning-Level String Students: An Exploratory Study." Phd Diss., Ohio State University, 2011.

Dakon's dissertation looks at how different modalities of memorization, such as visual or aural, affected the success of a beginning string student's ability to memorize. Results were assessed based on errors made in both pitch and rhythm. He also looked at how the students perceived the memorization tasks. This can affect how well students are able to memorize and if they are willing to keep doing it. This goes along with the above article as it discusses the students' perception of memory. Between the two articles both teacher and student perception are discussed creating a valuable dialogue. The dissertation also goes through multiple music specific methods for effective practicing. This can be helpful when comparing how well each method works. Dakon is a professor of music therapy and education at University of Kansas.

Dakon, Jacob M., and Abbey L. Dvorak. "Teacher Perceptions of Memorization in String Instructional Settings: An Exploratory Study." *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music*

Education, no. 202 (2014): 29-49. Accessed November 3, 2020.
doi:10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.202.0029.

Dakon and Dvorak investigate string teachers' perception of memorization in string pedagogy. They point out a significant problem specifically in string students' views about memorization: it is seen as extremely challenging or virtuosic rather than something that happens on its own. This begs questions surrounding how memorization is taught in string education settings. The authors spend a substantial amount of time discussing how we conceptualize memorizing music which can be valuable as it targets why it may be so difficult specifically for classical musicians to memorize music. Both authors are professors at the University of Kansas in music therapy and education.

Davidson-Kelly, Kirsteen, Nikki Moran, Rebecca S. Schaefer, and Katie Overy. "Total Inner Memory': Deliberate Uses of Multimodal Musical Imagery during Performance Preparation." *Psychomusicology* 25, no. 1 (2015): 83-92. Accessed November 3, 2020.
<https://doi.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fpmu0000091>

The authors look into how mental imagery can enhance performance. Part of what they look at is how it can improve memorization. One of the drawbacks of previous research has been defining what mental imagery used to practice actually is. This engages in conversation with the Bernardi et al. (2013) study as mental imagery is another type of mental practice. This study looks more closely at the pedagogy of mental imagery whereas the other just focused on the effectiveness of different methods of mental practice in memorization. The authors consist of a professor of music education, research fellow, and music educator. While they may have less authority over the cognition or psychology aspect of the article, but the more unique part of the study is that it is focused on pedagogy and the authors seem well-equipped in this subject.

Dunsby, Jonathan. "Memory, Memorizing." *Grove Music Online*. Edited by Deane Root.
Accessed November 3, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.42568>

This article just gives a somewhat broad overview of the history and relationships between music and memory. It touches on subjects such as different types of memory, such as short and long term memory for example, and how they relate to music. It also discusses how simply playing our instruments uses physical memory and reading music is based in visual memory. Dunsby is the music theory department chair at Eastman. He doesn't really have a lot of published work about music cognition or memory specifically, but it is interesting to read about this from a music theorist's perspective.

Korenman, Lisa M. and Zehra F. Peynircioglu. "Individual Differences in Learning and Remembering Music: Auditory versus Visual Presentation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 55, no. 1 (2007): 48-64. Accessed November 4, 2020.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4494330>.

This study examines the difference between learning music visually and aurally and how this affects memory in the second study. The first study did find significant results between learning modality and how quickly participants were able to learn the excerpts. In the second

study there was again a significant interaction between preferred learning modality and ability to remember the melody. The authors asked if one modality was better than the other for learning and memorizing, but found that it came down to individual differences. This is similar to the Dakon and Dvorak article as it compares visual and auditory memory. Both authors are psychology professors and Peynircioglu specializes in music cognition.

Mishra, Jennifer. "A Century of Memorization Pedagogy." *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 32, no. 1 (2010): 3-18. Accessed November 3, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20789876>.

Mishra investigates what trends have led to the common practice of performing from memory today and what changes have been made in the pedagogy of memorization from the romantic period forward. She moves through what creates a successful performance from memory to what different methods she has identified. She also goes through steps to be successful in each method of memorization which is something other articles haven't done a lot of. She also talks about performance anxiety when performing from memory and different reasons it can fail which is another thing not brought up in a lot of other sources. This source also differs from a lot of the other ones I have looked at in that it is not an empirical psychology study, but is written from a music educator's point of view.

Mishra, Jennifer. "A Qualitative Analysis of Strategies Employed in Efficient and Inefficient Memorization." *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 152 (2002): 74-86. Accessed November 3, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40319128>.

This study deals with the amount of time it takes musicians to memorize passages using different memorization strategies. Similarly to Chaffin, Demos & Logan, it takes an in depth look at how different strategies can affect our success of performing something from memory. It does differ from the other study in that the participants were asked to memorize shorter passages in a relatively short amount of time. The study would therefore have less to do with getting through an entire piece from memory, but is still valuable because it evaluates the effectiveness for different strategies. Mishra is a professor of music education and specializes in music cognition.

Mishra, Jennifer. "A Theoretical Model of Music Memorization." *Psychomusicology* 19, no. 1 (Spring, 2005): 75-89, Accessed November 3, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0094039>

In this article, Mishra identifies a process by which music is able to be memorized. She created a model and divided it into about four main categories: Preview, Practice, Processing Strategies, (Sensory Learning styles and Analytical Learning Styles), and Over-Learning. It is helpful to see how one person identifies memorization process, with a lot background in psychology and pedagogy, can incorporate many different types of learning. Based off of the Korenman & Peynircioglu (2007) study, this would reach a wide range of students and hopefully lead them to have successful performances from memory.

Mishra, Jennifer. "Influence of Strategy on Memorization Efficiency." *Music Performance Research* 4, (2011): 60-71. Accessed November 3, 2020.

In this study, Mishra investigates how effective different memorization strategies are. This is similar to Mishra's other article (2002) about the efficiency of different strategies used to memorize. The first study compares additive, holistic, segmented, and serial strategies for memorizing music and found that the holistic approach had the fastest or most efficient results. One part of the study that maybe wasn't great was how they evaluated errors. So while a strategy could be efficient regarding time, it maybe wasn't completely successful as there were still slips present. However, this wasn't necessarily the point of the study. In the discussion, Mishra also goes through what the downfall of each strategy seems to be, which can be really helpful when looking at other articles that also discuss different memorization strategies.

Williamon, Aaron. "The Value of Performing from Memory." *Psychology of Music* 27, no. 1 (1999): 84-95.

Williamon's study examines the extent to which performing from memory can impact the audience's perception of the performance. He asks important questions regarding enhanced expression in memorized performances and how the performers connection with the audience changes when a performance is memorized. This study helps answer if performing from memory is valuable both to the performer and audience and therefore why performing from memory is an important topic to investigate. Williamon is a performance psychologist at the Royal College of Music and has published a lot of research in this area.