

## ***Performers' attentional processes and strategies: Implications for music pedagogy***

I argue that a key sign of musical giftedness is the ability to extract 'meanings', grounded in feelings, from musical materials and to fully concentrate on them in the act of performing. Full concentration is fostered through the ability to cognitively 'navigate' the musical flow, i.e., to be able to position into the future, the past, and the present during performance. In my talk, I present the outline of a new model of performers' attentional processes and strategies (incorporating the above mentioned cognitive 'navigation', Stachó 2018), upon which a powerful novel attentional training ('*Practice Methodology*') is built. The training aims at enhancing in musicians (regardless of their instrument and including singers) the ability of real-time navigation of the musical process. This consists of the following sub-abilities: (1) the ability to form a clear cognitive and affective map of forthcoming structural units (i.e., to anticipate the duration, tonality and character of the forthcoming - usually hierarchically embedded - structural units through feeling their length, tonal trajectory and character), (2) to form a clear mental image of the preceding musical units to which the subsequent ones are to be measured, and (3) to deeply feel the present moment. The main aim of my presentation is to show how the new model of performers' attentional processes and strategies can be brought into pedagogical practice: a short outline of the model will be followed by an introduction to the training through a demonstration of some of its key exercise types. The model and the training were developed during the past decade; based on initial evidence from primary and secondary level pedagogy, further to the conservatoire level, the training can be used with singular success from the very beginning up to the most advanced levels of music education, yielding a uniquely powerful tool in music performance education.

### **References**

Stachó, L. (2018). Mental virtuosity: A new theory of performers' attentional processes and strategies. *Musicae Scientiae*, 22 (4), 539-557.



**László STACHÓ**

*Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary*  
*stacho.laszlo@lisztacademy.hu*

László Stachó is a musicologist, psychologist and musician working as Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer at the Liszt Academy of Music (Budapest), at the Faculty of Music of the University of Szeged (Hungary), and as a regular guest lecturer at the Santa Cecilia Conservatoire (Rome). His research focuses on early 20th-century performing practice, Bartók analysis, emotional communication in music performance, and enhancement of attentional skills in music performance. Over the past few years, he has been involved in a countrywide planning of music education curricula in Hungary, including the National Core Curriculum and conservatoire curricula. As a pianist and chamber musician, he has performed in several European countries and the US, and conducts attentional training workshops and chamber music coaching sessions at international masterclasses at prestigious conservatoires. In 2014, he was a CMPCP Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge; in 2017, he was Visiting Fellow at the Cambridge Faculty of Music and Downing College.