

VIDEO TAPE AS A TOOL IN MUSIC EDUCATION AND MUSIC RESEARCH

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The use of video tape as a means of improving our methods of teaching is not a new idea. It has been used in this way for several years. However, it is now being used in new ways, specifically as a means of presenting subject matter that could not be shown before it was invented, and this last point will be the focus of this article.

One of the earliest applications of video tape in education was at the presentation of lectures. This, obviously, is not limited to music education only, as television can be used effectively in this medium by any of the academic disciplines. The first impetus for using video tape was to have experts in specific fields prepare a series of lectures that would be used to supplement the efforts of the regular lecturer. These lectures were originally meant to be telecast through the commercial television stations, but they proved to be too time consuming and costly for the commercial networks to continue with their development. For example, if a programme was scheduled for a certain day, but could not be viewed for one of the many and unexpected events which could interfere, the programme would either have to be rescheduled or left out and neither alternative would be acceptable. To help avoid these problems, the system of closed circuit television (CCTV) was developed.

A CCTV system allows a particular user to schedule his programme to meet his requirements. With a complete CCTV set-up, he can also produce his own programme, a feature that adds to the flexibility and desirability of television in education.

The actual uses of television in music education have been in the following areas

- (1) Lectures in music history and music theory;
- (2) in teacher preparation and evaluation;
- (3) student evaluation; and
- (4) as a means of teaching motor skills, such as bassoon and oboe reed — making.

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Television as a lecture medium is used in many disciplines, and I will not cover them in this paper. Just let it be said that any lecture can be put on video tape.

The evaluation of a teacher's performance is a relatively new function for video tape. It is not readily accepted by many teachers, but it is an extremely effective way of pointing out strengths and weaknesses to the teachers. In many American universities it is also used in the preparation of teachers, especially during the *student-teacher* period of their university training. A student teacher is recorded while presenting a class, and the supervising teacher can later point out mistakes with the valuable aid of pictures. In this way, the supervisor would not have to rely on subjective words and faulty memories.

At the Eastman School of Music and Northwestern University School of Music, video tape recorders are also used as a means of teaching and conducting classes. A student is recorded in actual rehearsal and performance situations so that he can see himself as the performers see him. Also, the Eastman School of Music used video tape to record their young students who are studying violin with the Suzuki Method. The students are recorded and the recording sent to Mr. Suzuki in Tokyo for evaluation. In this way, a wider group of students are given the opportunity to study with master teacher and benefit from his expertise.

As far as I know, the only attempt, other than my own, made at actually teaching a motor skill with video tape has been at Florida State University. At Florida State University, tapes were made showing how to construct oboe and bassoon reeds. They also use video tape in conjunction with the private lessons on individual instruments, not as a direct teaching aid, but as an evaluative device. Every student must record one individual practice period (up to thirty minutes) and take the tape to his teacher for evaluation.

The video tapes which I made are designed to teach performance of *Kingada musical instruments. The tapes were made as a means of solving the problems of how to teach authentic African music in the public schools of the United States.

* The Baganda are an ethnic group who live in Uganda, they live in an area called Buganda and the adjective describing things of the Baganda is Kiganda. They speak Bantu language called Luganda.

The format of the tapes is a series of demonstrations showing the steps required to learn the performance skills of a musical instrument. The demonstration shows the correct performance posture for the instrument, the second demonstration shows how to tune the instrument, the next demonstration then shows the music to be learned in its simplest form with each succeeding demonstration gradually becoming more complex until the music is complete. Each demonstration is so designed that the tape can be stopped when the demonstration is completed. This allows the students time to duplicate the demonstration before the next one is attempted, and it also makes the repetition of each demonstration easier to do. A written text accompanies the taped lessons and discusses the people, their culture, and how the instruments and songs are used within the culture.

One purpose of the material is to teach the performance techniques of some Kiganda musical instruments, but my primary purpose is to teach an appreciation and understanding of another culture through the experience of musical performance.

My premise is that with an expert demonstrating the required skill, any music teacher can supervise the actual learning process and through the expert, teach students how to perform on musical instruments. I am aware that just any supervising teacher is not going to turn out expert performers, no matter how good the demonstrator is, but this is not the purpose of the material. I am convinced, however, that with this material, a Ugandan music teacher can teach expert performance of Kiganda music to Ugandans or anyone. This may eventually go even further to include Ghanaians teaching Ugandan music and vice-versa. This is an area which needs research and extensive experimentation.

In the area of music research, video tape offers unique answers to some recurring problems, such as notation of music and performance practices of musicians.

When musicological researchers attempt to transcribe a song from an audio tape, they are constantly faced with the problem of determining who or what makes a particular sound. If one is working from a video tape this problem is much easier to deal with because the researcher can see as well as hear the musicians. This is especially important when transcribing drum ensembles because many of the sounds are so similar it is very difficult to differentiate between drums from an audio tape alone.

When dealing with performance practice it is a real aid to authenticity when one can review a particular performance so that he can describe it accurately. Many times the researcher is so busy observing so many new phenomena that he misses some very important aspects of a performance. Some areas of importance which may be lost are visually given signals to begin or end an ensemble, or visual signals for a change in the rhythmic patterns. Another area is performance posture such as the embouchure used for blowing flutes, trumpets, and oboes, and the breathing techniques used to play these

instruments. Also, because video tape synchronizes the sound and the picture, the study of the human voice and the different techniques used to produce the singing voice may be carried out in more detail. These things are especially easy to overlook when one is viewing them for the first and probably only time.

One of the most important aspects of video tape is that it allows the researcher to carry out post-performance interviews with the performers immediately after the performance. One simply needs to replay the tape to ask questions about any aspect of the performance while the informant, who is often the performer, is also watching the event. This can be done without interfering with the performance or losing the information because one did not have time to write down the questions.

Using video tape can also make a research trip more valuable in that the recorded material is usable by other disciplines. Both linguistic and dance studies can easily be made from a video tape that was recorded for musicological purposes, because the tape incorporates sight and sound and synchronizes them during recording. All of this can be done on film as well, but video tape has the unique advantage of instantaneity. After the recording is made, the researcher does not have to wait for several weeks to have the film developed and the sound track synchronized and possibly to discover that the film either did not cover the subject properly or that the film was not exposed or developed correctly. Video tape is also a plus for the researcher in that he can show his informants what has been collected, as this often helps to make informants more co-operative. People enjoy hearing and seeing themselves, and films rarely reach the people who made them possible. Video tape is much more economical to produce than film and the portable unit can easily be operated by one person. Now that this means of recording history in action is available, it must be used while the music and musicians are still available. The quickening rate of change in the traditional cultures of the world will soon make this kind of material virtually impossible to collect.

Music education and musicology are two areas of academic research, but they do not exist separately. Any material which was primarily produced for music education can be used by the musicologist with the reverse being equally true.

Video tape has an endless array of uses and seems only to be limited by the users imagination and the sophistication of the equipment. To date, most of the experimentation with video tape has been in music education and new ways of utilizing it in this field are discovered constantly. Musicologists have just begun to use video tape and therefore have not even scratched the surface of determining its usefulness in the field. More musicologists should be encouraged to include a video tape recorder in their research so that a video tape section can be incorporated into the existing archives of recorded sound.