



## **Narratives of music teachers in Brazil: everyday learning through spirituality/ religiosity**

*Narrativas de professores de música no Brasil: Aprendizado cotidiano através da  
espiritualidade e religiosidade*

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### **Abstract**

In this article, three bodies of research related to the theme of music teachers' spirituality / religiosity are presented: two are about initial training and continuing teacher education and the other is associated with learning from spiritual / religious experiences. From a triple theoretical construct, these researches share common points: spirituality in music education; theories of everyday life; (auto)biographical approach in education. The concomitant discussion of these three researches can contribute to the debates on spirituality and music education from the perspectives of Brazilian research, specifically those that were conducted in the Brazilian southern state of Rio Grande do Sul.

**Keywords:** music education, theories of everyday life, teacher narratives, spirituality/religiosity.

### **Resumo**

Neste artigo, apresenta-se três corpos de pesquisas relacionados ao tema espiritualidade/religiosidade de professores de música: dois sobre formação inicial e formação continuada de professores e um sobre aprendizagem a partir de experiências espirituais/religiosas. Partindo de uma tripla construção teórica, essas pesquisas compartilham pontos comuns: espiritualidade na educação musical; teorias da vida cotidiana; abordagem (auto) biográfica em educação. A discussão concomitante dessas três pesquisas pode contribuir para os debates sobre espiritualidade e educação musical na perspectiva das pesquisas brasileiras, especificamente daquelas realizadas no estado do Rio Grande do Sul, região sul do Brasil.

**Palavras-chave:** educação musical, teorias da vida cotidiana, narrativas de professores, espiritualidade/religiosidade.

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Many studies in Brazil on music teacher education and practice are theoretically based on writings of francophone origin, mainly those of Portuguese authors such as Antonio Nóvoa. In this context, the inseparability of life narratives in the personal and professional spheres presents itself as a feature. Several Brazilian studies on music teachers have followed this path: Bozzetto (2004), Vieira (2009), Mota (2017), Louro (2013), Teixeira (2016), Lima (2015) and Borba (2013). However, in such studies, the experiences in religious settings and spiritual experiences are not highlighted as relevant themes. Yet, these experiential memories and narratives are part of the teachers' lives. Thus, they can be important in the analysis of their ways of being. Memories of religious experiences can, then, form part of the analysis in studies regarding teachers' initial and continuing education as well as teacher practice. The three studies herein presented share a commonality in that the music teachers agree that their personal and professional lives are inseparable aspects of their life histories.

### **Spirituality/Religiosity, daily life and (auto) biographical approach**

To search for proximity or distance between the terms spirituality and religiosity, we turn to authors such as Marques (2010, p. 139) who considers that both:

[...] involve the search for transcendence, the interest in the sacred, faith, etc. And they can be cultivated both individually and collectively, in religious institutions or outside. The frequency of participation in worship, repetition of rituals, and belief in rites are often associated with religiosity. On the other hand, the cultivation of spirituality, values, transcendence, faith, are considered part of the phenomenon of spirituality that is found in all cultures and in all ages.

For authors like Palmer (1995), there is a much deeper difference between religiosity and spirituality than that pointed out by Marques (2010, p. 92): "I will use spiritual to mean only those dimensions of human experience that reside beyond the realm of easily detectable materiality – frequently referred to as the metaphysical - but not connected to a supreme being or universal soul."

In this article, we present a set of three studies related to Spirituality / Religiosity: two about initial and continuing teacher education and one about learning from spiritual / religious experiences. These researches share three points in common: (a) spirituality in music education, (b) daily life theories, and (c) (auto)biographical approach in education.

In the preface of the *Handbook in arts education*, by Rita Irwin (2007), the author states that "As arts educators, we need to acknowledge the deep human need to create, to make meaning, to care for one another and ourselves, and to work in the service of

humanity” (p. 1403). In this article, we present three Brazilian studies that identify with this thought of Irwin; and we consider these studies as related to the theme of spirituality in that the experiences narrated show a search for deep human meaning in the care for individuals, for each other and for one’s self. Again, even if we adopt spirituality and religiosity as themes, our focus is on narratives as part of the life histories of teachers and not so much on the spiritual and religious phenomenon *per se*. For choosing narratives and (auto)biographies as methodological approaches, this study can also be grouped under the umbrella of daily life and music education studies.

When emphasizing that Brazilian experiences with spirituality and religiosity in daily life are quite rich, we do not intend to give an account of this multiplicity of experiences, but rather we intend to reflect on the possibilities of how teachers and musicians articulate their lives within the scope of everyday learning. In spite of the delimitation we have adopted, we believe that exploring music learning within a spiritually oriented perspective becomes quite relevant as it meets what Irwin highlights as deep human need.

Souza (2013, p. 18) emphasizes that in everyday theories:

Music learning always includes one's own experience with music. The basis for these experiences is the world of life that can be considered at three levels: a) students' subjective experiences, which are not usually reflected; b) the basic, universal human experiences which are, generally, concepts abstracted from the everyday; and c) music as a reflection of life and the world of life in music.

Although the observation contemplates the depth of experiences in human significations, it does not necessarily focus on extraordinary situations in society or on special cases of greatness. Rather, the spiritual experiences analyzed in these surveys focus on the ordinary and commonplace that happen throughout the life of the participants such as the Sundays at Mass or the dilemmas that music teachers face in their daily work. One aspect of the theory of everyday life pointed out by Pais (2019) is that the act of research is a gift made with much pleasure and dialogue among all the individuals involved. In that direction, the three researchers let the subjects talk about their lives and were deeply involved in their research.

By taking an everyday life approach, we adopt the narrative methodologies because narrating is an act of seeking a reflexivity in which ordinary things can acquire the meaning of learning for future actions throughout life. Almeida (2019) maps the (auto) biographical approach in educational research, highlighting the book *Produire sa vie: autoformation et autobiographie*

The book “presents the first systematic use of the autobiographical approach to explore the process of self-formation in ordinary everyday life” (PINEAU, 2006, p. 331). According to the author, in the same year the network of Life History and Self-Formation was formed by important European researchers, such as Pierre Dominicé (already at that time developing the Educational Biography), Marie-Christine Josso, Gaston Pineau, António Nóvoa and Matthias Finger Souza, Castañeda and Morales (2014) also highlighted some of the important reflections for the educational biographical field promoted by the Francophone group (...) especially those of Pineau, Le Grand, Delory-Momberger, Dominicé and Josso (p. 70).

Considering the many possible authors, we align with Josso (2004) because whereas Souza tells us about musical experience during music learning, Josso tells us about the processes of reflection that transform occurrences into life experiences. For this author, “some experiences have a certain intensity that is imposed on our consciousness from which we extract the useful information to our transactions with ourselves and / or with our human and natural environment” (JOSSO, 2004, p. 48).

Thus, we establish a threefold theoretical umbrella for these three researches (a) within the aspect of spirituality – the intensity of the reflections that are made; (b) within the scope of daily life and musical education – the importance of musical experience; and (c) within the approach of narrative methodologies – the processes by which the narrators reflect on how experiences, which might be considered of less importance in other contexts, acquire meaning in each individual way of living as musicians and music teachers. These music teachers have learned in an out-of-school environment and bring to their narratives the aspects of their life as musicians and music teachers, as much as their personal lives.

### **(Auto) Biographical Approach in Education**

It should be noted that other theoretical aspects tie the three studies together in this article. Many authors make distinctions between narratives that are produced by interviews with the researcher and those that are produced solely by the researcher. Passeggi (2011) distinguishes between “(auto) biographical narratives and self-writings.” It is interesting to note that the third research is characterized by the use of personal writings, thus taking on an autobiographical character on the part of the author.

According to Demetrio (2015, p. 67) “the autobiographical instinct responds to a need to put memories, stories, recollections that we all carry with us”. Writing an autobiographical text is a view that

leads to the other, to the cosmos, to life. It is not restricted, because by writing, one looks at the depths of the soul and the solitude that may have been experienced and put to flight generating another alter ego for the self with which it will have to reconcile time and again (DEMETRIO, 2015, p. 70).

In such a way, the writing of a person becomes reflective of the social groups with which they interact hence, all personal writing is also a social writing. In this direction, the self-biographical writings of the university professor that will be presented in the latter part of this article can also help the reflection of other teachers inside and outside the field of music. As pointed out by Zabalza (2004, p. 18), what is lived as personal dimension also resonates to other people that share similar experiences.

The class diaries are part of the teachers' personal documents. They are one of the tools for auto-biographical research. Although they may address many issues, questions of spirituality and religiosity also emerge from these reflections. In narrative studies in music education carried out by NarraMus, a research group from the south of Brazil (to which the three authors of this article belong), there are those who used research instruments similar to class diaries on themes related to spirituality and religiosity. Within these, the articles of Reck, Louro, Rapôso (2014) on class diaries in a Lutheran and other Catholic choir are highlighted; and Louro e Reck (2017) on diaries of research in ministries of praise in evangelical and charismatic Catholic environments. Also of interest is the article by Teixeira e Louro (2018) that studied oral and written accounts of dance academics who studied a music subject about the search for happiness and also narrated their relationship with the notion of divinity.

Another set of studies (LOURO, 2013) draws upon reflections from the writings of university professors. Although the latter research does not address themes of spirituality and religiosity, they are examples of the use of the class diary for teacher reflection on their teaching methodology. Louro (2013) deals with methodological improvisation as the resource that combines the contents of the subject, about research in music education, with the musical, pedagogical and life experiences of the students, as studied from the university professors' diaries. Similar to musical improvisation, there is a part that is fixed and a part that is variable in this type of improvisation. In tonal improvisation, the harmony often stays the same so that the melodic instrumentalist can create variations to the melody. In this methodological improvisation, the reviewed articles and books are the fixed component, while life experiences as music teachers, as well as the way the teacher presents their connections with bibliographic references, are the variable element. All of this process is described in the teacher's diaries. From this perspective, (auto) biographical exercises are an interesting resource for the reflective process of

teachers. Understanding their life histories and the elements that compose them, both teachers in initial education and in continuing education locate their new understanding within a vision of themselves as people who enjoy music and who seek to hone their teacher practice.

In the first study, which is reviewed in this paper, Maria Cecilia Torres gives a historical overview of her involvement with the (auto)biographical research in studies with teachers and highlights the theme of music and religiosity using data produced mainly in Rio Grande do Sul. In the second study André Reck carried out in a complementary subject of a licentiate in music course at a university in Rio Grande do Sul, the author highlights the students' narratives as part of their reflections as music teachers in formation. Narratives about spirituality / religiosity surface in these reflections. Both studies support the debate about the role of the (auto)biographical approach for the training of music teachers. In the third study Ana Lúcia Louro, using diaries in which dilemmas are highlighted, the confluence of personal and academic lives is described within the context of music teacher practice in Rio Grande do Sul. In the following section, we will present the narrative of each of the three authors of this study starting with Maria Cecilia Torres. The first person will be used pronoun will be used.

### **Initial and Continuing Music Teachers' Education**

The study of music memories in the space of autobiographical narratives and teacher training has occupied and permeated my work as a teacher educator in a music degree course and also in courses of continuing education in music, thus allowing exercise and recall of experiences and stories from the biographical narratives since the time of my doctorate studies, which was completed in 2003, with the research "Musical identities of Pedagogy students: music, memories and media".

When I was analyzing the oral and written narratives of the 20 students who participated in my doctoral research, I was able to understand and, above all, be amazed by the multiple sonorities of the churches, their various religious rituals and their repertoires that accompanied the various moments, celebrations and worship. The statements of the interviewees and their personal writings revealed "the sounds of the harmonium performing hymns, guitars and singing in the masses, children's voices in catechesis classes" among many other sonorities and timbres (TORRES, 2003, p. 136).

Using written autobiographical narratives and interviews, I interviewed 20 pedagogy course students and teachers regarding the formation of musical identities and the memories that both constituted and constitute them. The interviewees shared many

recollections about the songs that marked their childhood memories of friends and family, and school. The memories about music that were linked to religiosity recurred in the narratives of seventeen of the twenty participants in my study, lending a significant echo at the moment of data analysis.

In this way, I stress once again that one of the surprises I had as a researcher, at the end of the work and in the analysis of the autobiographical oral and written narratives, was to hear and perceive the presence of the memories of church music and to know the diversity of musical identities which emerged through interviews and autobiographies, as I recorded:

I missed some and surprised was surprised by others. I hoped to hear more of the memories of the melodies in elementary and middle school, but these sounds emerged in a sparse and diluted form, some with the voices of the teachers and sisters of the confessional schools (TORRES, 2003, p. 170).

A few years after finishing the study, I returned to my doctoral thesis and looked up the references about music and religiosity in the field of music education in Brazil for the past 15 years, highlighting the works of Torres (2004), Reck e Louro (2015), Louro, Teixeira e Rapôso (2014), Lorenzetti (2012, 2015), Oliveira (2016), Louro e Reck (2017), among others. These authors have developed studies in the field of education and music education from the perspective of biographical research.

I present two scenarios in which groups of teachers - one in the initial stage of teacher formation, in a research project subject at the last semester of the Music Education Under-graduation Program at IPA - Faculdades Metodistas de Porto Alegre - RS, and another in a stage continuing of teacher education, in a project of continuing music education for school teachers - brought their musical memories which intertwined with religious memories of rituals, nuns, priests and pastors, as well as the voices of the choirs and musical instruments that constituted these spaces of praise, prayer and thanksgiving.

### **Memories of teachers in a continuing education course in music**

For more than 10 years, I worked with continuing music education for elementary school teachers in São Paulo within the OSESP (Orquestra Sinfonica do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil) which involved the training of student audiences for orchestra presentations. Over that time span, I carried out (auto)biographical writing activities that investigated teachers' memories and the relationships of their memories with the songs, from childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The activities involved the choosing of

repertoire and the writing of songs that marked these moments. I present an extract of these activities.

I worked for a semester as a teacher in both presential and in distance classes using Moodle. This class involved a group of teachers of the final years of elementary education from different areas of knowledge such as Mathematics, Portuguese Language, Physical Education, Arts, Geography, History, among other areas.

In one of the meetings, I proposed a self-writing activity based on excerpts from Stephanou (2003) where he points out: "Our memory articulates different sounds with our experiences... produces, at what times. Where do they come from? Who or what produces them? At which moments? How many times have we heard... ah this song! this song!" (STEPHANOU, 2003, p. 1). From this reading, I asked the group to write about their childhood music memories, detailing the songs they heard, sang and where they heard those songs.

The group of more than 50 teachers had time to write and then comment on some aspects of their musical memories that they wanted to share with their classmates. The sonorities of their childhoods emerged from memories related to the Catholic Church, as in the case of a teacher who prepared children for their first communions. Their preparations consisted of rehearsing the choir and playing all the songs that were part of the mass. In other writing examples, the music and songs mentioned were part of the repertoires of the masses and weddings, such as 'The Wind', 'Hail Mary' and 'hymns and songs'.

As for the autobiographical narratives, I present some excerpts from the childhood recollections as in the following account: "In my childhood I have many memories of the music of the Church I had attended since the age of 4"; Another teacher commented: "I remember children's songs which I learned in the church and also hymns and songs. I started liking singing and I realized how the harmony makes the songs wonderful to the point that it would penetrate the heart and soul". In another account example, the participant recounts the sonorities and image of the mother singing to her baby son "the religious hymns" and complements that "I even fell asleep in my mother's lap to the sound of the church orchestra".

On the other hand, for a group of teachers teaching the same class, their writings of themselves<sup>1</sup>, from the perspective of music memories, focused on the time of adolescence, their comments included memories of music in the church as aspects of

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, I work with writings of self in the perspective of autobiographical narratives (TORRES, 2003), in which the participants narrated their musical memories in writing.



their spirituality. One teacher narrates "growing up and seeing his uncle create music sheets for the church" and also "hearing the sound of the guitars that played the songs adapted to the church rituals", commenting at the end that "it was modern and we young people liked it". In order to finish this topic with the musical memories of youth and the memories of religiosity, I selected this excerpt in which a teacher remembers her memory about music in her life was "when she was 11 years old in the catechism group in [her] church". The priest was very strict, and he liked always having choirs during his masses. And she added: "I already enjoyed singing and improvising with my brother in the singing and in the church, I will never forget the rehearsals, the gargling and the tune of the bass and treble voices on the piano of the coordinator who rehearsed once a week and it was very good". He closes his account by drawing attention to the fact that "when Sunday came, everyone who did catechism sang at the altar of the church" (teacher M. L.).

Among those memories that included participation in religious communities with orchestra and introduction into the "universe of erudite music", this group of teachers brought different styles such as gospel and sacred music, mixed with composers such as Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Sibelius, that made up the eclectic repertoires of the orchestra and choirs of different churches of different denominations. The songs in these environments were released through microphones, amplifiers and loudspeakers that broadcast the songs, as in the memory of one of the teachers with the Mother Church of a city in the interior of São Paulo that "at 6:00 pm, I played the song <sup>2</sup>Ave Maria".

### **Narratives of undergraduates of a music course: writing their musical histories**

In consonance with the thematic reflections of this study, I present some excerpts of narratives from students of a music course in which aspects of the didactics of music education and elaboration of research project are tackled. I proposed that they write about their first contacts with music, musical notation and other musical learning. In the autobiographical writings, memories of music learning emerged in church spaces, as one student who was "a member of the Assembly of God Church" reported, and who began learning with a church member lessons in music theory and wind instrument.

A classmate points out that "since 4 years old" she had sung in a choir of the church with other children and that at the age of 21, she began taking saxophone lessons in the Church and playing in the orchestra. Another colleague recounts he began his

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<sup>2</sup> Book containing sacred hymns; collection of hymns.

musical studies at age 15 playing songs from the hymnal<sup>iv</sup> to work on “both reading and writing.”

Among the undergraduates' narratives on their musical initiation stories are the testimonies related to their participation in Catholic Church<sup>3</sup> prayer groups, the pleasure of playing music in religious meetings and the emphasis on singing and playing in mass, participating in events, pilgrimages and retreats. One of the students points out in his autobiographical writings that it was in the Church where he actually discovered his future and so, thereafter, attended “a bachelor's degree in music”.

I realized that for the students of the research project elaboration, which is in the last semester of the course and encompasses the organization, writing and defense of a music education research project, it was an important exercise. Presenting fragments of the autobiographical method with excerpts from the article entitled “About reading and autobiographical writing: Theoretical notes” (CAMARGO, 2010) enabled this group of students to compose narratives of themselves and unveil some questions related to churches and religious rituals as educational spaces. In this sense,

I present a passage in which Carvalho points out: “In my way of interpreting the act of writing – in writing letters, in self-writing – these autobiographical studies take us to writing as learning” (CARVALHO, 2010, p. 15). The author further argues that this autobiographical space where autobiographical studies are inserted, becomes a “place of passage and possibility to traverse between public and private...” (CARVALHO, 2010, p. 15).

I believe that proposing autobiographical activities with music memories for both teachers in a continuing education course and licentiate in music undergraduate students, triggered a process of remembering and narrating music experiences impregnated with meaning. This allowed for reflections on the times and spaces in which these experiences occurred and how they contributed to identity formation.

### **Religious / spiritual experiences and teacher training**

The overlapping of world experiences in the music teachers' formation processes were the starting point for the doctoral research of the third author of this article, completed in 2017 (RECK, 2017). In this work, I set out to investigate how the teacher biographies can be problematized in the higher formation in music and, more specifically,

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<sup>3</sup> The Prayer Group is the fundamental cell of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal; it is the place of expectation and, at the same time, of the fulfillment of the perennial promise of God.

how (and if) religious / spiritual experiences can be significant in this process. For my study, I sought to align with some of the main arguments supported by music education sociology (GREEN, 2000; SOUZA, 2003), particularly in their relations with theories of everyday life (SOUZA, 2016; LOURO, 2013) which examines the subject from a complex historical-cultural fabric.

Such a sociological perspective, when approached in the process of institutional formation, was based on (auto)biography as a possibility for understanding the ways, times and spaces in which we constitute ourselves as music teachers, considering narratives as possible ways of producing understandings and reappraisal about life trajectories (LOURO, 2016; RECK, LOURO E RAPÔSO, 2014; ABREU, 2011). In the second semester of 2015, during a complementary undergraduate course offered in the music course of the Federal University of Santa Maria<sup>4</sup>, data production for this research was collected from multiple sources: 11 (eleven) daily 37 (thirty-seven) written reports, two (2) group reports and eight (8) individual interviews. This qualitative study emerges the theoretical-methodological framework discussed in the field of auto(biographical) research insofar as it takes as an object of study the individual genesis of the social in the biography processes (DELORY-MOMBERGER, 2012).

Starting from a hermeneutic perspective, the analyses produced dealt in very general lines with: a) the possibility of understanding life histories and music memories as significant processes in / for music education; b) the relation of religious / spiritual meanings in this process of formation; c) the dialogues between musical narratives, produced during a practice of collective re-arrangement. Due to the refinement of the results of the study and the proposal of the present work, I make present excerpts from the second analytical field described above, that is, on the relation between the religious/spiritual meanings in the process of higher education of the music teacher.

### **Practices in day-to-day religiosity and music education**

It is worth mentioning the relations between day-to-day religious life and music education have already been featured in the work of Reck (2011), which sought to "start from the everyday realities of the students as people who are involved with religious environments", considering that this type of involvement "is not uncommon among music teachers in formation" (RECK, 2011, p. 3). In general, this perspective seeks to

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<sup>4</sup> The offered DCG, entitled "Music Research from the experience of self", was registered and taught by my doctoral adviser, with my participation as a researcher and doctoral student enrolled in the discipline of Oriented Teaching II.

understand how the experiences produced in the sphere of religiosity / spirituality are (re)significant in the process of institutional formation.

It is important to note that the multiple experiences and religious / spiritual memories reported here are not limited to the institutionalized religious spaces. It is also possible to observe that these religious experiences are not always understood as linear and homogeneous, and that religious belongingness is often negotiated in different senses and spaces. In this sense, Christian musical practices, although dominant, still had deep differences among them, permeated with multiple theological and philosophical understandings. Taking this into account, the generalization proposed by terms such as 'evangelical students' or "Catholic pupils", for example, seems increasingly impossible. Secondly, the review of a conceptual discussion on religiosity / spirituality allowed for a broader understanding of musical experiences in this field, including, in the analysis, the relationships produced in music festivals and gatherings among friends, as well as in listening to music which, in one way or another, touched the threads of the senses of human existence. My attention was drawn to the writing of one of the collaborators of the research, who describes in one of his reports "I have never had a religious musical contact. But spirituality has always been present in the music that I like to play".

### **Religious experience and musical practice**

In addition to the more evident religious belongingness such as in Catholicism, spiritism and evangelicalism, it was also possible to see some plural crossings that can mark the religious experience. According to one of the contributors, "I myself am a Catholic, but today I like the Gospel more, depending on who is preaching it" and emphasizes: "depending on who preaches it". He also reports he has attended some spiritist centers, "*umbanda* and everything else". Some of these relationships are suggested in his writings: "I come from a non-practicing Catholic family and at the same time a certain conviviality with the Umbanda religion, for an aunt's grandmother had an Umbanda center", and continues, "but my grandmother was very God-fearing and she always had prayers to teach me and the other grandchildren and children". Such plurality has already been pointed out as a complex factor in the question of religion in Brazil, especially when "it is observed that people consider themselves Catholic as a broad denomination, but attend Spiritist centers, Candomblé and other cults simultaneously" (MARQUES; AGUIAR, 2014, p. 117).

In addition to different worlds and religious / spiritual experiences, different musical practices have also been reported, spread in a web of situations involving multiple ways of listening and producing music. Some of these relationships have been described by the songs that are celebrated in the Catholic masses and in the evangelical

services, in the rites of *Umbanda*, in the Spiritism studies; by the songs shared with family and friends, by the songs we listen to while we are alone, finally, by the songs that mobilize certain life meanings. Although all linked to religiosity / spirituality, listening to music is a manifold act and represents different ways of knowing the world. In this sense, it may not be possible to say that there is a single mode of listening to religious music, or some kind of religious dimension to listening to music, but different ways of understanding music in its relations with the world we live in.

Many of these musical practices narrated were produced in the Christian context, congruent to Lorenzetti's claim (2015) that "a large number of undergraduate music students had their musical initiation in the churches" (LORENZETTI, 2015, p. 15). Both in the Catholic and in the Evangelical context, observing the differences in music used in these two environments (LORENZETTI, 2015, p.21), different practices of making, learning and teaching music were narrated. One of the narrators, for example, says that he participated in various music groups in the Catholic Church, experiences that he considers important to his musical development: "I began to lose the shame of playing because I started playing at Mass and playing with a group of young people". He also says that in performing at the masses, he understood that this practice was not only a technical musical performance, not only errors and corrections, but also "helping others to pray and sing, and to be in prayer". This view is shared by Lorenzetti (2012), when the author points out that the Mass "does not allow for a show, does not allow applause for musical performance in the liturgical act, and singing and prayer are hardly disassociated" (LORENZETTI, p. 12).

### **Ways of listening and spirituality**

In the narratives, a way of listening to music that promotes some kind of look at oneself and one's relationship with the world is highlighted. This is the experience narrated by one of the collaborators when he puts the album *Dark Side of the Moon*, of the British band Pink Floyd, and is involved in a project of (self) knowledge: "whenever I am in a bad moment, whether tired, or whatever it is, I usually lie in a comfortable place with a good headset and play this album; it's incredible how in a few minutes I get out of the reality, it seems that I am in tune with the songs". Another participant reported about specific moments in which friends who share commonalities, in this case related to rock and roll culture, come together to make a sound: "sometimes you're there, whatever, you pick up a guitar, a circle of five or six people starts playing and everyone sees that they like the same songs and begin to interact in a deeper way through music".

Thus, sharing appreciations about the world and about music can be considered a meaningful social belongingness and existential process.

### **Relationships between religious practices and institutional learning**

In general, it was also possible to understand that the pedagogical-musical practices lived in religious/spirituality contexts are part of the formation process, and that their relations with the institutional process in the under-graduate Music Education program are broad and extensive. Some of the participants of the complementary undergraduate course reported that in recent years they have noticed an emphasis in the licentiate course in promoting dialogues between daily life and training, in the sense of "bringing and talking and discussing our practice". In the case in question, this practice occurred with an Evangelical church choir conductor following a trend that "with the large number of Evangelicals in the course, the educational practices of people in one way or another will end up being in the religious environment". This dialogue allows the religious musical context to be seen as one of these spaces of educational practices. This participant uses her musical experiences in the church as a basis for reflections on her pedagogical-musical practices, problematizing her relationships. The account refers to a situation in which conducting the church choir during a congress, "people began to weep and close their eyes". At that moment the participant was torn between the technical need to conduct and the emotion of the participants: "As an academic and with the knowledge I had, I could not get so involved, but if I do not get so involved, you know, a person can end up becoming cold". This dilemma produced the need to problematize their practices as a music educator: "They seem to be paths that oppose each other, but actually intersect; What happens is that I'm still pretty much figuring out how to cross this one, you know?" Reports like this seem to point to a complex relationship between everyday practices and higher education, because their experiences require constant negotiation between them. Thus, dealing with technique and emotion in conducting a choir, for example, is a practice that involves different ways of relating to music.

### **Possible contributions of this study**

Finally, I venture to offer a possible contribution of the lines described above, by proposing a more in-depth analysis of religious / spiritual meanings in music courses, specifically on teacher education. Note that it is not a question of being in favor or not, of accepting or not accepting these meanings; but to situate them as biographical elements that are inherent to the process of becoming a musician or music teacher. These

meanings are there, and more: they are not limited to the context of institutionalized religions, but also in the ways and meanings that a subject narrates and understands themselves. In analyzing these results, the findings indicate that playing, a praise, a Mass, or a Pink Floyd, for an example, is musical practice that involves different reasons in being in the world and different comprehensions about the meaning of life and death. Hence the importance of thinking about these practices in music teachers' education through an (auto)biographical prism.

### **Dilemmas of a university music teacher: overflows from the world of life to the academy**

The idea of life spilling over into the academy was already present in the comments of the professors I interviewed for my doctoral<sup>5</sup> research. I realized such an overlap at the time when for more than a year my father became ill and required more attention from me (which eventually turned into compassionate leave for monitoring health problems in the family). I realized that my experience with the Catholic Church flowed over to the care of my father, which in turn spilled over to my role in the university. I was able to study these circumstances from class diaries in which dilemmas were analyzed by setting up an autobiographical research. It is important to note that for me, these interrelationships were analyzed from a religious experience. However, I think that other university professors, inside and outside the music area, who wish to think of their professional performance as not dissociated from personal life, could do similar analysis, considering the situational overflow of family health problems to the professional practice and vice versa, though not necessarily considering religious experience.

### **The concept of dilemma and the university professor of music**

According to Zabalza (2004, p. 128), dilemmas is one of the main focuses in his "didactic research of the teacher's thought". This research area involves the examination of dilemmas and reflection on how teachers confront and elaborate them mentally, seeking "the way he himself evolved in the various scopes of conflict that the dilemmas defined" (ZABALZA, 2004, p. 109). For this author, it is necessary "to see how these dilemmas are structured and how the teacher evolves from the moment he writes the diary" (ZABALZA, 2004, p. 110). In order to do so, the author structures the chapter in

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<sup>5</sup> Research carried out as doctoral thesis for the Post-graduate Program in Music of UFRGS, under the guidance of Jusamara Souza.

which he analyzes, for a year, excerpts from the diaries of a kindergarten teacher structured in the form of tables in which it is possible to see the two poles of the dilemma and its evolution over time. In this way, it is possible to situate "the teacher's thinking about the bipolar or conflicting question that the dilemma reflects" and "how he cognitively and practically solved this dilemma" (ZABALZA, 2004, p. 110). This author concludes that the dilemmas constitute "the meeting point between the teacher knowledge and practice, between the personal experience and the professional experience" (Idem, p. 128). In this sense, the language of the class diaries corresponds to a "personal dimension" (ZABALZA, 2004, p. 18): the words are part of the teacher's daily life and express, in a more or less elaborate way, the feelings and internal reactions to each teacher's reflection. Within the area of arts and particularly in Music Education, some authors studied musical instruments university teachers and their dilemma involving "being a musician and being a teacher". In this direction Louro (2004) amplifies the bipolar question musician-teacher to a range of multiple possibilities of existence using the metaphor of the sunflower, in which the teacher is in the center and all his varied attributes are the petals of the sunflower. In this thesis, I analyze different encounters between the private and professional life histories of university professors of musical instruments, widening the existential question beyond question of choice of acting mainly as musician or professor. In a similar direction, Mota (2017), when analyzing interviews of oboe teachers from all over Brazil, observes similar questions - the dilemma of being a teacher addressing bureaucratic demands of educational institutions that are characterized as challenging for many, *vis-a-vis* a whole plethora of the life histories of the teachers involving 'World of the Oboe'.

### **Existential questions in addition to being a musician or teacher**

I will describe the personal context that generated the excerpts from diaries written by the first author of this article. The excerpts analyzed are examples of methodologies that use class diaries to address spirituality issues. Here, the question of dilemmas is shown as central, broadening the inherent aspects of the music lesson to the existential questions of the teacher. From now on, I adopt the first person singular. When facing personal difficulties that interacted with the professional through health problems with my relatives, I found myself faced with a dilemma of another nature. No longer was it a matter of adaptation of a music teacher to the bureaucratic demands of the university, nor was it a question of finding the time and ways to continue making my music; despite the mishaps, I still worried about these questions, but now it was a question of dealing with the demands and circumstances of family health problems. At



the beginning of 2016, my father became seriously ill and his condition demanded my care throughout the years 2016 and 2017. The public service legislation in Brazil provides for a period of leave of 60 days a year for the teacher to take care of his sick relatives. I got this leave. However, in the midst of this I still needed to give an account of my academic life - that of being a professor and researcher. It was then that a new dilemma arose: to be a teacher or a responsible family member. I wrote journals throughout 2017: in the first semester it was focused on the discipline of Research in Music Education at UFSM and in the second semester, in a freer form but with some references to the discipline Production of Knowledge in the teaching of the arts in the Master's Degree in Music Education IV. I also wrote about my processes of advising Master's and PhD students at the Graduate Program of Education at the same University. Transforming my concerns into a study of dilemmas using journal writing helped me navigate the year of 2017. In addition, my relationship with divinity, in this case with God within a Catholic charismatic perspective, established an existential support for these troubled times. More than simply believing that God was helping me, what gave me support was what I learned about difficult times in my life listening to other people in the so-called 'prayer of healing' sessions at the Catholic Church. Listening to other people's problems helped me deal with my own circumstances.

To better clarify the tensions that were generated in the journals I turn to a possible category of analysis that emerges from the data of Louro doctoral thesis (2004) when one of the interviewees narrates:

(...) this is experience, it is the human baggage, the person who touches, the moment one touches a work, when one recreates, one passes that baggage forward. So, the person who has not had experience, who has not suffered in life, does not have that strength to recreate, to share a work, (...); they kind of passed through life haphazardly.... I think that recreation comes from that... That we do not teach, it is life that teaches us. I think it is something that it is life that will teach you, you have to have a passage. Ah! Yes, you can teach the student to bring their experiences into the music; not just repeating the notes that are written there but try to internalize them and bring out your personality, your being, your experience, what you have achieved, or what you wanted, in life, your life experience, your human contingency, it cannot be disconnected from there. (Laura, second interview, p. 34). Cited by LOURO, 2004 p. 126.

In a similar process during my living with the illnesses of my parents, an experience forming one environment 'overflows' to another. "Prayers help me, I feel like a professional of another kind of healing, the spiritual healing I learned to exercise, and everything I learned as a prayer minister for healing and liberation helps me, with my parents and myself" (Excerpt 1 from August 15). When facing the problems of health in

the family, I use the learning, the formative experience, that I had in the church. So even though the family context is not the institutionalized context of the church (at this point it is becoming clear that the learning from everyday life can be present in different contexts as it is always related of the world of life) what I have learned about human relationships and evocation of the deity for help, specially to control emotions in situations of tension, helps me to stay focused on the problematic issues in the family. "I had an impression yesterday that was repeated today that gives me the feeling of a growth in face of the difficult times that I have lived lately. (...) I also perceive a maturation, an improvement in the writing of articles and in advising disciplines" (Excerpt 2 from November 23). Thus, as I perceived a flow from the church to the family, I could perceive a flow from the maturation process, especially from the control of emotions- which had already been influenced by my church experience - from problems with the family to the academic performance. On the other hand, the lack of time and fatigue made me strengthen a kind of teaching methodology that I had been elaborating over the last years: methodological improvisation (see ALMEIDA; LOURO, 2017).

### **The responsible family member: prayer, maturity and management of fatigue**

It took all the strength and experience of many years as a university professor to be able to continue working while the fatigue was too great and the feelings and thoughts turned to the health situation of my father. The most interesting from the point of view of teaching methodology is that it was precisely the approaches that I had been working on over the years, focused on (self) biographical research in Education, which served as a refuge when it was too difficult to continue acting as a teacher (see ALMEIDA; LOURO, 2017). On the other hand, the experience I had while serving within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal<sup>6</sup> in my city helped me find strength in prayer and in the specific practices of prayer for healing and deliverance to move forward despite the difficulties. My relationship with God informed the possibility of maintaining my role as a university professor. For other people, the relationship with a divinity or even, in the case of atheists, with concepts and philosophies, could fill this role.

Throughout this process I was able to improve the understanding of my own personal growth. Maturity was about trying to be a responsible family member, maturity was to not involve myself with unnecessary conflicts in University meetings and

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<sup>6</sup> Movement of the Catholic Church founded in 1967 with emphasis on the experience with the Holy Spirit. The lay workers are the people who act in the leadership of actions such as music, preaching and conducting prayers.

situations knowing that my weariness could lead me to exacerbated reactions, maturity was about getting from my research and everything I studied the means to keep moving forward.

Thinking about the dilemma of time and effort to be in the academy amidst a health crisis in the family, I see that yes, it is possible, it is possible to continue as a qualitative researcher who uses her knowledge to arrive at an understanding of the learning processes amidst an abyss of experiences; this process is informed by art, not only by the flute that I could still play sometimes, but also by all the artistic languages I talked to with my students, as well as by the notion of beauty that I try to feel throughout the time. In this notion of the beautiful is my connection with the divinity because it is the smell of the perfume of God (Excerpt 3 from December 04).

### **Final considerations**

These three studies point to a learning produced in daily life and told through narratives using an (auto)biographical approach. These learnings are related to spiritual and religious experiences, both in terms of institutionalized religions as well as those related to spirituality outside these institutions. In the same direction, it is important to point out that some subjects mix their experiences of different religions. We know that some authors do not consider experiences in institutional religions as spirituality, but we consider that the quest for the transcendence of a material world can, from a certain point of view, be considered as spirituality even if it is linked to an experience lived in an institutionalized religion.

We return to Souza's writings at the beginning of the text, which consider as part of the Daily Life and Music Education approach "the basic human experiences that are universal, and which are generally concepts culled from everyday life" (SOUZA, 2013, p. 18). Could spirituality be a basic human experience that can be obtained from everyday life? It seems that such research points to that direction. In the same way that the teachers in continuous formation bring an experience with religion to their day-to-day life, it is so with music students. Such involvements become significant experiences (JOSSO, 2004) through the power of narrative.

The students of André Reck were able to understand their education more deeply when they considered the flowing of spiritual experiences in the deep meaning of certain musical repertoires and practices. For Maria Cecília Torres, it was possible to note in her data that the religious experiences became very significant for the subjects of the narratives. The church was a real place of learning. For Ana Lúcia Louro, when she analyzes the flow of religious experiences in her private life to the times of dilemmas in

her academic life, she can refer to a faith that was greater than the day-to-day struggle. This enabled her to be stronger in facing difficult times. In addition, the writing process about the dilemmas heightened her ability to deal with all aspects involved in the continuity of her role as a university teacher.

The narratives in this study reach a deeper density of meanings (IRWIN, 2007) among the subjects insofar as these narratives led the subjects to reflect on which beliefs and values are behind their pedagogical-musical practice; and which existential meanings of being music teachers are generated in this reflection. In this direction, these three case studies can contribute to the debates on Spirituality and Music Education, within Brazilian research perspectives and specifically those of Rio Grande do Sul.

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