

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG



Chui's Student Excellence Scheme (徐氏卓越學生計劃)

Learning Report On Princess Galyani Vadhana International Ensemble Competition 2017

Personal Engagement

I and other three students from different local universities formed the Victoria Quartet right before making decision of participating in the Princess Galyani Vadhana International Ensemble Competition (PGVIEC) 2017. After making the decision to participate in the String Ensemble category in this competition, I decided to play the first violin for the quartet because of the tonic quality of my violin playing. Since then, I have been responsible for taking a leading role in music performance, which includes training and coaching of the quartet. Since the performance of the selected pieces requires professional knowledge and in-depth understanding of the music and the composer, I have also been responsible for research and explanation of the facts and theories applied to the pieces, and make sure that every player can execute in a way that fits into the musical context. Nevertheless, as all four of us were not professional and well-experienced players, I attempted to invite musicians currently playing in the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra to provide us some coaching and insights.

Learning Outcomes and Development

The most important learning outcome throughout the competition is knowing how to translate words to music accurately while interacting with other players in order to play harmoniously, or fully integrate into each other's part at most of the times. At the first few rehearsals, all players only manage to play the notes out from the scores without paying sufficient attention to other parts and to the details written on the notes, thereby making the quartet sound like four individual instruments playing their own part mechanically. Realising such problem, I began to observe (through YouTube videos) how other professional players use body language and breath to communicate with each other effectively. Certainly, experience of playing with the same players is one of the keystones of becoming a professional or at least well-qualified quartet, and the Victoria Quartet clearly lacks such experience. Therefore, we had to increase the number of

rehearsals in a very short period of time in order to nurture ensemble-ship and communication skills between members.

The juries sent us a question right before the prize-winners' concert, "how many years have you guys been playing together?" I was shocked by the fact that the juries expected an ordinary quartet to have played together for at least more than a year. In retrospect, I understood that there were still room for improvement on the number and quality of pre-competition rehearsals, yet since most members were very occupied by other activities (e.g. being an executive committee member of the Students' Union, performances, rehearsals, exams, internships etc.), I really did appreciate the tremendous hard work and efforts made by all members despite being under such fully packed schedule. I sincerely hope that members of the quartet will have more time for not only rehearsals, but also other kinds of social activities in order to let everyone of us know more about each other (this implies that understanding the characters of all players will facilitate communication through both texts and music).



