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Coordinated Effort: A Study of Karen Tuttle's Influence On Modern Viola Teaching

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Doctor of Musical Arts

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HOUSTON, TEXAS
MAY, 2002
ABSTRACT

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Karen Tuttle is unquestionably a living legacy in the world of viola pedagogy. The potency of her teaching philosophy, along with her dynamic personality, has influenced music students for almost sixty years. She has always been a famously free spirit whose ideas have consistently drawn both controversy and allegiance. Despite changes in cultural climate, Tuttle’s belief in the importance of personal exploration has remained steadfast. Her contributions to both the meaning of performance and the mechanics of viola playing have enriched the field of viola pedagogy on a scale that is rare. More than a playing technique or a school, Tuttle’s teaching is truly a philosophy. The nature of her playing philosophy, and the level of exposure it has received, has made her teaching both controversial and misunderstood. The purpose of this study is to examine Karen Tuttle’s influence on modern viola teaching.

Based primarily on many articles and interviews, topics covered include her biography, her teaching principles, and her influence in teaching. This influence is researched through interviews with former students. Of her legacy in viola pedagogy, we see specifically what is most groundbreaking and effective, and how this has made her teaching so revered.
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PREFACE

I never studied with Karen Tuttle. The genesis of this project is rooted in two specific experiences that I had in the past three years.

The first occurred while working with Karen Ritscher in my final year of Doctoral coursework at Rice University’s Shepherd School. In a discussion about rounding out bow technique, she described a pattern for bowing that she attributed to Karen Tuttle. I was intrigued by the idea, and took it home to experiment. A few days later, while practicing the technique on scales, my wife came knocking on my door. “What are you practicing—what are you doing differently?” After hearing my practicing for several years, she had immediately noticed a change— from a distance and without any prompting—and liked it! I took this as a good sign.

The second experience took place the following year. I was teaching at this point, but happened to be back in Houston when Tuttle gave a master class at Rice. I was very interested to hear her talk about bow technique and connecting it to her idea of “coordination.” What she said surprised me: not because it contradicted what Karen Ritscher had said at all, but her way of describing the process was completely different. After the class I spoke with my friend (and former Tuttle student) Sheila Browne about this; her response was that everybody finds their own way to understand coordination. I
found this a fascinating idea: a pedagogical system that tailors itself to each individual’s style of learning. This was the idea from which the topic grew.

I would like to thank the former students for their willingness to be interviewed. Without them, there would be little to write about! Also, I would like to thank David Ferris for his advising, and editing of the manuscript. Karen Ritscher has been involved at every level of this project, from conception and research to revision, not to mention regular long-distance encouragement. My wife Christina Jennings has lived with this project also, and without her copyediting, typing, and support I might never have finished it.

Finally, I would like to thank Karen Tuttle for this project. Having never met me before, she was willing to speak with me about her life and teaching in a way that will always amaze me. Writing about her has challenged and enriched my own understanding of pedagogy, and I will always be grateful to her for the opportunity.
INTRODUCTION

Karen Tuttle is unquestionably a living legacy in the world of viola pedagogy. The potency of her teaching philosophy, along with her dynamic personality, has influenced music students for almost sixty years. She has always been a famously free spirit whose ideas have consistently drawn both controversy and allegiance. Despite changes in cultural climate, Tuttle’s belief in the importance of personal exploration has remained steadfast.

In the field of instrumental pedagogy, it can be difficult to attribute knowledge to its original source. Students have years of private instruction, play in countless ensembles and orchestras for conductors, and hear performances and recordings of all kinds. Through these experiences, many aspects of playing are anonymously accrued into one’s general account of musical understanding. There will be comparatively few ideas that one can say with certainty came from somebody else. Those that are recalled in this way are probably very important, principles that transcend any specific piece or passage; these principles were very likely to have been passed down from teacher to teacher. Milan Kundera has written similarly on human gestures:

If our planet has seen some eighty billion people, it is difficult to suppose that every individual has had his or her own repertory of gestures. Arithmetically, it is simply impossible... A gesture cannot be regarded as the expression of an individual, as his creation (because no individual is capable of creating a fully original gesture, belonging to no one else)...¹

While our individual gestures, ideas, or chromosomes are certainly not unique, it is the combination of them that distinguishes each of us. In much the same way, Karen Tuttle’s philosophy contains ideas that have been taught or conceived before; the concepts themselves are not original. There were many accomplished viola players and teachers before her time, and there will be others to come. She freely acknowledges those she considers formative to her method.

Karen Tuttle has created a unique combination of ideas, applied them to her own life,

and has taught them through her own personality and conviction. Her contributions to both
the meaning of performance and the mechanics of viola playing have enriched the field of
viola pedagogy on a scale that is rare. More than a playing technique or a school, Tuttle’s
teaching is truly a philosophy. Her commitment over the course of years, as well as the
quality of her students, have made her teaching principles part of the string world’s
collective unconscious. The nature of her playing philosophy, and the level of exposure it
has received, has also made her teaching both controversial and misunderstood. The
purpose of this study is to examine Karen Tuttle’s influence on modern viola teaching.

As a teacher, Tuttle’s most immediate attribute is a sympathetic personality. As
many former students recollect, Tuttle is remarkably able to convey her trust and faith in
each person. Perhaps the most distinctive ‘stamp’ of Tuttle’s teaching is that her former
students play so differently from one another. While it is a teaching method, the principles
allow for a wide range of outcomes. This is evident in the different kinds of people that have
studied with her, and the variety of playing careers in which they find themselves.

Tuttle’s care for the individual is coupled with a unique vitality. She exudes joy for
teaching, which is fueled by the passion of her beliefs. The core of her teaching principles
can make some people uncomfortable: Tuttle accepts sexuality as the most basic element of
our human lives. For a music teacher to incorporate such an understanding into her work is
polarizing; the idea either makes perfect sense or seems bewildering and crazy. Former
student Jonathan Brown recalls his orientation meeting at the beginning of Masters study:

When we first got to Juilliard in the fall of 1998, all the new violists had to
meet with the department chair. Not just Karen Tuttle’s students, but those
from all the studios, freshmen to DMA. Samuel Rhodes was the co-chair of
the department at the time, but he couldn’t be there: so it was only Tuttle
running the meeting. Basically, this was supposed to be a meeting going over
the rules and procedures... The first thing she says is, “Okay, now the first
ing, you need to find your way around this building, because you’re going
to waste a lot of time if you don’t know where you’re going.” The building
was a maze to all of us, so that was certainly something we could agree on...
Then she changed topics: “Now I’m going to tell you a few things about
music. I’m going to tell you the ingredients to be an artist: if you want to be a
musician, you have to communicate. And one of the best ways we have of
communicating is lovemaking.” The freshmen in the back were getting a little
uncomfortable! "If you have the ability to say, 'Oh, YES!' (accompanied by a
thrust with her fist), then you're communicating." You can only imagine the
shock of the assembled new violists at the Juilliard School! ...It was really
something.\(^2\)

Tuttle's first teaching job was as William Primrose's assistant at the Curtis Institute
of Music in 1945; now in 2002, she teaches students at both the Juilliard School and Curtis.
In between, she has taught at various schools and festivals, and given countless master
classes. Over the course of her career, we can only guess how many viola and chamber
music students she might have taught: 1,500 would be a conservative estimate. However
many people Tuttle has taught, the number who know something about her teaching is
undoubtedly many times larger.

Much of this project is based on primary sources and many of the articles were
written in interview format, which presents both advantages and challenges. With so many
pages of interviews there was no lack of resources; the challenge was to find the strands
within that created a story. Also, Ms. Tuttle was always generous with her time and very
open in discussing all topics. She feels very comfortable using her own remarkable life
history to teach, and has done so throughout her career. In her teaching, she focuses on her
formative musical experiences that are most relevant to the maturing student. Discrepancies
arose between sources in the course of writing, particularly the biography section. The
controversy of Tuttle's ideas accounts for some of these. The combination of her
personality with these beliefs has created rumors of all sorts. Another cause of these
differences is the subjectivity of human memory, particularly since many of these events
occurred some time ago.

To study Tuttle's effect, we must first learn about Tuttle herself. The first chapter
will be in two parts: a biography of her life, based primarily on articles written about her and
various interviews, and a series of short biographies of those people she considers to be her
primary influences, supplemented by her comments from interviews. The second chapter

presents the principles of her pedagogy. Her philosophy presents an organizational challenge in that many concepts are multi-layered and interdependent. Discussion of her pedagogy culminates in her original musical concept, coordination. This chapter is based on articles she has written, articles written about her, and several interviews with Ms. Tuttle.

The third chapter investigates the influence Karen Tuttle’s teaching has had on teaching. To research this area, nine former Tuttle students were interviewed. They were asked a set of similar questions that covered the many ways in which each learned from Tuttle, and what effect she has had on their teaching. This chapter is based exclusively on these interviews.

The conclusion draws upon the body of the study to more specifically identify the nature and degree of Tuttle’s influence. Of her legacy in viola pedagogy, we will see particularly what is most groundbreaking and effective, and how this has made her teaching so revered.
CHAPTER 1
BIOGRAPHY AND PRIMARY INFLUENCES

BIOGRAPHY

Karen Tuttle was born to Ray and Eunice Tuttle on March 28, 1920 in Lewiston, Idaho. Her parents brought her up with music: her father was a country fiddler and her mother directed their church choir. After several failed harvests on their rural Washington farm, the family moved to the town of Walla Walla when Tuttle was twelve years old. When Tuttle finished eighth grade, she announced to her parents that she was finished with school. Her parents accepted this, on the condition that she find another activity for the school hours of each day. Her choice was her father’s fiddle. “If I ever ‘goofed off,’ my mother would pick up the phone and give me a look to warn me [threatening school].” And so it was that Karen Tuttle had her first violin instruction, from a young woman named Jean Heers. Tuttle liked her because she was a rebel of sorts: her personality was raucous and she smoked, which at that time was not accepted in Walla Walla.

Soon thereafter, she left her home to study in Pullman, Washington with Karel Havlicek. Havlicek himself had been a student of Leopold Auer, and Tuttle was taken with his “tremendous energy and enthusiasm.” The technique she learned from this time however, came at the expense of ease and comfort. “You know, I have pictures of myself like this as a young violinist!” She strikes a pose with severely bent wrists, extremely turned head with clenched neck, and furrowed brow. Despite the contortions, Tuttle followed Havlicek when he moved to Berkeley, California. Around this time, she began making concert tours up and down the West Coast. Not only did she gain valuable performance experience; she became comfortable speaking to audiences, which she initially found frightening. She found her manager very difficult however, and after 50 concerts she quit. She then moved to Los Angeles, lured by the thrill of Hollywood, and got a job on the

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5 Ritscher, Interview with Tuttle, 86.
staff at NBC. At that time women were not allowed membership in the orchestra; when the group was out of town however, she filled in as needed.\(^8\) Her final violin teacher was Henri Temianka when she was 17. Temianka played with "good physical habits and natural fluidity"\(^9\) which would become important to Tuttle later; but he did not teach such technique to her. Tuttle could see that he was apparently not interested in teaching, and so her study amounted to only a few lessons.\(^{10}\)

Tuttle's life reached a pivotal moment when she heard William Primrose perform with the London String Quartet in Los Angeles. She was so taken by his ease and comfort with the instrument that she approached him immediately after the concert and asked to study with him. Her conviction to do so was strong enough to trade the West Coast for Philadelphia, and the violin for viola. In a musical career full of success and creativity, it was this choice that most defined her future. She studied with Primrose for four years at Curtis.

An important step in Tuttle's teaching career came before graduation, when Primrose asked her to be his assistant in 1945. As she describes it, being an assistant was not the same as it is today. Instead of providing extra help and organizational assistance as many do today, Tuttle's responsibility was to teach as his substitute when he was concertizing. After her graduation in 1948, Karen Tuttle moved to New York City and embarked on a busy playing career. She continued to act as Primrose's teaching assistant as a commuter.

In the years 1950-1956, many different projects were underway. As a teacher at Curtis, Tuttle became the head of both the viola department and the chamber music department when Primrose left the school in 1951. She held both of these positions until 1956, when she decided to stop.\(^{11}\) Once she moved to New York, Tuttle was very interested in quartet playing. After founding the Gotham String Quartet upon arrival in 1948, she was

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\(^7\) Ritscher, *Interview with Tuttle*, 86.
\(^8\) Karen Tuttle, telephone interview by author, 4 February 2002.
\(^9\) Ritscher, *Interview with Tuttle*, 86.
\(^{10}\) Tuttle, telephone interview.
offered a position in the Galimir Quartet. She accepted their offer, and performed with Galimir for several seasons. Around this time as well, Tuttle joined New York’s NBC Orchestra as their first female member.

Another pivotal life moment came in 1950 when she auditioned for Alexander Schneider to play in the inaugural Prades Festival. Not only did this lead to her meeting and working with Pablo Casals, but the festival indirectly resulted in the formation of the renowned Schneider Quartet, of which she was a member. This quartet’s specific mission was to record the complete Haydn Quartets. Although the recording project was never completed due to financial limitations, the records that were produced have become legendary. The Schneider Quartet performed the complete cycle over 21 concerts in two seasons at New York’s 92nd Street Y.

This period of her life was personally eventful as well. She gave birth to her daughter Robin in 1954, and she also married her current husband, Reichian therapist Dr. Morton Herskowitz, in 1957. This was her third marriage: the first two, one before Curtis and one after Curtis, were both short-lived. The family journeyed to the Pacific Islands for a honeymoon, which doubled as a research trip for Dr. Herskowitz. The experience was professionally significant to Tuttle because she introduced her instrument to the native populations of Fiji, Samoa, and Tahiti.

Upon return, Tuttle moved back to Philadelphia, where Dr. Herskowitz maintained his private practice as a Reichian therapist. The transition in Tuttle’s life was quite dramatic; from living in New York as a working professional for twelve years, to raising her daughter back in Philadelphia. While she was growing up, Robin was Tuttle’s first priority; concerts and teaching took a less regular role in her schedule, though she still was active in both capacities. Robin’s strongest childhood memories of her mother’s performances were from the various festivals where they would summer: Marlboro, Vermont; Kneisel Hall, Maine;

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11 Karen Tuttle, telephone interview by author, 7 April 2002. This is contrary to the common conception that she was fired from the Curtis Institute for being a single mother before she married.
Norfolk, Connecticut, among others.\textsuperscript{12}

In the 1970's, Tuttle's teaching career took flight with a flurry of teaching appointments. She first started teaching at the University of Albany in 1970, though the commute from Albany to Philadelphia became too much after just two years. In 1971, Tuttle began to teach viola and chamber music through the Philadelphia Musical Academy, and was also appointed to teach viola at The Peabody Conservatory. Both Karen Ritscher and Kim Kashkashian began studying with her at this time, and each felt that it was the beginning of a new teaching phase for Tuttle. Ritscher remembers that "we were her first real group of students, and I think that she was just getting it down to her own science at that point."\textsuperscript{13} Kashkashian recalls that "at that point, she probably didn't have her routine developed the way she did later. We were really her guinea pig class, because she had just formulated for herself the whole coordination system."\textsuperscript{14} For several years in the 1970's, Tuttle was working with the violists at Curtis, though she was not recognized as a faculty member. Curtis officially reinstated her to teach chamber music in 1978. She began taking students at both the Manhattan School and the Mannes School of Music in 1980. Tuttle's summer activities in this period also normalized. She taught at the Aspen Music Festival for seven years, from 1979 to 1986. Banff Arts Centre of Alberta, Canada invited her to give annual master classes starting in 1983.

The mid-1980's is the last major transition point in Tuttle's teaching responsibilities to date. Curtis finally acknowledged her efforts with their violists and re-appointed her to teach viola in 1986. Juilliard offered Tuttle a teaching post the following year, and she subsequently stopped teaching at Peabody, Manhattan, and Mannes. She has split her time during the school year between Juilliard and Curtis for the past fifteen years; in the summers, for nearly twenty years, her principal summer teaching activity are the master classes at Banff.

\textsuperscript{12} Robin Herskowitz-Heald, telephone interview by author, 22 February 2002.
\textsuperscript{13} Karen Ritscher, telephone interview by author, 10 December 2001. Tape recording.
\textsuperscript{14} Kim Kashkashian, telephone interview by author, 8 February 2002. Tape recording.
PRIMARY INFLUENCES

Karen Tuttle is quick to discuss the personalities that have molded her perspective on music and life. Her six primary influences include two violinists, a violist, a cellist, an oboist, and a psychoanalyst. These professional designations belie the complexities of each individual however; it was from these complexities that she learned so much. One violinist was a brilliantly scientific teacher, while the other had a famously volatile personality. The violist was a purely natural player; the cellist was a thoughtful, compassionate humanist. The oboist also conducted and was a master of phrasing, and the psychoanalyst set the world on its head with his studies of the human sexual process. In this section we will get a short biographical sketch of the six, each followed by a paragraph describing their influence on Tuttle.

Pablo Casals

Pablo Casals stands as one of the most legendary musicians of the 20th century, known primarily as a cellist, conductor, and composer. Born in Vendrell, Spain in 1876, he died in 1973 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. His lifelong obsession with the works of J.S. Bach has ultimately changed the course of classical music, though his lasting imprint on the world of classical music runs deeper than that. Paul Tortelier has described it in the following: “Pablo Casals, the greatest cellist of our time, owed the superiority of his interpretations to the quality of his convictions, resulting from an exceptional musical intuition, based upon a broad knowledge and ever-strengthened by the sacred fire of exaltation.”15 His legacy as a musician lies in his relentless pursuit of musical interpretation.

The Spanish Civil War played a pivotal role in Casals’ life. The ensuing dictatorship essentially forced Casals out of Spain with threats on his life. In 1936, he moved to the French border town Prades: he continued making tours around the world, but refused to

play in countries run by dictatorship. By the late 1940’s, his public performances became a
memory: he had decided not to play in public again. It was only an extraordinary
circumstance that brought him out of self-imposed retirement: Alexander Schneider came to
him and proposed that a festival be held in Prades, for the purpose of commemorating Bach
and recording the Brandenburg Concertos. Even this was not a quick decision on Casals’
part. Schneider first made the suggestion for 1949, but it was only the 200th anniversary of
Bach’s death, in 1950 that finally provided for Casals’ acceptance.\textsuperscript{16} Thus began a series of
yearly festivals held in Prades and later in Puerto Rico, which had Casals at their center.
Rudolf Serkin invited Casals to Marlboro in 1960, sparking a close relationship that lasted
until the end of his life.

Karen Tuttle first met Casals at the Prades Festival, in 1950. She was overwhelmed
and inspired by him, and stayed on to study for six months. Casals’ approach to Bach in
particular affected her:

Casals was the first artist to play Bach as if he were a human being with an
emotional life. Casals made me acutely aware of the importance of getting the
emotional response, the character, before one does anything else. He spoke of
this using such words as ‘love, melancholy, frank,’ but even more, he showed
the character in his face. He was saying, in essence, that Bach must be played
expressively.\textsuperscript{17}

He also affected her approach to instrumental technique:

He was one of the largest influences for me. He gave me one of my big
truths. I had asked him if he analyzed what he did on the instrument. He told
me that he had gone to a teacher when he was 10 years old who told him to put
a book under his arm. Casals said “But it didn’t feel good!” I ignored this
advice, and revolutionized bow technique. This reinforced my feeling that if it
doesn’t feel good, it is wrong!...I think that he was a huge influence on many
people’s lives because he verbalized what a lot of people felt but were afraid to
say.\textsuperscript{18}

D. C. Dounis

Demetrios Constantine Dounis, perhaps best known as the author of several method
books, was born December 21st, 1893 in Athens, Greece, and died in 1954 in Los Angeles.

\textsuperscript{17} Karen Ritscher, “An Interview with Karen Tuttle,” \textit{American String Teacher} 43 (Autumn 1993): 87.
Dounis excelled as a young violinist but attended medical school to avoid disinheriance from his family. His scientific, diagnostic approach shaped his legendary pedagogical style, and among those that sought his advice were many of the world's preeminent soloists: Jascha Heifetz, William Primrose, Yehudi Menuhin, and Joseph Szigeti. His teaching was limited to professionals who were primarily addressing specific technical issues; his fee of $100 per lesson in the 1950's must have been consciously prohibitive to all but the most serious as well. Despite having a background purely as a violinist, he was famous for helping players of all instruments as well as singers. Because these musicians were already established professionals, many were reluctant to acknowledge his assistance.

With the exception of a few brief teaching posts over his life, Dounis taught privately. He also travelled, giving lectures and masterclasses around the world to espouse his principles. He taught musicians to look at technique in a new, mechanical way that took the body's own systems of musculature and balance into account. "Dounis' major belief was that in order to express, one must overcome the barriers posed by technique."¹⁹

Students disagree as to whether or not he helped with interpretive issues, or was primarily interested in mechanical ease. Dounis had a large interest in Paganini, particularly a 'secret' that Paganini discovered. This secret, Paganini claimed, required the use of intellect to play and practice, and eliminated the need for long hours of repetition.²⁰ Dounis was also concerned with the connection of mind and body: he was known to employ contemporary psychology to his teaching style. He indirectly addressed issues of self-confidence by using such techniques as always speaking in the positive, and posing questions in such a way that students felt that they had arrived at the answers themselves.²¹

Karen Tuttle studied with Dounis only a short time, but has claimed him as "the

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¹⁸ Ibid.
²⁰ Ibid., 45.
²¹ Ibid., 9.
strongest influence of my life." Tuttle remembers Dounis saying that Paganini was the only one that had understood not just how to play the violin, but also "the laws behind the instrument." From Dounis, Tuttle heard explanations for what she had seen, but not fully understood, in watching Primrose play. She learned fundamental ideas of balance from him that have molded her own technical philosophies.

William Primrose

The "Dean of Twentieth Century Violists," William Primrose was born in 1904 in Glasgow, Scotland and died in Utah in 1982. His father was a violinist in the Scottish Orchestra of Glasgow and violist of the Ritter Quartet. Studying under Camillo Ritter, the first violinist of this quartet, Primrose had impressive musical beginnings, and graduated from Guildhall School of Music winning the gold medal in 1924. In 1926, Primrose began studying with Eugene Ysaye, who encouraged him to make the switch to viola. Before turning his musical efforts over to his solo career, Primrose held positions with the London String Quartet and the NBC Symphony. Extensive touring with the renowned tenor Richard Crooks secured Primrose’s place as a soloist. His experience as a chamber player was extensive: he performed with Oscar Shumsky, Josef Gingold, and Harvey Shapiro as the Primrose Quartet, played and recorded with Heifetz and Piatigorsky when the three taught at the University of Southern California, and like all the string players of this project, Primrose also appeared at Casals’ Prades Festival.

One of Primrose’s great missions was the expansion of the viola literature, a mantle he inherited from Lionel Tertis. He accomplished this by both commissioning works from composers and transcribing and arranging existent pieces himself. He was a fearless editor, and his editions are remarkable for the thoroughness of their markings and their clarity of purpose. Brigham Young University, where he taught until his death in 1982, established a

22 Costantakos, 187.
23 Ibid., 45.
Primrose International Viola Archive which commemorates both the man and one of his most treasured goals. It is fitting that Franz Zeyringer's commanding volume *Literatur für Viola* bears a dedication to Primrose.

Primrose played an important role in Karen Tuttle's life. It is interesting to note that, of her principal influences, William Primrose stands as the lone violist. Primrose's strong support of her in her 20's clearly helped her career as both a teacher and a player.

Tuttle was particularly influenced by his approach to the bow hold. "This is an area where Primrose was a master. I used to pronate the wrist too much. Primrose simply said, 'Just place your hand on the bow the way you would naturally let the wrist and fingers fall if you weren't worried about holding the bow.' Primrose was taught this by Ysäye." In her own teaching she becomes more specific in her idea: we will examine this further in the chapter to follow.

She describes Primrose's playing as natural and effortless:

But because [he was so natural], trying to elicit information from him about how he did something technically was a bit like asking the average person, "How do you breathe?" Still, I knew that I would be able to unravel my own technical problems by watching Primrose and absorbing what he did. Watching him was a great lesson in itself.

She pushed for answers to her technical questions, but his final answer was "don't be inhibited!" In Tuttle's eyes Primrose was afraid that, by dissecting his playing, he would lose the intangible element of his sound. Once she became his assistant, Primrose would refer students to her for technical questions: he would claim that he knew more about his playing than he did himself.

After Primrose left the Curtis faculty in 1951, Tuttle stayed on very good terms with him throughout his life. She describes her continuing friendship with him as being "as close as he let people be."

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25 Ibid., 70.
26 Ibid., 68.
29 Tuttle, telephone interview by author, 7 April 2002.
Wilhelm Reich

The noted physician/biologist/psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich was born in 1897 in Austria. In addition to his schooling, his early education was augmented by collecting and breeding butterflies, insects, and plants, which is seen by some as the genesis of his lifework. (Article) After graduating from public school and serving in the Austrian Army during World War I, he enrolled at the Medical School of the University of Vienna. During this study, Reich became a member of Freud’s Vienna Psychoanalytic Society; suggestive of things to come. He finished the 6-year program in 4 years, becoming a doctor in 1922.

His multidisciplinary focus became evident soon after finishing his medical degree. He did post-graduate work in Internal Medicine, Neuro-Psychiatry, and other forms of therapy. At the same time he was working at Freud’s Psychoanalytic Polyclinic, and in two years became the Polyclinic’s Director of the Seminar for Psychoanalytic Therapy. In the late 1920’s, he also founded several Viennese offices with the name Center for Sexual Consultation and Research. After similar activities in Berlin, he left Germany with the rise of Hitler in 1933. In Norway he continued his research at the Psychological Institute at the University of Oslo. He moved to New York in 1939 and soon established his Orgone Energy Laboratory in Forest Hills. In 1949, his students and followers founded the Wilhelm Reich Foundation in Rangeley, Maine: their plot of rural land was dubbed “Orgonon.”

Reich was a controversial figure, due to his touchstone subject. Reich’s research focused on what he viewed as the issue most central to human existence, the sexual orgasm. In the orgasm, Reich saw a function that combined the otherwise disparate fields of psychology, biology, and sociology. Viewed very simply, the orgasm phenomenon is a system of tension and release. Given the complexity of issues surrounding the orgasm however, this process of tension and release is much more complex. Reich identified a kind of energy flow in the body that was essential to the process, which he called ‘biopsychic
energy’ or ‘orgone energy.’ In his orgone theory, biopsychic energy is meant to flow freely through a body in its natural state: in orgasm it becomes concentrated, and is released.30 While we will not review Reich’s theories in their entirety, we must see how the theory of biopsychic energy was integrated into therapy.

As humans grow up and develop, they build emotional barriers that isolate their inner selves from the outside world- in Reichian terminology, these barriers are called character armorings.31 According to Reich’s research, muscular rigidity in the body restricts the flow of body fluids, including biopsychic energy. Reich’s psychoanalytic work discovered close links between character armorings and excessive muscular tension: in fact, the two are termed “functionally identical...They can replace one another and can be influenced by one another.”32 This discovery made an enormous impact on treatment, and led to an approach that Reich called “vegetotherapy.” The most basic goal of vegetotherapy is to re-establish the flow of biopsychic energy by loosening the shackles of character armoring and muscular tension.33 This technique of Reichian therapy, then, treats the patient by confronting these muscular tensions and emotional issues as equal problems: in fact, Reich saw treatment of the muscular tension as potentially a more direct approach to rehabilitation.34

Reich’s theories were so controversial in the 1950’s that he was the target of a Food and Drug Administration injunction. For refusing to stop pursuing his research, he ended up in court for disobeying this injunction. He was sentenced to two years in jail, and died before completing his term, in 1957. Many of his published articles were destroyed by the Food and Drug Administration following his death, to the dismay of his followers.

Karen Tuttle has been deeply affected by the theories of Reich. Her first contact

31 Reich’s theory of character armorings places their root in the cultural development of patriarchal society. Reich, 7.
32 Ibid., 270.
33 Ibid., 8.
34 Ibid., 301.
with his ideas came through a friend undergoing Reichian therapy. Her friend described Reich’s perspective, and Tuttle found it so compelling that she got a copy of *The Function of the Orgasm*. Reich’s theories have been woven into her life by her marriage for over fifty years to Dr. Morton Herskowitz, a Reichian therapist who works out of their home. As with Dounis, Reich’s philosophy answered questions that she asked herself while trying to understand Primrose’s natural approach.\(^{35}\) She views Reich as the ‘ultimate’ in connecting the physical to the emotional in musical performance.\(^{36}\) However, she is hesitant to talk with students about the issues that Reich talks about, because she is not trained to do so. We will see how Reich’s theories directly apply to Tuttle’s teaching when we examine her principles.

**Alexander Schneider**

Alexander Schneider was born in 1908 in Vilnius Lithuania and died in New York in 1993. After studies in both Vilnius and Frankfurt, Germany, he served as concertmaster of the Frankfurt Museum Orchestra starting in 1925. He joined his brother, cellist Mischa, as second violinist of the Budapest Quartet in 1933, a quartet he played with until 1944, then again from 1955 to 1967. When he quit the quartet in 1944, he took a complete break from ensemble work to focus on the solo violin works of J.S. Bach.

It was Schneider who was able, through his persistence, to convince Casals to come out of retirement for the 1950 Prades Festival. This inaugural event inspired the formation of the Schneider Quartet. His close association with Casals continued at the various summer festivals including the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, which Schneider organized.

After the Budapest Quartet disbanded, Schneider devoted an increasing amount to time to teaching and conducting young musicians. In addition to teaching violinists in New York, he founded the New York String Seminar in 1969. The Seminar, which was designed

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\(^{35}\) Tuttle interview, 4 & 5 June 2001.  
\(^{36}\) Weinberger, 70.
for students of high school and college age, quickly became an institution for performance education. He directed the program until 1992, shortly before his death.

Karen Tuttle has many vivid memories of Schneider. She describes theirs as a ‘love/hate’ relationship: she admired his musical sense, but was less enamored of his coarse manner and his physical habits of playing, which she describes as rigid and backwards.

"Sasha changed my life, though I resented it—I would play something and he would say, 'What in the hell are you doing?' (retold in a heavy Russian accent) I would say, 'Don't yell at me!' but I would be yelling at him back. That is what he was after—he wanted that from me... If I didn't look at him I could follow him very well. He did things right musically." 37

Marcel Tabuteau

Born in Compiegne, France in 1887, oboist Marcel Tabuteau was highly influential as both a performer and an educator. He received the premier prix in 1904 from the Paris Conservatoire and, at the age of 18, was invited to play English horn with the New York Symphony by its director, Walter Damrosch. After six years as principal oboist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, he moved to the same post with the Philadelphia Orchestra, which he held for 40 years. In 1924 he began teaching at Curtis as professor of oboe and conductor of the string orchestra. He trained many who went on to become principal oboists themselves in other major American orchestras.

Karen Tuttle identifies a very particular idea with Tabuteau, a philosophy of phrasing. According to Tuttle, one of Tabuteau’s principal beliefs was that “the bar-line is the enemy of the music,” which is an abbreviation of the idea that phrasing and the listener’s musical experience operate independently of the mensural divisions on the page. 38 Tabuteau assigned a number to each note, according to its energy level. The higher the number, the more energy the note contained. The results show the energy flow within a

37 Tuttle interview, 4 & 5 June 2001.
phrase. While Tuttle does not employ these numbers in phrasing, the same principle is the basis of her term "grouping." She often illustrates the idea not with words, but with hand gestures to show contour.

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38 Ritscher article, 87.
CHAPTER 2

“GETTING DOWN TO IT”: TEACHING PRINCIPLES FOR MUSIC-MAKING AND VIOLA PLAYING

Even for a teacher of such experience, Karen Tuttle’s pedagogy is based on an unusually broad range of principles. These ideas range from interpersonal and intangible concepts to the most specific physical motions. Overall, the operative function of her teaching philosophy is integration: our physical bodies and sound combine to serve as a conduit connecting our emotional lives with those of others. To describe these relationships, Tuttle appropriated the word ‘coordination.’ If one word could express the essence of her teaching philosophy, coordination would be the one. The word has long been in our language, but she has used the term to such a degree and with such specific implications that it has truly become her own. In her teaching then, Tuttle works to free the body and impart a deeper understanding of music’s language so as to enable students to express their emotions in a more articulate manner. In Tuttle’s view, an understanding of one’s own emotional life is required to ultimately succeed in the process. Her pedagogy strives to encompass these ambitious goals.

Fortunately, the size of the goals is more than matched by Tuttle’s enthusiasm for the learning process. Rather than give a lecture class on any particular facet of playing, she would prefer to deal hands-on with an individual student on whatever issues arise.\textsuperscript{39} The heading of this chapter is based on a Tuttle phrase “let’s get down to it;” it is a memorable lesson-opening line that shows her willingness to get involved with the unique issues a student brings.\textsuperscript{40} It is clear, in both speaking with Karen Tuttle and reading about her, that her zeal for the subjects of performance, teaching, and learning is just barely bridled. Much more than a set of abstract guidelines, her beliefs fuel her passion and zest for life.

In the ensuing sections we will examine Tuttle’s philosophy of coordination. To do

\textsuperscript{39} In her opening 90-minute presentation of the “Coordination Workshop” held June 8-10, 2001 at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Tuttle spoke to the audience for less than ten minutes before asking participants to come forward with his or her individual issues.

\textsuperscript{40} Jonathan Brown, telephone interview by author, 26 November 2001.
so, we must first discuss the emotional, musical, and physical components that will be coordinated, going from the most basic to the most specific. Because hers is an integrated system, there will necessarily be some overlap as we proceed. We will first discuss her goals in teaching and the requisites needed both to effectively learn and ultimately be successful. We will then examine the ways in which Tuttle’s perspective is informed by Wilhelm Reich’s basic philosophies. Following a further section on emotion in music we will get into the physical issues of playing: body posture, bow technique, specific hand and finger actions. At this point, we will have the groundwork in place to appreciate the concept of coordination. At the end of the chapter, we will hear how her teaching has been received through the years.

SUCCESS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Goals of Teaching

To integrate and fulfill what a healthy mind and body dictate is to live to full capacity. Few are so fortunate. Our struggle and discipline as artists is to keep open and alive the center of our feeling. We must respect and trust it profoundly, for it is our only genuine sounding board, and the only honest way in which we can project.\(^{41}\)

In the context of Tuttle’s comprehensive performance philosophy, this is perhaps the most fundamental concept. The above speaks for the importance of creativity and individuality, but the paragraph also raises a most important challenge in teaching; addressing each student as an individual. Her explanation is basic, “[to] just give them what I think is healthy and what they need...”\(^{42}\) But Tuttle’s deep interest in and love for humanity gives such a statement deeper meaning than it could have for others. Beyond what students need, she strives for responses that will make them personally happy.\(^{43}\) Because her sense of student needs is more nuanced and specific, so too are the manners in which

\(^{42}\) Tuttle, interview, 4 & 5 June 2001.
\(^{43}\) Ibid.
she addresses them. From the outset then, Tuttle’s method is built on the tenet that both the end results and their means will be unique for every student.

Karen Tuttle has said that her real goal is to teach people how to teach. In this goal, there is no doubt that she has clearly succeeded! In her interview with Weinberger, she talks about periodically testing her students by asking them to break down their viola playing to see both what they are understanding, and what they are able to articulate.44 While this technique would certainly help with any future teaching, more significant is Tuttle’s support of each student to find his or her own path to musical fulfillment. Any student who has had a good experience in self-examination and self-diagnosis would presumably encourage others to do the same.

Balance is a very important concept for her pedagogy, which she describes as “the key to almost everything.”45 For herself, Tuttle prioritizes balance in her own playing life: “My goal is to feel mentally and musically happy and in balance with the self.”46 As a teaching goal, she describes her method as “helping the student feel healthy with the instrument.”47 These two statements both refer to the relationship between the person and the instrument, and the need to think about the two as having common purposes instead of separate interests.

Requisites for Learning

As a ‘student of life’, children occupy a special place in Tuttle’s pedagogy:

Years are wasted trying to recapture the spontaneity and fluidity of a little child... A youngster...picks up an instrument for the first time. Spontaneously, he will treat it as a wonderful new toy. He will pluck and scrape, feel the hair of the bow... He has made his first contact with the instrument and it has been fun! ... Children, given a chance, have a natural love of discipline and achievement. Watch the struggle of an infant trying to turn over. Or the tenacity of a one-year-old, falling and getting up a thousand times before he

44 Weinberger, 70.
45 Tuttle, opening class lecture, Coordination Workshop, 8 June 2001, Cleveland Institute of Music, Cleveland, Ohio, tape recording.
46 Ritscher article, 90.
47 Ibid.
finds his balance and walks.\textsuperscript{48} The child’s instinct to experiment is a trait that many people apply to learning and living. Perhaps more important than the actual experimenting, however, are two conditions that allow it to happen: 1) having no fear of failure, and 2) having the freedom to think creatively. Putting an adult into the situation of the one-year-old above, self-consciousness could well prevent success. As we grow older, it is also more difficult to listen to and to trust our own feelings. Tuttle describes these developments of mind and body as “unnatural complexities: Love becomes lust, joy becomes cleverness, sorrow becomes malice...”\textsuperscript{49} There are also other important characteristics gleaned from a child’s learning process. A child has passion for the task at hand, energy to see it through, and is constantly building understanding. All three of these should grow with us as we mature. In discussing Reich-influenced principles, we will again return to lessons of youth.

Karen Tuttle firmly believes in the integrity of the viola as an instrument, separate from the violin, and it is important for her students to accept this as well.\textsuperscript{50} This specifically counters ‘switch-hitting’ violinists who would suggest that playing the viola entails identical technique to violin playing. The differences cover the range of playing technique, reflecting the physical and acoustical differences of the two instruments.

**Ingredients for Success**

Tuttle often presents her playing principles as a “list of ingredients” required for a great performing artist: discipline, creativity, facility, beautiful sound, connection to emotion,\textsuperscript{51} and the ability to excite emotion in others through projection.\textsuperscript{52} Discipline is a formalized version of concentration during experimentation (which every child has), and creativity is also evident in early development. Technical facility, connection to emotion, and

\textsuperscript{48} Tuttle article, 65.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 64-65.
\textsuperscript{50} Hanani, 310.
\textsuperscript{51} Weinberger, 70.
\textsuperscript{52} Tuttle article, 64.
projection (the ability to excite emotions in others) will be discussed in later sections. When separately asked what facet she first looks for in students, her answer was beautiful sound. "I can work on the body if they’re willing. I can spell it out and make them do it, that has happened quite a bit. Because once you have a sound that you like and can count on, you’re halfway there."53

REICHIAN CONNECTION

Wilhelm Reich has been singled out in this chapter for two reasons. First, the philosophies of Wilhelm Reich play a role on several levels of Karen Tuttle’s pedagogy. Second, the influence of these philosophies is probably the most powerful reason why Tuttle’s approach to performance has become so distinctive and widespread. In the scheme of Tuttle’s plan, Reich’s ideas deal with the emotional life and the physical body of the performer and especially how the two relate to one another. We will discuss tension and release, and emotional armoring, the basic ideas from Reich’s work, The Function of the Orgasm, and examine their effect on her teaching.54

The most fundamental Reichian concept that Karen Tuttle employs is tension and release, each of which cannot naturally exist without the other. Clearly this is not an original concept in and of itself, but the application of this idea to our emotional lives was what must have made so many people uncomfortable with Reich’s theories in the 1950’s. For Reich, the most basic example of tension and release in the human emotional experience is that of the sexual orgasm.55 For Tuttle, the verbal adaptation of this lies in the phrase, “Oh, yes!” The emotional and sexual power of the statement is unmistakable. She believes that the meaning of this phrase is the most essential communication performers must be able to

54 It is important to mention that Karen Tuttle does not purport to be schooled in Reichian theory. As she poignantly recalls, “I got a hold of The Function of the Orgasm and read the preface and said to myself, ‘this is Truth!’ But then I couldn’t go on, because I couldn’t understand what the hell he was talking about.” (KT, 3) Despite this claim, her husband is a Reichian therapist and has undoubtedly influenced her understanding.
55 Reich, 3.
convey. Tension and release also show themselves in Tuttle’s sense of posture and physical actions of playing, but the universality of the idea has previously been applied to the mechanics of playing by Dounis, one of her own influences.

First, we need to clarify how Tuttle defines ‘release’ in the context of viola playing. She has been asked several times to describe it physically:

Discrete movements of the neck, shoulders, chest, and the pelvis...are collectively referred to as a ‘release’... The aptness of this term can be appreciated from a simple experiment. If one sings a glissando of an octave interval on the consonance, ‘Ah,’ one observes that in preparation for (and simultaneous with) the shift for the low to the high note, the head tilts back slightly...If one intentionally prevents the movement of the head alone, one is immediately aware of the greater difficulty in performing the glissando. The vibrato and the smoothness of the shift are impaired and the sound is flattened or deadened. It is evident that the movement of the head- actually a yielding backward flexion of the neck- in this instance has a ‘releasing’ effect upon the throat which profoundly influences the modulation of the sounds produced.

Release movements are predominantly subtle, have a soft, yielding quality and, in those players inherently capable of them, they appear smooth and natural rather than extraneous or self-conscious.

‘Release’ is the magic word. In any kind of sport, release is actually what initiates the movement.

Babies are excellent examples of emotional tension and release, and are one of Karen Tuttle’s most evocative images. Because they have no verbal skills and sense only their own needs, “they are straight [in their emotional expression] if they are allowed to be.” As we get older, we gain more understanding of other needs in our surrounding world but our own freedom and spontaneity from infancy are qualities we need to rediscover. The emotional world of the infant is reflected directly in his or her physical body, with no lense of self-consciousness to either suppress or misguide feelings.

Karen Tuttle adopted Reich’s theory of armoring as a teaching tool, but her approach is not that of a therapist. Blockage points hinder the flow of life energy and Tuttle

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56 Brown interview.
58 Ibid.
59 Hanani, 69.
60 Tuttle article, 64-66; Tuttle interview; Weinberger 70.
aims to free these points in musical performance through the release. To illustrate, she often recounts the following tale:

I had one very bad experience with it—just with breathing and releasing the solar plexus, a student went absolutely crazy—she lay down on the floor and had a fit. Had I been a psychiatrist I would have said ‘oh, great!’ but I was scared to death! I told my husband (who is a Reichian psychiatrist) and he said, ‘You’re talking about that? You shouldn’t be, you don’t know what you’re getting into.’ And he was right; I had no business messing in that. So I have learned to go very carefully.  

As we discussed in the introduction to her principles, the physical and musical serve to transmit the emotional; ‘release’ then links one’s physical world with one’s emotional world. In playing, the physical release allows emotions to course freely and naturally through the body. Excessive tightness or rigidity prevents this flow. As a therapist does, Tuttle wants to free up these areas of the body. Also like a Reichian therapist, she believes that the roots of the issues are emotional. However, her ultimate goals are certainly different, these techniques are means to a different end.

Of the release points, Karen Tuttle identifies genitalia as most important to musical expression. “The problem is that some of the serious armoring happens in this part of the body. We’ve all been exposed to such a puritanical view of sensuality. Integrating sensuality in music is the feeling that fills the spaces between the notes, it’s what fills up a note, it is the richness of the dot. Awareness of your whole body, including the genitals, is what fills the spaces.” Sound quality is also dependent on this body area. “The sexual element that goes into playing...is incredibly strong... It’s right at the heart of a big sound.”

As the wife of a Reichian therapist, it should come as no surprise that Tuttle attributes great value to therapy. For students with confidence issues during performance,
therapy may be the most effective solution. Another potential issue most effectively addressed through therapy is breathing. "Breath-holding or jerky respiration may either prevent the release in co-ordination or...prevent it from doing its work." Restricted breathing may be relatively easy to identify, but rectifying it may be more difficult; the condition can suggest anxiety issues that should be addressed by a therapist.

EMOTION IN MUSIC

Karen Tuttle is certainly not the first advocate of expressing emotion in musical performance, but she is one of the most ardent. Both Casals and Schneider deeply influenced her perspective. The idea that music should create an emotional experience for the listener could be considered her most fundamental musical belief, the seed from which everything else musical grows. We will discuss the responsibilities that Tuttle hangs on both the composer and the performer as a result.

Given that music can excite the emotions of the audience, it is then the responsibility of the performer to make this happen. Tuttle is fond of the verb 'to move' in this scenario: "If you want to move people, you have to move yourself." If a performer expects to tap into the emotional worlds of the audience members, then he must tap into his own to do it. Tuttle often talks about the five basic emotions that we have: love, joy, sorrow, anger, and fear. She has written an 'emotions list,' which divides emotional descriptors under these five headings. (See Appendix 1) While the words are obviously organized by category, her list is neither systematic nor comprehensive. It is intended only as a teaching tool, for her students who are receptive. "I just added [on to the list] what I could think of, when something would occur to me. It's not directly [Reichian], though it is closely related. It's been very useful." The list is an aid in answering the question of what character the music has. She encourages students to have a specific emotion in mind at every point in their

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65 Ritscher article, 90.
67 Ibid.
performance.

Discussion of the music brings us to the responsibility of the composer. In order for the performer to successfully incite emotion, composers must write works that can deliver such cargo. As a playwright can write characters and roles that are either believable or not, so too can a composer write music that is convincing or unconvincing. Tuttle has clear opinions of the compositional process:

There are composers who write in such a way that it’s hard to tell what they’re [emotionally] after, because it’s not clear. If you cannot find it, then chances are that this is not going to be a successful piece to present.\(^{70}\)

Great composers do not write in the anticipation of teachers eulogizing their dots, or of musicologists writing thousands of books of systematized study of the science, history, form, and methods of these compositions. Composers’ great works come from brain and core—and a deeply felt contact with rhythm, harmony, architecture, and environment.\(^{71}\)

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PLAYING

In this section, we will examine various physical playing principles that Karen Tuttle employs in her teaching. The most basic tenet to her technical outlook is comfort, that playing the viola should strive to be free and natural. Tuttle’s physical ideas embody the concept of tension and release, and the balance between them. The natural-playing Primrose and the physiologist Dounis figure heavily into her technical ideas. We will start with posture, then move into specific actions of playing. As these principles become more specific, we will focus on certain aspects more than on others. As with a tree, it is much clearer and more informative to describe the trunk, limbs, and a few leaves rather than attempting to describe each individual leaf.

Posture

Karen Tuttle has a keen understanding of playing posture that goes literally from

\(^{69}\) Ibid.  
\(^{70}\) Ibid.  
\(^{71}\) Tuttle article, 67.
foot to head. As physical language is an important form of musical performance, the body must be positioned in such a way as to allow freedom of expression. Tuttle’s first rule in posture is balance: balance ensures alignment, which should enable the greatest range of body movement, i.e. the most specifically expressive body movements. Her ideas of posture can be divided into two basic categories, those postures that are universally good for everyone and those which are specific to the individual player. The dividing line between these two issues is the instrument itself.

Before each player picks up the viola, Tuttle looks for the same posture starting with the feet. For left-handed people the right foot will go slightly back, and vice versa for those right-handed.\(^{72}\) In either case, the feet are slightly separated and planted firmly. The feet should remain balanced from heel to toe, and the resultant feeling should be “centered and grounded rather than hovering or tenuous.”\(^{73}\) The calves should be active for balancing, but not so active as to cause the heels to come off the ground. The knees are unlocked and ‘ready to spring.’ From the knees up, it is important to be aware of the body’s alignment over the feet. The pelvis, chest, shoulders, neck, and head should be in line supporting each other, particularly in the plane running through the sternum and spine (the ‘side view’).

“When I see someone hunched over, I explain that gravity is working against them if they carry themselves this way. The shoulder should be back and the chest area should be open, without looking like a soldier- otherwise you’re creating a different set of problems.”\(^{74}\) Finally, it is important to have a loose stomach. All of this positioning is essentially a way in which to ‘start from scratch,’ a way to free the musculature and enable a maximum range of motion. “With this instrument, try to look as natural as you can.”\(^{75}\) Without awareness of this natural body balance, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the most natural position while playing- the body will not know that for which it strives.

With the viola comes tailoring of posture. Length of neck and width of shoulders

\(^{72}\) Tuttle interview, 4 & 5 June 2001.
\(^{73}\) Weinberger, 70.
\(^{74}\) Ibid, 69.
will affect the optimal position, but balance is the basic premise that Tuttle uses as a guide. Balance is achieved by keeping the left shoulder down and ‘cuddling’ the instrument with the neck rather than trying to capture it with the chin. In cuddling the instrument as opposed to the chin-grip, the differences seen by an observer would be 1) the head will be almost facing straight ahead instead of down the length of the viola, and 2) the neck muscles will be much more at ease. Cuddling serves to balance the head by using the head’s natural weight to hold the viola, instead of relying on the neck, jaw, and shoulder muscles to pinch. The most obvious adjustments must be made based on the individual player’s neck length. Some players will find that they can cuddle and balance the instrument comfortably with only a sponge to prevent slipping between the shoulder and viola. For those with longer necks, Tuttle suggests the use of high chin rests and shoulder rests, although some of these often can be eliminated as the player becomes accustomed to the balance. The upper and lower arm should be in a neutral position, with the elbow at a ‘hanging’ angle between the shoulder and the hand. The wrist should work from a naturally straight position.

Karen Tuttle’s principles of holding the bow are also highly dependent on the individual’s physiology. She seeks what she terms a balanced bow hold. As a general rule, she advocates holding the bow mainly with the ring created by the middle finger and thumb, the latter of which should be malleable. The first, third, and fourth fingers serve to balance. As another general rule, “the angle formed by the axis of the fingers and that of the stick is most natural at around 60 degrees. However, this constantly changes as the bow is drawn up and down.” How deeply these fingers contact the stick and how far they are spread apart depends on the anatomy of the individual hand.

**Specific Playing Actions**

Going hand in hand with Tuttle’s ambitious and comprehensive goals to encourage

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71 Tuttle opening class lecture.
76 Ritscher article, 89.
77 Dew article (October 1993): 939.
development of the ‘whole’ person is a comprehensive mechanical method by which to physically play the viola. As we have so often seen, the principles of tension/release and balance are present at every stage. However, at this level her techniques also promote tactile awareness, ‘feeling’ instead of just ‘doing.’ The physical release is essential at this level of technique because it allows the performer greater sensitivity and awareness. To prove this, think about how one would touch anything to understand its physical properties. Tension in the hand prevents one from learning all that one could from touch. Even to check an item’s hardness, the common test would be to squeeze as opposed to clench. Unreleased body tension divorces the player from tactile sensation, and Karen Tuttle has developed her releasing techniques to prevent this situation. These releases are not designed to banish tension from the body, but rather to ensure that the body is free.

---Bowling---

The first of two primary goals in bowing is to create a ‘big’ sound. For Tuttle, ‘big’ means penetrating and focused, so a big sound can occur at any dynamic. The key to this type of sound is to use natural armweight (as opposed to muscle pressure) as often as possible. Tuttle connects the weight of the back with the bowstroke, particularly the upbow. The danger here is that students, in trying to involve the weight of the back in the upstroke, will mistakenly raise their shoulder in an effort to ‘extend’ the back muscle. For fear of this misunderstanding Tuttle tends to avoid telling students to “get their backs into it,” and instead asks them to release their chest muscles and be free in the armpit. When the shoulder and arm are in the correct positions, body weight transfers to the bow naturally. The shoulder should be relaxed, and should not move vertically in the course of playing. The arm itself should be positioned in such a way that the elbow is always above the wrist,

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78 Tuttle has a very particular choreography for basic bowing that integrates the back, shoulder, elbow, wrist, and fingers. Dr. Robert Dew’s article “Instinctive responses 2” gives an excellent, diagnostic description of the sequence of mechanical events that occur in this process.

79 Dew (October 1993): 936.
in various degrees, throughout the bowstroke. This relationship ensures a steady natural weight from the elbow to the wrist.

The other basic goal of Tuttle’s bowing technique is to be able to produce a truly sustained legato. The focus, then, is on sustaining intensity over the changes of bow direction. “The frog and the tip are the parts of the bow where the notes are the most emotionally significant.”

Her technique surrounding changes in bow direction, particularly the sustaining of intensity around the tip, is another distinguishing factor to her teaching.

In the process of the down bow, Tuttle creates another term to describe an original concept: the “repull.” The need for such a technique is based on the assumption that, because of the physics of arm and bow weight, sustaining sound is most difficult at the tip of the bow. Beyond only sustaining the sound, “the repull even makes possible a rise in intensity and volume where it is ordinarily becoming most difficult to produce.”
The repull begins to work on the down bow at the balance point. At this point, the fingers are still somewhat flexed from the bow change at the frog. Just after the balance point, the fingers flex further which “gives more potential distance to the repull, like a cat crouching before springing.”
The repull is like a second start to the downbow, as the name implies; in the upper half of the down bow, the fingers release again as they started to do in the early stage of the down bow. As the fingers open, the shoulder joint and wrist supports the motion: the wrist pronates (turns down and out) and follows the fingers in the same direction, while the shoulder joint makes wrist pronation much easier by raising the elbow.

Tuttle also describes the feeling in the hand another way: “as you approach the tip, the balance shifts through the hand. When you feel the first finger taking paramount pressure, you feel the pull across the knuckles towards the fourth finger and then the fingers

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80 Weinberger, 70.
81 Ritscher article, 89.
82 Dew (October 1993): 939.
83 Ibid.
straighten out towards the tip.”

The actual change in direction occurs as the wrist and fingers finish their extension. The arm “goes under” and the back then initiates the upbow motion, which is followed in sequence by the shoulder joint, wrist, and the fingers. By involving so many joints and releasing them throughout the change in bow direction, this bowing method again allows for greater tactile awareness in the process. The repull, in giving renewed life to the down stroke, allows for a much fuller, more intentional, and therefore more organic bow change.

In bowing, Tuttle divides her various types of strokes into two basic categories: détaché and tremolo. These are differentiated according to the joint that initiates the stroke. The détaché family of bowings, which includes détaché, martelé, and ‘balanced spiccato’ (what could also be called arm spiccato), is initiated by the elbow. The tremolo bowings include tremolo and spiccato tremolo (wrist spiccato), and are initiated by the wrist. It is important to note that, in defining bowstrokes, none are initiated by the shoulder joint.

Bowing motion includes both the weight of the back and the angling of the shoulder joint, while the strokes themselves are made from the elbow and below.

--Left Hand

Left hand action embraces many of the ideals we have encountered in other aspects of playing. In her desire to make the mechanism understandable for students, she has dissected the various functions of the fingers- placement on the string, vibrato, and shifting- to allow for more specific awareness.

In the placement of the left hand fingers on the fingerboard, Tuttle’s most basic tenet is the independent feeling of each finger. Independence in this case implies an individual sense of weight and balance. An interesting part of her finger action is the application of tension and release. She asks students to “plop” the fingers to the string,

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84 Ritscher, 88-89.
85 “Going under” is another Tuttle original phrase: it describes a downward scooping motion made with the hand and forearm across the bowchange at the tip.
which is a way of releasing them. ("Plop" is another term for which Tuttle has created a specific definition.) This technique encourages minimum finger pressure on the fingerboard, which is otherwise a common area that sustains unnecessary tension. The finger motion to the string should come from the base finger joint, which therefore also takes responsibility for where the finger falls, i.e. intonation.

With intonation addressed primarily by the base joint knuckles, the tip of the finger is then free to create the impulse for vibrato. Here again we see the value she attaches to physical sensation: "You have to have a love affair with the fingerboard. By that, I mean you have to feel tactilely into the string with your left-hand pads. The vibrato is a delicious sensation."(Ritscher, 88) Accordingly, Tuttle usually teaches vibrato by demonstrating on students' arms, as if their arm was the viola neck. In addition to showing the student what vibrato looks like, this technique essentially gives the student a photographic negative of vibrato's feel, since the student's arm takes the role of the viola.

To traverse the fingerboard, Karen Tuttle teaches two distinct types of shifting. The more elaborate of the two she calls an expressive shift. In this type of shift up, the player begins the motion by releasing the wrist and bringing the base finger joints into contact with the neck. The motion is then from point-to-point, i.e. not from position to position with a consistent hand frame. The extra contact with the base joints of the fingers is to promote a tactile feeling of the shift. To shift down, one should "come back into the palm of the hand."(Ritscher, 88) Shifting into the palm encourages the finger to play on the pad, as well as keeping the wrist in a more neutral position. The second type of shift she calls a scale shift: it is faster, going from place to place by lifting the fingers and just relocating. This shift relies more on memory rather than tactile information; in performing it is a necessary element, though not preferable.\(^\text{87}\)

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\(^{86}\) Ibid, 90.
\(^{87}\) Ibid.
"COORDINATION"

When I first realized [coordination], I burst into tears, put my viola down, and thought, 'My God, I'm onto something here.' It was one of the moments in my life that said this is right, this is Truth.88

Having looked at the basic ideas needed to understand it, we can now turn to Tuttle's most distinctive concept, coordination. Her favorite dictionary definition of the term is a state or relation of harmonious adjustment or functioning.89 In her pedagogy this definition still holds true, but the context becomes quite particular. Earlier, we described Tuttle's teaching goal as integrating our physical bodies with music so as to be able to emotionally connect with other people. In Tuttle's language, 'coordination' describes the performer's process of harmoniously connecting the physical body with musical intention so as to express emotion. Coordination requires each of these parts of our lives to function fully. We will now examine several of the principal connections that coordination strives to make. Coordination is principally concerned with making connections between the physical and the musical, so as to allow the emotional to be expressed: the physical and musical set the stage for the role of emotion. The chief currency of the physical world, with regard to playing an instrument, is in the physical releases. The most significant examples of coordination then are the connections of body releases both to music in general and to bowing.

To understand how physical releases function in music, Tuttle first puts them into a sequence as a "circular system going this way. [Drawing a circle, through the head down the body, then curving out through the pelvis in front of the body back up to the head.]"90 The physical release chain starts from the top of the body and works its way down. The depth to which it reaches in the body is dictated by the emotional significance of the musical event.91 The 'event' can be either during playing or as a preparation to play. The release is usually a way to sustain through or to connect notes. For instance, a neck release could help

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90 Tuttle interview, 4 & 5 June 2001.
fill out the second half of a note by giving the player an increased sensitivity to potential
nuance. Preceding a bow change with a shoulder or stomach release can help the player
become more aware of the line when it is most important. While Tuttle does have
suggestions for what type of physical release will work where, the solutions are ultimately
specific to the individual.

Tuttle's application of coordination strongly affects bow technique; the goal is to
enable maximum expression. By this, she means the ability to create nuance; not only
between notes, but within notes as well. Her term "to fill" describes the shaping that should
occur within a single note, in order to further inflect the musical line. Tuttle also identifies
certain points that most need releases. The first two precede the changes in bow direction at
either end of the bow. At the tip she prescribes a release in the neck, which "adds
assurance...in that the desperate feeling of 'running out of gas' is avoided." 92 This release
is a continuation of the repull, though it works in the opposing direction. The release before
the change at the frog takes place in the chest and neck. While the neck opens back at the
tip, at the frog it softens forward, as one would bring an infant in to hold. The other two
places Tuttle looks for physical releases in bowing are at the balance point, going in both
directions. The releases here should both involve the shoulders and the chest: she often
describes the up bow release as a 'sigh.'

In coordinating the hands together, Tuttle gives the right hand priority. "First you
must really feel the pull of the bow, otherwise the string coordination is meaningless. But
with the pull and repull, you feel a counter-reaction in the left-hand intensity." 93 Though
this might seem only applicable to the type of vibrato, expressive shifting would react to the
pull of the bow as well.

The concept of coordination has application in chamber music as well as solo
playing, particularly for the violist.

91 Ibid.
93 Ritscher article, 89.
[T]he viola is a link between all the voices and if you move right, you can be a very profound influence. When you move in a natural way, people will gravitate towards you... You should sit on the inside [of the quartet], manipulating, setting things up for the violinist and cellist, which you do by pacing and with your mood. You crawl inside their skin-- that's really the function of the violist, crawling inside the skin of whoever has the solo.  

For all the players of a chamber group, the physical movements that allow good ensemble playing are releases. But the movements are not necessarily to visually lead others: the motion can allow the individual to connect to "the impulse which moves all the individuals at the same instant. It is like the exquisite unison of a school of fish changing direction." 

RECEPTION OF HER TEACHING

Karen Tuttle's teaching methods have not always enjoyed the acceptance that they do today. In her early years at Curtis, she encountered resistance. "It was very difficult at first, because [my teaching] brought up things that aren't talked about. I was all gung ho for it, I had found the answers to a lot of stuff...people made fun of me, mostly people who were very inhibited themselves." The 1950's were an era of the string virtuoso, and these were the people who gave her the hardest time. The virtuoso-teacher (such as Piatigorsky, Heifetz, Elman) didn't talk about these sorts of things, his primary method of teaching was by example. As Tuttle describes it, this type of person 'didn't want to know' what he was doing for fear that the knowledge would ruin their intuition. The successful ones all incorporated the coordination and physical releasing she espoused, however. She even caused a stir in the Curtis administration: "finally I was called into the President's office and was told, basically, to shut up. And I did." As a result, she started teaching more by example and requiring more technical work. For a time afterward, she would only discuss the deeper issues with individual students who expressed interest. Still, a student told Tuttle once that people made fun of her, walking around with their bodies loose and heads flopping around. Tuttle's response: "At least they're hopefully a little more relaxed."

The Galamian School of violin playing provides a striking contrast to Tuttle's manner with students. Shortly after World War II, Ivan Galamian began teaching at the

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94 Hanani, 312.
95 Dew (September 1993): 838.
Juilliard School and quickly developed a famously dictatorial teaching style. He insisted on his specific musical interpretations, complete with his bowings and fingerings. While heavy-handed, his students raised the level of technical accuracy in violin playing and began winning the most prestigious violin competitions of the time, including the Leventritt Award, the Tchaikovsky, Queen Elizabeth, and Carl Flesch Competitions. His method brings mixed reactions from Tuttle. "The emphasis was on technique rather than emotional output. It was too bad—I thought that was a bad emotional influence, though technically it was excellent." A purely technical approach cannot possibly address the emotional issues of both the music and the student, which for Tuttle are so important to develop. She recalls a train trip she took with Galamian once, a story that tells as much about her energy as it does about him: "...I told him that I wanted to talk about how he taught. 'Oh please don't...I'm taking a train...' he responded (told by Tuttle with a heavy Russian accent). I said, 'Yes, but this is important. I want to know if you talk about the body in terms of crying or sex... ' He did this [a blank, expressionless face], and I knew that was it."

Though our culture has become much more open to discussing emotional issues, it is still uncommon to find instrumental teachers who will address them. Besides her former students Tuttle finds a kinship with teachers who were born and taught in Russia, mostly because of their volatility, their ability to freely express themselves. Her favorite example is Alexander Schneider, with whom she played in the Schneider Quartet. There is still a difference, however, between people who are able to express their own emotions and those who are interested in talking about them in a teaching environment.

As mentioned above, Tuttle's manner of teaching coordination has changed over the years. For various reasons, she has relied increasingly on teaching coordination through demonstrating. As we noted in the section on Wilhelm Reich, she sometimes got overly involved with the students' inner lives. Also, she remembers having too many

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96 Tuttle interview, 4 & 5 June 2001. All Tuttle quotations of this section are from these interviews.
misunderstandings. "Those that don’t understand it are left with physical movement that are disconnected from the musical ideas." Viola-based coordination concepts keep the priorities clear. One aspect of her own maturity has actually made it easier to teach coordination:

When I was younger [30's] and teaching a lot, I couldn't be as free because I was pretty. The male students would flirt with me- not in a sexual way- just that they thought I was pretty, and they would act like men with a pretty girl. That was a little difficult- and then I got gray hair and things changed. It was much easier, because I was either mama or grandma! Now it's nothing- if somebody comes in, I start talking about using the whole body when you play. If they are really open I can get to the genitals, and what it's all about, without embarrassment.

The musical world has become ever more competitive through orchestral auditions, but this has not influenced Tuttle's teaching. She continues to deal with the individual on his or her own terms. "I don’t think about conductors when I’m teaching a person. I just give them what I think is healthy, what they need, and give them confidence. But I don’t do it for conductors.” This attitude may not automatically produce legions of orchestral violists: by having their needs addressed in their lessons however, students will hopefully be more satisfied with their professional lives in the future, whatever those may be.

One final, remarkable reflection on Karen Tuttle’s teaching career is that, for over a half century, she has worked privately with our country’s, and the world’s, most talented and dedicated young violists. It is clear that the personal connections have been very important to her. “I still love teaching, and that is because I’ve had these kinds of students, ones that are willing to try things.”
CHAPTER 3
INFLUENCE OF IDEAS

"Karen Tuttle has a passion and love for teaching, she says it is what keeps her young. I see that now in myself." -Susan Dubois

As a teacher for over fifty years, Karen Tuttle has touched thousands of lives directly. While this is no small feat in itself, her influence extends farther still. Her former students have achieved great recognition as performers and teachers themselves. They are heard in orchestras of every size around the world, including title chair players in America's top orchestras; in string quartets of regional, national, and international reputation; and as soloists, which is particularly unusual for the instrument. If her students' successes as performers are impressive, then as teachers they are astounding. Her former students teach at every level of education, including many of this country's most prestigious music schools. Tuttle is particularly proud of this, and she has said that it is her main goal to teach people how to teach.98

As we have seen, Tuttle's teaching principles range from the most exact and physical to the most general and emotional. In addition some of her ideas apply uniformly, while others are adapted more specifically to the individual. For instance, the posture of the body would be more or less uniform from student to student, as would the basic mechanics of left-hand finger action. Exactly how you hold the bow, what the physical releases look like, or how your emotions connect with the music will vary from player to player. Of course, students naturally have different strengths and different needs in performance.

To examine Tuttle's influence, nine former students were interviewed. Each of these people has a commitment to teaching, based on the rationale that those who teach regularly would have a more familiar relationship with Tuttle's material over time. Of her former students who teach, Tuttle says "they each have their own personalities and take it as far as

they can. They’re very honest about it, the knowledge comes out in many ways.”99 These people each began their teaching careers differently, and it is interesting to note that most of those interviewed were not directly encouraged by Tuttle to go into the field. Steve Ansell and Jonathan Brown each described the teaching influence he felt from Tuttle. Ansell said that “[p]art of the reason I teach now, besides the fact that I enjoy it, is that I feel a responsibility to hand down what was taught to me. Karen’s influence is one of those things that I hand down, in my own way of course!” Brown stated it this way: “I think that as long as I have wanted to play, I have wanted to teach... [w]hile she may not have influenced my desire to teach, I am all the more grateful to have worked with her now that I am teaching.”

The chapter presents an account of my interviews with Tuttle’s former students.100 Each was asked a variety of questions about their experiences, and the effect Tuttle has had on their own teaching, playing, and living. While there is a range of opinion among those interviewed on every topic, it becomes clear that each is deeply grateful for the time spent working with Karen Tuttle. We will go from topic to topic, rather than from person to person. The goal is not to be comprehensive, but to observe trends and the range of viewpoints. The first section is titled “Tuttle as teacher,” in which we will learn about former students’ experiences in learning from her. The second section, “Tuttle as ‘teacher of teachers,’” looks closely at the concept of coordination, and how it is variously used in teaching. The final section puts these experiences in perspective to see what, on the whole, makes Tuttle the distinctive master teacher that she is. Through the responses of her students, Tuttle’s legacy in the realm of teaching becomes much clearer.

Below is a short introduction to each of the interviewees:

**Steven Ansell** is principal viola of the Boston Symphony, violist of the Muir Quartet, and teaches through Boston University. Though a student of Michael Tree at Curtis, Ansell took lessons privately with Tuttle as well during his first undergraduate year, in 1972. He first learned about her in high school by listening to the Schneider Quartet’s Haydn recordings; he also knew several Tuttle students, and was very impressed with the result of her teaching.

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100 Unless noted otherwise, all quotations in this chapter are from these interviews.
Jonathan Brown currently studies with Thomas Riebl at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, while serving as his teaching assistant. Brown studied with Tuttle as a Masters student at The Juilliard School starting in 1998. He first learned about Tuttle’s pedagogy through his undergraduate teacher at the University of Illinois (Michael McLelland), and was inspired by watching a masterclass she gave in 1997.

Susan Dubois currently teaches at the University of North Texas. Dubois studied with Tuttle at The Juilliard School for a doctorate starting in 1991, acting as her teaching assistant during the second half of study. Dubois met Tuttle briefly by playing for her in a masterclass, and eventually decided to study with her by recommendation of her former teacher, Donald McInnes.

Daniel Foster is principal viola of the National Symphony Orchestra and teaches at the University of Maryland. Foster studied with Tuttle at Curtis starting in 1991 for graduate work. His first experience with her was playing in a masterclass she gave at Oberlin. He was very familiar with Tuttle’s ideas beforehand, as both of his Oberlin viola teachers had worked with her (Jeffrey Irvine and Lynne Ramsey).

Jeffrey Irvine is currently teaching at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He studied with Tuttle for two summers at Aspen starting in 1978, while already holding a teaching position at Wichita State University. During his undergraduate study at the Philadelphia Music Academy, Irvine became familiar with Tuttle’s philosophies through her chamber music coachings.

Kim Kashkashian is an international soloist and teacher at the New England Conservatory. Kashkashian studied with Tuttle starting in 1970 at the Peabody Conservatory, then went on for a masters degree with her at the Philadelphia Music Academy. Kashkashian was already studying at Peabody when Tuttle began teaching there; she knew nothing about her beforehand. When Tuttle arrived she felt very fortunate, but didn’t realize how fortunate at the time.

Lynne Ramsey serves as first assistant principal viola of the Cleveland Orchestra and teaches privately. She studied with Tuttle for one year in 1979, during her tenure with the Pittsburgh Symphony. Ramsey was on the brink of a career change when she heard a performance given by a Tuttle student; this experience alone caused her to pursue study with Tuttle.

Karen Ritscher currently teaches at both Rice University’s Shepherd School and the Mannes College of Music. Ritscher first worked with Tuttle at the Philadelphia Music Academy in 1969, on a two-year hiatus from her undergraduate study at Eastman. Ritscher first heard about Tuttle from her high school teacher, who praised her as both a teacher and a person. She continues to play for Tuttle periodically.

Carol Rodland teaches at Arizona State University. She completed both bachelors and a masters degree with Tuttle at Juilliard, starting in 1987. During her masters study, she also served as Tuttle’s teaching assistant. Plagued with tension problems, Rodland was on the verge of quitting the viola when she heard about Karen Tuttle’s abilities to solve such issues.
TUTTLE THE TEACHER

The most valuable time studying with a teacher is in the private lesson. In most situations, the balance of the relationship falls somewhere between that of friends and that of mentor-student. While the most effective balance depends on the comfort of both parties, the student, in deciding to pursue study, is presumably acquainted with the teacher’s style; the teacher also presumably has the benefit of greater knowledge through experiment. As between any two people, the relationship between teacher and student is complex. In this section, we will look into various aspects of studying with Tuttle. In the brief biographies above, we learned how each came to know about her. We will continue from there by getting into the style and routine of their lessons, and the lasting impact these lessons have had on those interviewed as players.

In any relationship, the unexpected often arises early on. Some did not register surprise; her style of teaching suited them naturally, or they were so impressed that there was no room for surprise. This could also be called a shock of recognition, or identification. Rodland said “it’s hard to say, because it felt so right on a personal and musical level.”

Others had more specific surprises as they started to work with Tuttle. One issue was her pedagogical flexibility, which was more accommodating than Brown or Foster expected. Foster responded, “She gave me the option of working on her stuff, or not working on her stuff-- we could work on coordination, or we could just talk about the music. I wasn’t expecting that--I didn’t know if she thought that I might be resistant to it, but that’s what I was interested in working on.” Most surprising to Irvine was his performance in lessons. “I always played better in lessons than I did at home. Somehow, I felt it was because she was so strongly behind me. That she believed in me and had confidence that I could do it.”

Tuttle’s direct manner also took some by surprise. Dubois remembers the first lesson they had together:

My manner was very formal, and I was physically and musically trying hard to do everything ‘right.’ She got out of her chair and walked over to
me, put her hand on my chest and tried to push me over! My body was very stiff and I immediately lost my balance. She was trying to make the point that my playing posture was very rigid. As I now know, especially with my study of martial arts, if you are at ease in your body and feel a low center of gravity, you can move more freely. If someone were to try pushing you over, as Tut did, you would not lose your balance. Tut just came up and said, “Look honey, this is how it needs to be, and this is how you are.” Also, when I was trying to release or soften my wrist, she would come over and poke it while I was playing to test it, or would pull my left thumb back to make sure that I was not squeezing the neck of the instrument.

Having known nothing about her before, Kashkashian responded in the following manner:

Everything was surprising! Her entire approach was quite unusual, and completely new in its concept for me. Before studying with her, I had never considered the possibility that playing the viola could feel good. Of course she insists on that, so the entire premise was an eye-opener for me. It took some time before I could really understand-- but I think that is true for everybody, because there are so many layers and levels to what she teaches.

We have various ways of communicating with each other, the most common being speech and action. In a musical lesson, action translates into demonstration on the instrument. Interviewees reflected variously on the most effective forms of communication Tuttle used in their lessons. Dubois:

Initially, Tuttle would verbalize almost everything. I'm a visual learner, so if I asked for clarification she would then demonstrate on her instrument. She was very capable of verbally describing what she wanted, but some concepts of coordination are very difficult to put into language. In this case, 'a picture is worth a thousand words.' Her demonstrations really made the concepts clear.

In addition to verbal and musical communication, her students identified the power of her body language and physicality. As Brown recounts:

Her verbal explanations tended to be helpful, once you got the idea of what certain phrases meant...She also demonstrated...and was very good at physically imitating what I was doing, in contrast to what she was looking for. Ultimately; I learned the most from her physical demonstrations, her gesture, and the faces she made. I remember especially playing Bach for her-- once it was memorized I would play while watching her, and she would guide me through with her facial expressions. That was extremely interesting.

Foster also remembers the importance of physical communication:

I found that she did very little of either [demonstration or verbal communication]...Verbally, it didn't seem that easy for her to describe what she was doing, and she rarely, if ever, played...It was more by will power, a
little physical pushing and pulling, gestures—"it should feel this way (making a gesture)," and then a lot of trial and error—"no, that wasn’t it, yes, that was it, no, that wasn’t it."... She tried to get directly to the physical motion side—again, not by playing...almost how I would imagine a dancer, who didn’t describe but demonstrated without actually dancing.

Having studied with her at a different point in Tuttle’s life, Ritscher had a somewhat different experience:

In the early years she would play a lot—she was performing then, and was usually in shape... I would copy and she would say, "no, like this, no, like this." Everything was very hands-on, so there was a lot of physical communication too through poking. She would explain things, but it was never in a way that I could have repeated to someone else. Recently she has become much more articulate verbally. I’ve noticed that, in the past few years, she can talk about it in classes clearly.

Rodland identifies another way in which Tuttle communicated, albeit indirectly:

She didn’t play a lot in lessons, and she played less when I returned for my masters. She would demonstrate filling up a note, but it was mostly talking. Maybe most important was the feeling you got, once you walked into her room, that she loved and respected you as a person. That immediately created the safe environment necessary to lower the personal walls, and do the kind of work you do with her.

Speech itself can take two basic forms in teaching, either as discussion or lecture. Students experienced Tuttle’s use of the two during lessons similarly. Questions she would ask the student were primarily limited to issues of character, e.g. “What do you think the character of this music is?” Other than that, she would give her own perspective on what was successful and what was less so. She encouraged questions from students, and all remember this as an important part of their experience. Dubois gives this account:

Early on, she tended to lecture. I would try to mentally understand her concepts, but I tended not to ask questions--I would just take it in and try to figure it out... At the last lesson of my first year though, something clicked. After that I asked many more questions, for my own understanding and eventually for teaching as her assistant. She would always say that she was learning just as much as we students were. Tut wanted to know what we had learned, and was always open to a better way of explaining a concept of coordination--in this way, she invited discourse.

In the previous chapter, Tuttle’s treatment of the individual was described as a fundamental teaching principle. The sections following dealt with many aspects of playing which are applied to every student, however. In describing how Tuttle incorporated both of
these ideas into her teaching, Rodland puts it most succinctly: "She addressed exactly what I needed in that moment, and reacted completely spontaneously to what was going on right under her nose-- I loved that." Brown speaks of the dichotomy of these two approaches:

She dealt with my own individual issues in a universal way, if that makes any sense. She has...principles about playing the viola, and also about what music means. For the most part, I believe these principles 100%...All of these principles she works on...with every student. I continue to gain from her, even though the individual result may be different than she would want them to be. She teaches universal issues, and through them individuals can find their own personalities.

The routine of lessons was described quite similarly by all. Specific technical issues might be addressed, outside of a musical context, at the beginning of study. The pattern that everyone eventually fell into was a simple one: they would come to their lessons and play repertoire. It was in this way that Tuttle liked to work best.

When asked about the particular manner in which they prepared for lessons, all essentially were working to apply her specific coordination ideas to their current repertoire. Ritscher remembers Tuttle expecting four hours of practice daily from students; if you weren’t prepared, she preferred that you cancel. "She just assumed that you were practicing four hours a day, because that’s what she did." Ramsey’s description of her preparatory process is particularly fleshed out:

I prepared coordination-- by the time I studied with her, I already learned the notes of a reasonably wide repertoire. So in preparing, I would take all of the coordination apart so that I could integrate the ideas and make them second nature. I would, for instance, work on only plopping and slurring: then repulls; then neck and stomach releases; then I would put them all together with the metronome on the lowest setting and work it up... This process takes a long time, but it was very helpful to me...It gave me the freedom to say what I needed to say with the music...

People had different experiences with choosing the repertoire studied, and seemed to fall roughly into two groups. Tuttle was more specific in suggesting repertoire for those students who studied with her earlier in her career, as well as those students who were younger when they studied with her. Older students tended to choose their own pieces. That being said, most report working on very similar repertoire with Tuttle: Bach Suites, Brahms E-Flat Sonata, Hindemith Sonata Op. 11/4, and Telemann and Walton Concerti. Ritscher
saw, "I can't teach pieces like Hindemith [Op. 11/4] and the Brahms Sonatas without remembering every single thing she told me. It was so explicit, the voice is still there."

Dubois remembers in particular her experience with Brahms E-Flat Sonata. "[It was] the first piece we worked on together... Looking at the part now, it looks like a roadmap—marks for the neck release, arrows for phrase direction, roller coaster curves going to or through notes, and undulating mountains and valleys to remind me to fill up notes." In terms of repertoire associations, most connect the Bach Suites and music from the Romantic era with her.

As we learned in the previous chapter, the emotion of music is a guiding principle for Tuttle's musical ideas. Though she reiterates that she is not a therapist, a lesson can tread on this ground as she and a student discuss the emotional connection to a given piece. A few spoke with her regularly about personal issues; most only spoke of these things occasionally, and some were steadfastly against it. Brown recounts it the following way:

We dealt with them a little bit regularly. I know that there were other students that definitely had very emotional, personal discussions with her. Sometimes she really surprised me in this arena, she could come up with theories about people! But she would also make very astute observations. I always got the impression that, as much as she loved to 'dive in,' she was also very wary. As far as [personal] emotional issues in the music, I remember playing the C Minor Bach Suite for her— we used a 'method acting' approach to the music. For this piece, she asked what sort of tragedy would I imagine this to be, and how would it feel? Going through those emotions in myself, then recreating them in the music. In that sense, emotional issues were always in the forefront of lessons.

Dubois gives another perspective on the question:

I didn't approach such issues in lessons. Working on releases can trigger past memories, but this wasn't the case for me. She would talk about the importance of 'living life'— for example the joy of childbirth, or of falling in love. She is always relating things to falling in love. The more experiences you have, the more you can identify with the physical sensation of the emotion. Working on releases has allowed me to embody musical characters— for me, this doesn't depend so much on my personal emotional life, but for some people I think it does.

Occupying such an important place in Tuttle's principles, it was interesting to hear how generally cautious Tuttle has been in bringing up Reich and his theories in lessons. Many people only discussed Reich in passing, usually due to her husband's occupation.
The few who discussed Reich with her clearly did so because of their own interest. Though not interviewed together, Irvine's and Dubois' responses dovetail nicely. Irvine:

She didn't mention Reich, but I used to go hiking with her husband Morty. I would ask him about Reich and how he treated patients, and then began to see how it was connected with what she taught. He suggested that various issues from one's past could manifest themselves in the form of physical tension. I have a couple of stories I tell students to illustrate the connection— it is very important to be aware of it as one works on releasing.

Dubois continues:

Tut warned me of the emotional issues that can come up through coordination work. As Tut's assistant, I once worked with a student on releasing her weight through the bow arm. She was trying to "melt" into the string, which we managed to achieve through breathing and body movement. When she was able to let go, she realized that she was no longer in control of her right arm, and that scared her. The student described a very real wave of unease going through her body— Tut related this phenomenon to the feeling of childbirth, but I can't vouch for that! But it was proof positive that working on physical releases can involve more than just the physical body, and Reich's theories certainly support that.

While Tuttle has said that her goal is to teach people how to teach, she achieves this by providing lasting inspiration to her students as performers. Ansell describes her continuing influence on his playing:

Great teachers all continue to inspire in the same way— they impart knowledge that is essential, that touches upon the heart of whatever the matter is. Karen did that— she went right to the core of the music and right to the core of how you could play. That's just it, she was quite unique in that way. I always left my lessons with a real feeling of elation, that I had found someone who spoke the truth. What she said, and how she said it, just seemed right. Her teaching influences me daily. In fact, I learned more about the physical playing of the viola from her than I did from anybody.

Irvine and Foster both describe a process of "putting it all together" that has stayed with them, a perspective on what they had previously learned. Foster:

Studying with her was when everything came together for me, all the disparate aspects of what she was talking about. It all came down to projecting emotion, that's what it was all about— that was the sole purpose in playing... She managed to make the point, without sounding oversimplified as it can be, that it's about communicating, without cheapening the importance of excellent technique. She did not only suggest this as a general principle— she would talk about how you could achieve it, on a note-to-note level.

Irvine describes her lasting influence on his playing this way:
She was my last teacher, and was completely different from those with whom I had previously studied. I studied with several other excellent teachers—Karen gave me the tools to put it all together musically and physically; it allowed me to develop and let go in a way that I hadn’t been able to do before. I could get closer to my potential by using what she taught me—still trying!

Brown and Rodland refer to Tuttle’s encouragement for individual searching.

Brown:

I remember her common phrase: ‘getting down to it.’ It wasn’t meant in the sense of a bottom line, but rather as encouragement and commitment to looking at yourself honestly—seeing what’s there, what’s not working, what’s at the heart of the music, what mean the most, and why you are playing the piece. That serves as lasting motivation.

Rodland remains inspired by Tuttle because “she does things for the right reasons. She has the love and respect for humanity along with a deep love of music.”

Kashkashian identifies Tuttle’s approach as the source of her lasting inspiration:

Once you accept the premise that the body resonates and amplifies what you’re doing with the instrument, then it’s going to change your entire approach. What is the meaning of technique? What is an organic phrase? At what point do you decide that the waves of sound produced in this organic phrase are ‘in balance’ with the body, the viola, and the phrase itself? In a sense, the inspiration was these basic questions, which I expect to last for my entire professional life—you keep coming up with new answers. It’s a constant process of growth, in both understanding and the ability to execute.

In the context of lessons, there were two particular points to bring out. First, the importance of physical communication in the lesson, especially the use of gesture and facial expression as demonstration tools. Another common form of Tuttle’s physical communication is in poking, either to feel for tension or to bring awareness into a certain part of the body like the wrist, neck, or back. The second point is the climate of the lesson. At different times, many former students talked about feeling implicit support from Tuttle, the belief and trust in each individual’s worth.

TUTTLE, TEACHER OF TEACHERS

This section will examine the specific teaching influences Tuttle has passed on to her former students. As the concept of ‘coordination’ sits as the centerpiece of her own
philosophy for viola playing, so is this section on the experience of teaching coordination the heart of this study. Every student had profound personal experiences in coming to understand this concept; each now applies coordination to their teaching uniquely.

To deal with coordination as Tuttle envisions, the emotional issues of music must be addressed; her former students now have to figure out how to address these aspects with their own students. Many use Tuttle’s ‘Five Basic Emotions’ list as a teaching tool and ask students to have emotional characters in mind while performing. Kashkashian put it in these words:

She used to ask us to give a basic emotion for any given phrase. Of course, there is a great deal of reluctance to do that. First of all, you don’t want to commit yourself and ‘make a mistake.’ Second, it just seems too obvious; that’s why we have music and we don’t want to have to use words to describe it. But I have found that it is a wonderful tool for focussing-- if a student is playing in a slightly ‘pale’ manner I tell them that they have to write a story as if the music were an opera. Then they have to tell me the sentence before playing the corresponding phrase. It’s an automatic focussing device for intensity and commitment. It’s an important tool even though it can seem brutal; students are forced to say something simple to describe something that is inherently complex. But it helps-- I followed her example on this.

Foster gives a somewhat different view, dealing more with physical projection:

I tell students that in order to project emotion, they must physically feel it themselves. Tuttle’s “Five Basic Emotions” and her emphasis on knowing what you want the music to say emotionally certainly influenced this. Tuttle also talked about making the facial expression to go with the chosen emotion. I was hesitant about this at first since many players, such as Heifetz, did not involve such physical expression. However, I now think that if you really feel something deeply, it is hard for that not to show. Also, there have been scientific studies showing that smiling can actually make you feel happier-- that the expression can affect your emotional state. You’ve got to get into character as an actor does, then raise the intensity level ten times so that it is projected to everybody. That has a lot to do with what she talked about.

Learning coordination is thought to be an inherently personal endeavor, so students were asked if this was their experience. A variety of responses resulted, the parts of the question drawing people in different directions. Ritscher and Ramsey agreed that it had been a personal endeavor for them, but not without a lot of advice. Ramsey:

I guess that it was my experience. But she gives the groundwork through lots of specific physical assistance- she tells you how to stand in such a
way that you are settled on your hips; to bring the instrument to you and
not vice versa, which facilitates the neck release; to release the stomach on
ergizers or slurs and ties; to repull; to extend your torso with every up
bow. She told me everything to do, so I don’t really think that I was a
rocket scientist to figure it out.

Brown focuses on imitation:

This was definitely true for me... Basically, it’s a matter of figuring out what
you want in the music, then finding the physical release-- where and to what
degree-- that will make the music possible. For me, at first it involved
mimicking what Tuttle did, and trying to understand what she meant by it,
and then integrating it into my own playing. Now I don’t have to think of
these things anymore, they just happen.

Irvine views it this way:

She had a different way of approaching it for me... She approached it in a
technical way, because I think she knew that was how my mind worked, and
how it would therefore make sense to me. We worked first on releasing my
neck... Also about “going under,” as you go to the tip. Leading with my
elbow to change at the frog. While we worked on these technical ideas, she
was showing me how I could use them to get my musical ideas across more
effectively.

Dubois talks about the individuality of the result, and the means by which to get
there:

First, one has to figure out how physically to perform these motions... Secondly, how does this affect the music? Finally, where in the music
would you do it, and why? Then you add emotion-- it’s going to mean
something a little different to every person... When students don’t
understand the underlying concept, they often exaggerate the physical
motions. I remember seeing an example of this during my first year, and I
told Tut... that I didn’t want to look like that when I played! She kind of
laughed, and then said that it was necessary for that student to do the
movement that she was doing-- by exaggerating the physical, the motions
would eventually become subtle and more internalized. It’s going through
the motions until those motions mean something to you. For me, being able
to physically release without consciously thinking about it was a pivotal
moment-- suddenly everything made sense together, and it sounded and felt
right.

Kashkashian also talks about the ways in which such a learning process will be
inherently unique to each person:

The short answer is that any activity that requires the spirit and body
connection is going to feel different for every person. There’s no way that
you can describe to someone how to swim and expect him or her to be able
to do it without finding out how it feels to move through the water. We have
to find out, each of us individually, how it feels to move with the instrument
through the music... The one rule in this process is the concept of tension
and release. With each student, I work carefully to help find his or her most effective points of physical release.

Foster recounts the following:

It definitely was my experience... I was already close to tying the musical and the physical together. Certain comments she made to me confirmed that the two were inseparable, totally linked. She told me herself that she hated the idea of just being relaxed—-it implied limpness and lack of energy, which was anti-musical.

The experience of working on coordination was particularly thorough for Rodland, who between degrees at Juilliard studied with Kashkashian in Freiburg, Germany. "I was Kashkashian’s first “fully immersed” Tuttle student... It was interesting for her to work with someone who was grappling with some of the same issues that she had had earlier.”

Her understanding of coordination has gone in two directions:

I think there are really two different levels to it. There is the physical (how you get form the frog to the tip and back- repull and “over the bow””) and the musical (tension and release in the phrase)... I found that with all the repulling and releasing my phrasing was occasionally interrupted. Kashkashian and I worked on devising a different level on which to operate so that it could still work for you and not against you. For me then, musical coordination requires a repull wherever the phrasing needs it, regardless of where one is in the bow.

Ansell takes issue with the phrasing of the question, voicing a sentiment that others mentioned at various points as well:

I don’t think that everyone needs to figure it out for him or herself, some people just do it. Tuttle is able to teach an effortless way of playing, if the student is able to internalize it. Most good musicians have physical flaws; things they don’t do efficiently in terms of coordination or in terms of the way they physically play. They overcome these flaws because of their innate understanding of music, and their talent for it. As far as playing technically, everyone does have to figure out for themselves how they can manage it best- sometimes they need help, sometimes it’s natural. There are players like Perlman, Heifetz, or Szigeti— they had to learn how to play the violin too, but they start at a completely different place than most of us. It’s like different orders of talent, some people have more physical talent. I don’t think that anybody ever really teaches a ‘Perlman’ how to play.

It is no surprise that coordination fits into each interviewee’s teaching style differently. Some bring up coordination as a whole, while some go more progressively; others tend to focus on certain parts of the concept. Each response is related and yet distinct. Irvine’s use of coordination might be considered the most formal:
At this point, I would say coordination figures quite prominently in my teaching. When I first started teaching coordination it seemed unusual, and I was afraid that students wouldn’t be able to understand it...now I approach with each right away. I also teach principles of coordination to summer students, even if only working with them for two weeks... With my new college students, I approach it directly from the start-- I have each choose one the six Vivaldi sonatas arranged by Primrose. Students don’t have to worry too much about the notes-- they can take their time and try the ideas out on something that’s not too hard for them.

Ritscher teaches coordination also, but she draws a distinction of levels. She also teaches it in chamber music:

It depends a lot on the level of the person-- for high school kids for example, I do the “poke around” thing and show them about the neck, but I don’t teach them phrase by phrase that way. With college students I do teach it, especially the last few years. I have a hard time insisting on it however, because I know they are under other pressures. I do work with students on coordination as a concept now, even at summer festivals and sometimes student quartets, because they ask. Then I give them my ‘coordination presentation’-- it comes up a lot in quartet cueing.

Rodland uses it significantly in her teaching as well, also according to the student and their level:

For me, it depends on the student as to whether or not I consciously deal with it. I definitely have a progressive plan for what students need to be doing with regard to repertoire and technique, based on their year in school. Some people come with physical problems—With them, I start right from the beginning. I teach repull to basically everybody, explained in different ways depending on the type of student.

Ansell’s approach is highly dependent on the person:

I tailor it to the needs of each student-- how far I get into it depends on the individual. I do not teach it systematically anymore, but most of my students are also now graduate students. It’s a rare bird that can pick it up because it takes a lot of time and dedication, as well as a very open mind. As far as changing older students’ habits, I do try to change them; but very gradually, and only in a way that helps them realize what their problems are and how to fix them. Remedial work is often slow, and can be difficult for a more formed musical personality to adjust to. When I studied with Karen, I was 18 and had only been thinking about ‘how to play’ since I was 17! Before that, I just did it. I didn’t really have any deeply ingrained habits yet— I was lucky in that way.

Foster tends to teach certain parts of coordination, but does not teach it as an entire system:

It takes a lot of energy to teach it, because it is difficult to explain. It also takes a certain single-mindedness, because there are other things that need
to be talked about. But if a student is thinking about anything else, then they aren't doing it. It kind of has to be exclusive, I think. I do try to introduce elements in, and I try to relate it to the ability to phrase, to be physically comfortable in order to do technically what you need to do to make the phrase speak the way you want it to.

In addition to the overall context of coordination in their teaching, each person has their own areas of the body and motions that they tend to focus upon. Some look for the body’s full alignment. For Ritscher, “you can’t really address what’s going on in the shoulders if something is off in the spine.” Rodland has an approach for both of her types of coordination, the physical and the musical. The physical deals with the whole body, while the musical focuses first on the repull:

I always start from the ground up, to make sure that people are completely grounded... I make sure that each bone is in its proper location and fully released, that the stomach is loose but strong, that the chest is open and the joints are free... When I am teaching repulls, I have them do it with knee bends so that they release the whole body into the string. Then I do an exercise where I hold the tip of their bow. On a down bow, I stop them at the balance point and pull the bow [in the direction of the up bow]; at the same time they relax their right hand and continue to pull the down bow with the arm. This helps to understand the specific release point. Then I have them do it with a deep knee bend so they understand how to release their bodies around the sound. I pretty much do this with everybody.

Ramsey’s focus in teaching coordination also involves multiple body systems, but she tends to look particularly at the connection of the bow arm to the torso. She advocates “pushing the elbow through the up bow and extending your torso, also the back and stomach release at the frog. When you start on the up bow you breathe in, then just before the bow change you breathe out which releases both the stomach and the back.”

Brown, despite his difficulty translating coordination into German, teaches coordination principles primarily through use of the bow. “[I have focussed on bow changes, and] how they relate to the use of the entire bow-- so there is a constant flow of energy in a circular motion.” Specifically in bow changes, Brown looks for “circles at the frog with the elbow going under and the fingers still pulling. Also, the neck release with a [right hand] scooping motion at the tip.”
Ansell and Irvine each have their own methods of approach. The former, while not teaching coordination as an entire system, works primarily to release blockages from the body, e.g. stiffness in the right wrist or hand. Meanwhile Irvine, who does teach coordination comprehensively, focuses first on the ability to release the neck, since this is the way in which he learned it himself.

An important aspect of teaching coordination is how to effectively introduce the concept to new students. The interviewees had different methods to help students appreciate it, though several use a variation of the following demonstration. The teacher will play the same musical phrase two different ways, ‘coordinated’ and ‘uncoordinated’ and ask which one the student prefers. Invariably, all prefer the first to the second.

Ritscher and Kashkashian both use a combination of demonstration and explanation as a means of introduction. Ritscher describes a possible scenario:

It usually comes up if I start talking with a student about the strength of his or her musicality, but that it is not being supported with effective body movement. I can usually show them what they are doing that is screwing them up, and then I tell them how lucky I was to have studied with a teacher whose system addresses it. The greatest thing about it, I tell them, is that it is a technique for being musical. I tell them what a genius she is, that she figured out a way to physically teach phrasing. Along with some demonstration, it often comes out as a story that inspires.

While Irvine also employs explanation to introduce coordination, he has the student participate as well. The action is targeted on the neck, which is not coincidentally his starting point in teaching:

Oftentimes I have the student try an experiment-- while holding the viola in position but with the bow in hand, I have him move the forearm back and forth, as if he were doing a very fast stroke. Usually, the head will also move as he moves the arm. I use this to illustrate the fact that the neck should be free enough for the head to react to arm motion. I also point out the fact that the head naturally moves in the opposite direction of the arm, as long as the neck isn’t clenching. Karen may have taught me that many years ago, but I can’t remember!

Others who teach coordination less formally do not make an introduction to the subject. Ansell describes his own manner of introduction:

I prefer to introduce it gradually, because it is not for everybody. I remember talking with Karen a while ago about teaching, and we were
talking about introducing this sort of stuff to students... Early on, I think that we do try to get people to 'see the light,' so to speak. After you've been teaching for a long time, she said, you realize that if they see it, they see it; if they don't, they don't. That the way I view it now.

While we have discussed many ways in which coordination connects with emotion, it is important to address its connection to physical technique. Instead of asking a general question about the physical manifestations of coordination, interviewees were asked how they taught right shoulder blade motion as a coordination issue. This was the most technically specific subject of the discussions, and was posed because it is a particular area in which players and teachers come to their own understanding. It was in responding to this question that some were wary about contradicting Tuttle's perspective. Foster:

I don't deal with that at all. I find free, strong, and connected bowing technique to be essential. My grandfather, John Kendall, is a well-known violin teacher who has many philosophies of his own, a significant one being the simplicity of the bow arm. It is interesting to compare this to Tuttle's technique, where you are thinking about 50,000 things in the course of bowing. I do think that the two are not at all mutually exclusive, with the exception of the shoulder blade motion. I find that moving the shoulder forward at the tip can cause the shoulder joint itself to tighten. I take Tuttle's lead on this-- you don't see such a motion in the people she terms "naturally coordinated." She doesn't need to see anything in particular to know that someone is doing it [playing with coordination]. She can hear it, that's what is most important.

Rodland looks at the issue differently to solve the physical question:

I have people imagine that all of their bowings and string changes come from a relaxed and balanced underarm system. Tuttle pronates the shoulder forward and hangs-- this doesn't work for me, to me it dislocates the shoulder a little bit. It changes the balance of the upper arm one needs to get the weight into the string... I think that she is built differently, and not everybody's shoulder joint is the same. But I figured out what she was getting at, and made it work for me.

Kashkashian does utilize shoulder blade movement, but she connects the issue to body height:

I use the right shoulder blade a lot, not only for coordination, so I can't give a simple answer. The degree of pull in the shoulder blade affects the sound. My students become aware of pulling out away from the spine, and also pulling back away from their chest with the shoulder blades, to get different kinds of sounds. With smaller students, say 5'5" and under, we tend to have to pull out more with the shoulder blade. It can be a big help to the feeling of 'over the bow,' but I don't find that it's necessarily helpful for
everybody. Stature does have something to do with how one experiences it, because the leverage issues change so drastically.

Ritscher and Ramsey each use shoulder blade motion during bowing, but each chose to mention different ends of the bow. Ritscher:

Many string players don't even realize that they have shoulder blades, so that's the first step. I try to tell them that motion is good, and then I talk about what happens as you move your arm through space... Usually I pull out the anatomy book to show how complex the system is, how the arm attaches from the structures. Most people use too much pectoral. I recently went to play for Tuttle again to work on Brahms E-Flat, which I hadn't played for her in thirty years! I wanted to check in to make sure of my overall understanding, and up-bow initiation was one area we talked about. I didn't see it before, but she initiates the up stroke with the shoulder blade—she says she does so with the elbow, but she is really going further up. What I had remembered was essentially a scooping with the fingers to change at the tip. I teach it mostly by figuring out angles— for me, I experience it mostly as the elbow going backwards, as a local event in the arm.

Ramsey talked about right shoulder blade motion around the bow change at the frog:

So that you use your back, on the up bow you push through with the elbow and you extend; the bow change I teach as the back and shoulder blade releasing, not the elbow dropping at the point of change. When you release your stomach, your back is going to release. I guess you could say that the shoulder blade would slide at this moment, but if someone told me this specifically, I would turn into a pretzel! But it makes much more sense to me to release your stomach and let out a big breath— I can do that.

In conclusion to this section, the interviewees confirmed the multiplicity of approaches possible under one “method.” In coordination's translation of physical motion to emotional and musical meaning, each person realizes it differently. The way in which a teaching program integrates coordination can be successful in many different ways, from the primary focus to a finishing touch. All agree that to appreciate the techniques of coordination, students must hear the difference in sound. The viewpoints on right shoulder blade motion show the variety of technical outcomes the “method” can have.
TUTTLE'S DISTINCTION AS TEACHER

After discussing the specific ways in which Karen Tuttle has influenced them as players and teachers, interviewees put their experiences in context to say what most clearly distinguishes Tuttle as a teacher. The responses are all a pleasure to read; they are a testament to her ability to work with people and to understand music and viola playing in a way that is truly distinctive.

Dubois:

She opened my eyes to a new dimension of playing-- how physical and emotional awareness helps music come alive.

Brown:

[It’s her ability to relate the physical workings of the body with emotional tension and release, or excitement in music. Whereas many people focus more on one or the other, she has developed a way to teach a combination of the two that’s really special. When you listen to her recordings with the Schneider Quartet, you can hear this depth and vitality in her sound that comes from this relationship-- physical coordination and emotional understanding of the music.]

Foster:

A lot of it comes down to personality. More than her methods, technique, or playing, she is a force of a personality. She’s got something that she really believes in-- that the point of playing is to convey emotion, period.

Rodland:

I consider her one of my primary influences in life, not just as musician-- how to live life in a healthy way. I will be forever grateful to her. When I took a year off from school, she would never take any money for lessons. She said “honey, you can repay me by doing this for other people when you’re in a position to do so.” That’s just the way she is, and I certainly hope that I will be able to repay her as instructed!

Ramsey:

She’s just so different. Her ability to get to the heart of ‘you’ as a person. It’s not enough to play the notes with a nice sound and good intonation. It’s enough to get a job, it’s enough to make some other people happy, but it’s not going to be enough for you to find satisfaction for a lifetime. As a person, she is completely unfettered by any social expectations. What you see is what she is-- I think that’s a hard thing to do.
Irvine:

Two things stand out. The first is that her method is really her own: she claims to have gotten it from others, but it is truly her own original physical and emotional approach to playing. The second was her ability to simply help me, or make me, play better. I don’t think that ‘support’ really describes it. There’s an incredible teaching-force, or life force, there. It’s more than what she says, it’s hard to put into words. I really felt that she believed in me and my potential, and that she was ready to do anything to help me fulfill that in the strongest possible way. I felt that she really liked me.

Ansell:

Karen Tuttle figured out how people with less than prodigious talent could play like people who did have it; she was able to incorporate this into a system of teaching and playing. This is really an amazing feat! She is musically ‘in touch’—her love of music comes across, as well as her understanding of its character and emotion. Finally, she is able to make students feel good about what they are doing, reassuring them that it is worthwhile. She has a very positive influence on her students. She discovered some very important things, she is a giant.

Ritscher:

The single biggest thing is that she helped each person to be the most of themselves that they could be in playing—she helped people get to their real self. Also, her level of artistry—I think that she teaches pacing better than anyone on earth. Then, of course, there was the sound she expected. She was so specific physically... She is a physical genius. That’s one thing that I think has gotten lost about her— in this way, she is probably the most technical teacher I know.

Kashkashian:

There is something that many great helpers of any discipline have, I’ve noticed— the ability to be totally sympathetic and totally objective simultaneously. She always had the greatest empathy and love for any of us in any stage of our developments and predicaments: on the other hand, she always remained absolutely objective in her own response to us, and to our relationships with the music. This is something I see in great teachers past and present, they have this in common— she has it.

While each of Tuttle’s students has his or her own wonderful way of describing her distinction, certain themes emerge. Her creation of a method of playing and teaching incorporated profound understandings of technique, emotion, and music. She is able to show faith in students individually, and to develop each on their own terms. Finally, she is able to live honestly and express freely, as an example of her ideals. Each interviewee has a different style of expression, and all comment with admiration about the same person. That
people of all different manners and abilities are able to take profound lessons away from one person teaching essentially one concept is an eloquent testament to both the universality and individuality of her teaching.
CONCLUSION

As we have seen, coordination is a concept that fundamentally applies to musical performance of any variety. Nothing inherently links the principle to viola playing, string playing, or limits coordination to classical music. But it is no accident that coordination is so effective in this field. Classical music has recently involved very little improvisation, while requiring ever-greater demands on technical execution. Such an environment can unwittingly create an emotional separation between the performer and the performance.

Within classical music, string instruments are particularly extreme examples, for two reasons. The first is that breath does not create the sound; breath naturally keeps the bodies of wind players connected to the experience of phrasing. Secondly, string instruments require more elaborate physical techniques than any other instrument, particularly because of intonation issues. Both of these facts contribute further to a separation between performer and music.

The viola holds a special place among the strings; viola jokes aside, it is often referred to as the most ‘human’ of the string instruments. In terms of range, this is literally true. In orchestral and chamber music, viola parts often reflect the emotions of sorrow or melancholy. Coordination is, at its core, a way for music to remain connected to the human experience. The inherent and assumed characteristics of the viola make it especially fertile soil for such ideas.

Karen Tuttle has left an indelible mark on the world of viola teaching. As we have seen in the previous chapters outlining her background, principles, and effect on students, her influence has taken many forms. As a player, her recordings, particularly as a member of the Schneider Quartet, will continue to inspire generations of musicians. As ‘coordination’ combines the three realms of the musical, physical, and emotional, so can her ultimate influence as a teacher be divided into the same three categories.

Tuttle’s strongest influence on the world of teaching is in her development of coordination. In this concept, Tuttle shows her commitment and dedication to combine
musical understanding, physiological awareness, and emotional acuity. Coordination is particularly influential in the realm of bow technique, where Tuttle has invented the technical concepts of repulling and releasing. The influence of coordination is particularly clear to trace because of the specific terminology that accompanies it; besides 'repull' and 'release' there is also 'filling' and 'going under,' among others.

Physically, the teaching legacy Tuttle passes on is her body communication. She uses touching as a tool, both to diagnose and to bring awareness for the student. While others certainly use touching to teach, her style of poking and testing is distinctive and has influenced many. In addition, Tuttle's ability to communicate through physical gestures and facial expressions has deeply impacted students' learning. It is interesting to note that only the students mentioned this mode of communication, not Tuttle herself. Using physical gestures to teach may be less conscious to the teacher, as no former student cites facial expressions and gestures as part of his or her teaching either.

Emotionally, Karen Tuttle has created a pedagogical legacy of deep respect for the individual. Many remember her unspoken trust, and her projection of confidence in their abilities. Her expression of caring fosters an environment that allows students to work, free of self-consciousness, on the issues most important to them. In creating this forum for self-directed work, Tuttle encourages development of individual personality.

Tuttle's teaching influence for many people transcends mere pedagogy; perhaps more accurately, Tuttle has expanded the meaning of "teaching influence." Students have been influenced by her love of humanity, and by her freedom of personal expression. She strives to help students in ways that go beyond the comfort level of most teachers. Karen Tuttle has inspired at least two generations of violists with an entire approach to the viola and to both music and life in general. In the world of viola pedagogy, she stands alone as the most influential figure of the past fifty years.
### Appendix 1: Karen Tuttle’s Lists of Emotions

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Appendix 2: Interview Questions

General
1) When/where/for what degree did you study with KT?
2) What did you know about her beforehand?
3) In retrospect, was this knowledge accurate?
4) What did you find surprising as you began to study with her?
5) When did you know that you would want to teach? Did this decision have anything to do with KT?
6) How did routine fit into your lessons?
7) How did KT use playing vs. speech to communicate?
8) How did discussion and lecture fit in?
9) Did being 'prepared' for lessons with KT have any specific meaning for you?
10) Do you associate certain repertoire with her?
11) Can you say how KT has inspired you as a player, both then and now?

Coordination
12) I've been told that everyone must figure out coordination for him/herself. Was this your experience? How?
13) How does coordination fit into your own teaching?
14) Are there specific areas/motions you tend to focus on as you teach it?
15) In your experience, have you found a specific way to effectively introduce coordination to new students? (e.g., through experiment, demonstration, lecture, etc.)
16) How do you teach right shoulder blade movement as a coordination issue?

Reich
17) How often did you approach personal emotional issues in lessons? Do you have a sense of how this compared to your studio mates?
18) Did Wilhelm Reich's name come up in the course of study? If so, how important did it seem?
19) How has KT influenced your teaching approach to emotion in music?

General, wrap-up
20) Are there other aspects of your teaching that you directly attribute to KT?
21) What do you think most clearly distinguishes KT as a teacher?
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