

*moon chunks:*  
creating musical meanings<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** In literature studies several authors have been researching on how text (verbal) and image (visual) can relate to each other, and words like “synergy” and “imagetext” have been used in the attempt to describe the narrative discourse, which so often appear in picture storybooks. In musical research, narrative deals with several questions linked either to musical: perception, reception, composition or performance. The starting point of this investigation was *Wie schmeckt der Mond?* by Michael Grejniec, a children’s picture book. This paper explores the way the book was written and illustrated, and how a new music orchestral piece *moon chunks* was composed. By focusing on specific compositional ideas, the piece was shaped to highlight different aims, and the musical narrative was used in a plural musical-verbal-visual interaction, in order that the new music language would better communicate with the younger audience. Conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the composer’s own artistic practice and 8 interviews held with random children in the audience.

**Keywords:** Composition, Narrative, Meaning, New Music, Children.

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**N**arrative is an important investigation tool, and the term that has been used differently in research fields such as literary studies, philosophy, science, music and education. In musical research, different approaches to narrative have been discussed (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009; Almén, 2008; Bowman, 2006; Maus, 1991, 1997, 2005), and narrative “It is viewed variously as “story”, as a “mode of knowing” and “constructing meaning” (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009: 7), as it “records human experience through the construction and reconstruction of personal stories” (Webster & Mertova, 2007: 1).

Many authors (Kivy, 1990; Berenson, 1993; Lavy, 2001) seem to follow the idea that we experience music in a narrative mode. Others (Newcomb, 1997; Maus, 1997; Levinson, 2004) propose that we experience it in a dramatic mode.

If we look carefully, especially if we are willing to look under the surface, we stand to find more than a little imagining in our experience of music, even of fugues and sonatas, and many of our imaginings would seem to be called for by the music. Why doesn't the content of these imaginings constitute fictional worlds, the worlds of music? And doesn't this make the music representational, as literature and painting are? (Walton, 1990: 60).

Maus refers that “a composition, like following a play or novel, can involve following a series of fictional actions - then comparisons and contrasts with literary narrative seem more pertinent” (Maus, 1991: 12). Therefore, to compose can be viewed as a story telling with a succession of musical events, where the discourse refers to the material the composer adds to the story.

Without meaning to analyse the terminological issues on analogies that have been raised on topics of music, narrative, drama and literature, the idea of creating relationships between stories (here viewed as the events in a narrative) and discourse (viewed as the treatment of the same story in the presentation of the narrative) can be compared to the analogy of music composition. Writers/Composers create books/scores because they intend to communicate and produce meaning. The text/music that was created by the writer/composer is then recreated by the reader/listener. Many piece titles and/or programme notes are a clear intention on the composer's side to share the inspirational idea of the composition, or to share parts of their “imaginings” (Walton, 1990). It is a way that composers have to communicate with the listener's personal narratives that occurred on their own musical creative process, and consequently encouraging the access into new music, which is frequently unknown and unfamiliar. The listener decides to connect this sequence of sound events according to their own *imaginings*, which they build up while the musical work is being played. Therefore, listeners also create their own inner narratives, and actively participate in the construction of the musical piece (Elliott, 1995), and even if music does not *speak* to us as the human language does, it is true to say that it can *sound* to us in many forms.

Music is heard as narrative because when we listen to music we conceptualise it *in terms* of narrative, with narrative itself acting almost as a meta-metaphor within which all things can be made comprehensible. Structured as narrative, listening context (associations, environment, mood), sound, utterance and the moments of physiological arousal that they can evoke all cohere into a unified but dynamic experience (Lavy, 2001: 99).

As a composer, I find music composition inseparable from a communicative approach. Usually while composing, I not only imagine the future context of the performance, but I often create my own narratives. This induces many *imaginings* which guide my compositional decisions.

Narrative music, as mentioned and analysed in this paper, means music which helps to create *imaginings*. Guiding the audience through particular sequences of events, and highlighting musical elements from certain parts of the music, allows the listener to feel more intensely some sections of the composition. In other words, one searches to find possible meanings in a narrative form that draws the listener into the context that they can identify. The objective is to connect the audience in a process of meaning construction through particular sequences of events, contexts and musical elements from certain parts of the music, in order to create a meaningful experience and to construct musical significances. Many studies shed light on an issue that can be observed through different angles; however, to be aware of the narrative dimension in music composition adds appeal as per the use of metaphors in writing.

## 1. Children's picture books

Several authors (Doonan, 1993; Mitchell, 1994; Sipe, 1998; Lewis, 2001) have been researching on how text and image can relate to each other. From these researches words like “imagetext” (Mitchell, 1994) and “synergy” (Sipe, 1998) have been used in the attempt to describe the narrative discourse, which includes visual and verbal languages, which so often appear in children's picture books. A very common characteristic in picture books is the existence of a narrative discourse, which uses visual and verbal languages

Both the words and pictures of picture books have temporality – both can imply the passage of time, the words by their very nature and the pictures by their sequence. Consequently, both are capable of having rhythms, and the two together create a third rhythm: the rhythm of picture-book narrative” (Nodelman, 1988: 244).

The picture book should be looked at as a whole, whereby images/illustrations should not only describe the written narrative but should be able to add to the action other elements that weren't directly told. For David Lewis “What we find in the picture book is a form of language that incorporates, or ingests, genres, forms of language and forms of illustration” (Lewis, 2001: 65). Often

picture books are structured from a simple narrative, easily detected by the young reader, with the clear objective of helping children in learning the codes of literacy.

## **2. *Wie schmeckt der Mond? and moon chunks***

My piece *moon chunks*, English translation of the Portuguese title *Pedaços de Lua*, was written for narrator, image projection and full orchestra, and it was a commission from Coliseu do Porto, for a family Sunday morning promenade series. As the piece was going to be played in a children's concert, by a youth orchestra, I decided that the starting point for my work was going to be the Portuguese translation of the children's picture book *Wie schmeckt der Mond? (A que sabe a Lua?)*, written and illustrated by Michael Grejniec, in 1993. To better recognize some references that will be used later, I considered to be helpful the inclusion of a short synopsis of the book: *The turtle, the elephant, the giraffe, the zebra, the lion, the fox, the monkey and the mouse all wanted to taste the Moon. One day the turtle decided to climb a very high mountain to reach it, but it did not succeed. So, the turtle called the elephant, and proposed to hop on its back. However the elephant also could not reach the Moon. As the problem was not solved, they called other animals, one by one, in order to make an animal ladder. Finally, the little mouse ended up reaching the Moon, and they all tasted the little crumbs that the mouse shared. The Moon tasted to whatever they most enjoyed...*

As Grejniec was the writer and the illustrator of the book, it allowed him to complement his narrative discourse with the visual image, in an intertextual way. The book is the result of a dialogue between two distinct languages, which were thought together and complement each other, with the objective of telling a story. It takes the reader to a world where both words and images construct meaning. Taking inspiration in this idea, a musical narrative was constructed.

### **2.1 The story, the illustrations and the music**

After reading the story many musical ideas inspired me. As in the book it was my intention that the music was thought and structured from a very simple narrative idea, that could easily be recognized and identified by the target audience of the concert – the children. I also wanted that this piece allowed children (and also adults), to have an early contact with new music, which compares to the objective of the picture story book in helping children to learn the codes of literacy, fostering the development of several skills, and trying to contribute to the development of novel audiences in new music.

The narrative structure and the artistic dimension of the book were kept intact, meaning nothing was altered from the original. As in the picture book, the composition tried to develop synergies between music, verbal and visual components, trying to use the dialogue between the component elements to

potentiate the musical narration. Departing from metaphorical suggestions of a minimal text, music-image-text together make up an original form, and amplify its sensorial capacities of communication. The metaphoric construction of the text is completed both by the illustrations and the music, which clarify the sense of the word associations.

## 2.2 Shaping Form

The orchestral piece *moon chunks* uses a narrator to tell the story in a dialogue with music played by the orchestra, and projected images, in an attempt to unite verbal, visual and auditory codes. As in Grejniec's book, repetition shapes this piece. The musical progress is punctuated both by repetitions of the narrative sequences and by the accumulation of characters, which build a relatively simple musical plot, and shapes the form of this piece. This formal repetition helps to characterize the characters, actions, spaces and the passing of time. The use of a structured repetitive narrative scheme and character accumulation promotes the possibility of recall in retelling of the story. The picture book is reinforced with musical components, which are also full of repetitive parallels, which create different rhythms and sensorial levels.

## 2.3 Musical representation - plot /action/ characters

To understand the appeal of the idea of musical plot, it is better to begin from listeners' capacity for interpreting musical events anthropomorphically. Listeners can hear musical successions as story like because they can find something like actions, thoughts, and characters in music (Maus, 1991: 6).

The musical plot of this piece is determined by the succession of events in the story, and by the appearance of the characters within the story. The physical attributes of the participating characters are also important to the construction of the musical action, as they reinforce the image and the text. The narrator is the first element that connects the audience to the narrative. He starts the story and after his first line, starts the projection of a set of tiny eyes looking at the moon. The narration continues and suddenly the image of the moon appears in the middle of all those small eyes, completing the opening illustration that appears in the book. At this point the Moon is presented, and a musical leitmotif is created to represent it (Figure 1).

The image displays a musical score for measures 3 and 4 of the piece 'moon chunks' (Pedacos de Lua). The score is arranged in six systems, each representing a different instrument or section:

- Clarinet in Bb I:** Single staff with a melodic line starting in measure 3, marked *mp* and *mf*.
- Clarinet in Bb II, III:** Single staff with a melodic line starting in measure 3, marked *mp*.
- Violin I:** Three staves (1,2,3,4; 5,6,7,8; 9,10,11) with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked *p* and *Pizz*.
- Violin II:** Three staves (1,2,3,4,5; 6,7,8,9,10; 11,12,13,14) with a melodic line starting in measure 3, marked *p* and *ritardando*, including a *(gliss)* instruction.
- Viola:** Two staves (1,2,3,4; 5,6,7,8) with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked *mp* and *Pizz*, including a *(gliss)* instruction.

Figure 1 – *moon chunks* (*Pedaços de Lua*): moon’s musical leitmotif: measure 3 and 4

The narrator carries on with the story, now accompanied with the same tiny eyes, that gained movement, and that blink. From this point onwards all the characters of the book will be slowly presented, and they will be symbolised by orchestral instruments. Following Grejniec’s book, and with the continuation of the narrative, the tiny eyes will be slowly reveal a number of animals that are intended to taste the Moon. In the score, from measure 21 onwards, the narrative (musical, visual and verbal) will be put into the action, in a repeatedly and progressive way. In table 1 it is possible to observe the musical representation that was created for the participating characters of the story, and when they first appear in the score.

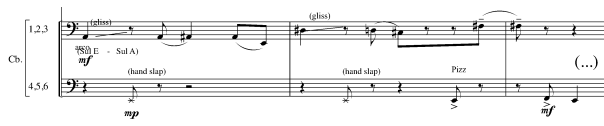
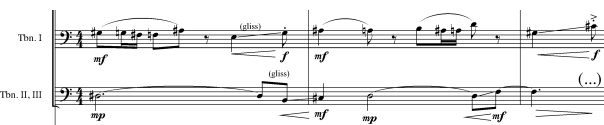

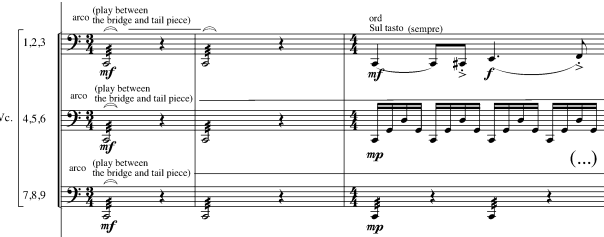
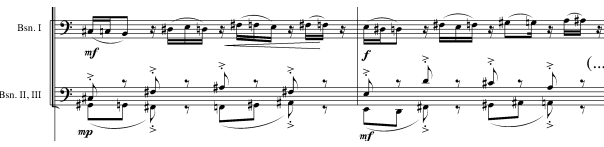


Animals	Instruments	First appearance	Musical example
1. Turtle	Double bases	Measure 21	
2. Elephant	Horn and Trumpets	Measure 30	
3. Giraffe	Trombones	Measure 45	
4. Zebra	Oboes	Measure 57	
5. Lion	Violoncellos	Measure 68	
6. Fox	Bassoons	Measure 81	
7. Monkey	Violins	Measure 90	
8. Mouse	Flutes	Measure 103	

Table 1 – Characters of the picture book and their musical representation in *moon chunks* (*Pedaços de Lua*)

As in the book, the Moon is a special element of longing and desire, and the plot, action and characters follow it. Therefore it required a different musical approach to the musical characterization of the animals. The story is presented by showing the actions the different animals make trying to reach the Moon, with the movement of the Moon herself trying to escape. In the book the size of the moon gradually gets smaller, which had also to be represented in the score. In both book and score this symbolizes the passing of time. Therefore the Moon is characterized with a leitmotiv that not only marks a constant presence in the musical actions, but also gradually shrinks in terms of duration and dynamic, as it can be observed in table 2.

<b>Moon</b>	<b>Appearance</b>	<b>Corresponding animals</b>	<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Dynamics</b>
Leitmotiv introduction	Measure 3 and 4 (Figure 1)	N/A	Violins I/II & Violas Clarinet - fish	<i>piano</i>
Reminder of measure 3-4	Measure 27 and 28 (eco of Figure 1)	Turtle	Strings Clarinet - fish	decrescendo <i>mf</i> to <i>p</i>
Leitmotiv appearance	Measure 37 - 43	Elephant	Strings Clarinet - fish	decrescendo <i>f</i> to <i>p</i>
Leitmotiv appearance	Measure 51 - 55	Giraffe	Strings Clarinet - fish	decrescendo <i>f</i> to <i>pp</i>
Leitmotiv appearance	Measure 62 - 66	Zebra	Strings Clarinet - fish	decrescendo <i>mf</i> to <i>pp</i>
Leitmotiv appearance	Measure 76 - 79	Lion	Strings Clarinet - fish	decrescendo <i>mf</i> to <i>pp</i>
Leitmotiv appearance	Measure 87 and 88	Fox	Strings Clarinet - fish	decrescendo <i>mp</i> to <i>pp</i>
Leitmotiv appearance	Measure 98 - 100	Monkey	Winds – air/percussive sounds Viola Clarinet - fish	decrescendo <i>p</i> to <i>nothing</i>
Leitmotiv appearance	Measure 108	Mouse	None	silence

Table 2. *moon chunks* (*Pedaços de Lua*): gradually shrinking (duration and dynamic) of the Moon's leitmotiv

As represented in the tenth illustration of Grejniec's book an animal ladder was slowly built, with group effort of the animals, arriving one by one. In the music collaborative scheme the same happens. When the instrument that represented the animal appears in the plot, it is represented by a theme, which is then modified to stay in the score with several different musical functions. The turn in the story is going to be signalled by the mouse entrance that, as it happens in several traditional tales, despite its small size, it will play a decisive role in the conflict resolution. The highest point of the story



is when the Mouse bites the Moon. There is a change in the action, which will be visually and musically highlighted. The Moon becomes reachable, mainly due to its underestimation of a tiny mouse.

To reach the Moon was an objective that becomes a reality, due to the cooperation of all animals involved in the story. Very close to the end a moralizing message prevails, which suggests that you should not judge a book by its cover, and that many hands make light work. The book shows a restful image that is supported by the Music, where for the first time in measure 142, a triple meter is presented, in the shape of a lullaby (Figure 2).

• = 40

Fl. I, II, III

Ob. I, II, III

Bs.-Cl. I, II, III

Bsn. I, II, III

• = 40

Hn. I, II

Hn. III, IV

B-Tpt. I, II, III

Tbn. I, II, III

Timp.

Narrator

• = 40

1.2,3,4

n. I 5,6,7,8 9,10,11

n. II 1,2,3,4 5,6,7,8 9,10,11 12,13,14

Vla. 1,2,3,4 5,6,7,8

Vc. 1,2,3 4,5,6 7,8,9

Cb. 1,2,3 4,5,6

Figure 2 – *moon chunks*: (*Pedaços de Lua*), measure 142-147: triple meter in the shape of a lullaby

Just when we thought the story ended, with no warning, appears a fish. *Where does the fish comes from?*, one could ask. In the music as in the book, this question needs reflection, as the answer is not immediate. Returning to the beginning, and on analysing the story, it is possible to realize that a clue was there. Not as verbal code, as the fish was never mentioned, but in visual and auditory aspects. In the first illustration of the book it is possible to count the number of the eyes present, and then realize that the number of pairs of eyes present are not eight, as in the amount of animals that participate in the plot, but nine. The ninth animal, the fish, which was never part of the action was always present, and aware and following the story's development. When a child reads the picture book this is probably a detail that will never be fully discovered. The same may happen in the concert situation. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge it and to enhance it.

Musically, in the first measures, the Moon leitmotif (Figure 1) is presented in the Violas (pizz) accompanied by harmonics in the Violins symbolizing the Moon up high. There is another instrument in the leitmotif, the only instrument present that is not a string instrument, which also participates in the scene, and looks like that is helping to define the Moon's leitmotif. This instrument is the clarinet, which will be present during the narrative as a reinforcement of the orchestral texture, but will only be truly revealed in measure 159, 12 measures before the piece ends. To help define the atmosphere, more than 20 rain sticks will be played by the orchestra players, an element that symbolizes the water where the fish lives (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Clarinet leitmotif of the fish

The unexpected turns out to assume a real value, and the elements that apparently seem most insignificant, become the carriers of various roles. This scene works musically as a coda, and it is treated as such. The musical representation assumes itself as a factor that enriches text and image, and music becomes an important feature, which provides a source of relevant information. Here the music's role is not only a tool to understand the unwinding of the plot/action, but also to describe in addition the atmosphere and the context. It informs and completes the “imagetext”, and carries a message to be discovered by the audience, urging them to venture further in establishing a cooperative relationship with the work. The musical narrative asserts itself as a privileged platform for innovating, amongst the plural ties that can bind music to speech and to illustration.

## 2.4 Musical representation - other musical elements

Other elements, such as texture, tempo, time, gesture and rhythm, can also be analysed and mentioned. Texture helps the construction of meaning contained in the story as, for instance, after an initial presentation of all the animals represented in the story, the piece starts with a solo in the double basses, which represent the turtle, and follows on adding the other animals as thickening up the action.

In this narrative the tempo is mainly represented both by the Moon leitmotiv that shrinks as the Moon gets smaller, to symbolize the passing of days in reference to the phases of the Moon. The temporal order by which the instruments introduce their own attempts to reach the moon, adds a subject of effort and perseverance. The last theme's presentation is like a reflection of the past on the voice of the fish/clarinet. The section has the quality of a meditation on a remembered past, very close to the end. Expanding from Kramer's idea of "gestural-time" (Kramer, 1988), some ideas also came to mind. The piece could imply this notion, as musical gestures could formally give a function to the music, and regulate the time order in which events occur in the composition. Many sections end each time utilizing the same gesture to a cadence. These moments were planned and written this way in order to allow in the listener a similar "gestural-time" each listening, as if the repetition of the same moment is re-experienced, as a reminder of the non success, returning to a similar point of the story, starting over and over the creation of the animal ladder.

During the work the rhythm of the music tries to correspond to the rhythm proposed by Grejniec's picture book, trying to establish a dynamic relation between the pictorial, linguistic and musical codes. The suspense effect tries to maintain constant the listener's attention. Also, all of the characters had specific rhythmic patterns that helped the audience to better recognise them.

### **3. Enhancing young listeners' music meaning constructions**

The plurality of compositional styles and techniques in the twenty-first century constitutes a challenge for the composer, and offers enormous range of sound possibilities for musicians and listeners to engage with. In this particular case the recipients of the work were young musicians and listeners. After *moon chunks* was finished, a research project was implemented immediately after the première of the piece. This project had the objective to understand how young listeners' music meaning constructions were enhanced, in other words to analyse how the use of narratives could enhance communication, induce imaginings and draw children's interest into *new music*. As music is a temporal art form, it is difficult for a child to listen to and to retain several musical ideas, especially in *new music*, as "when the music finishes, children have experienced so much that, while they may be able to discuss some most recent musical idea, it may be difficult for them to return to earlier musical images" (Blair, 2007: 10).

#### **3.1 *moon chunks* in the overall context of the concert**

The concert line up was (1) my piece *Pedaços de Lua (moon chunks)*, (2) Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor*, Op 64 and (3) Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance - March n°1 in D minor*, Op.39. Images

were projected during the first two pieces of the concert. In *moon chunks* the image projection was of the children’s book *Wie schmeckt der Mond?*, by Michael Grejniec. A designer worked on the images from the book, in Photoshop and the animation was done in Powerpoint, to allow greater control of the synchronization of music and image. In the performance of Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto* images from the German painter Caspar David Friedrich were projected. The designer and the music director of the Promenade Concerts chose those images to be projected. Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstance* had no images but the public’s participation was invited in a sing-along.

### 3.2. Interviews

On the day of the piece’s première children, randomly selected to give a representative sample in terms of attendee gender and age, on entering the concert hall were shown the book and asked if they knew Grejniec’s story *A que sabe a Lua?* (*Wie schmeckt der Mond?*). This was to ensure, that before interviewing them that half of the children knew the story and the other half had never heard of it. Once determined if the child entered into my quota of “Children that previously knew the story” or “Children that did not know the story” I asked if they would participate in short interview after the concert. The objective was to understand and identify which musical aspects of the new music piece *Pedaços de Lua* (*moon chunks*) they valorised the most while listening. After the parents and children agreed, four questions, presented in Table 3, were asked at the end of the concert in the form of a semi-structured interview.

Children that previously knew the story	Children that did not know the story
Question 1 – Which music did you enjoy the most of the concert? Why?	
Question 2 - Do you remember the 1 <sup>st</sup> music piece? (only to be asked if the child did not choose it as the most enjoyable piece).  Do you remember the book?  Did you prefer to hear the story with the music or when mummy or daddy read it to you for the first time?	Question 2 - Do you remember the 1 <sup>st</sup> music piece? (only to be asked if the child did not choose it as the most enjoyable piece).  What did you like best in <i>Pedaços de Lua</i> ( <i>moon chunks</i> )?
Question 3 – To what did you pay more attention to?	
Question 4 – The 2 <sup>nd</sup> piece also had images. What was different between the 1 <sup>st</sup> and the 2 <sup>nd</sup> piece? (1 <sup>st</sup> - <i>Pedaços de Lua</i> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> - Mendelssohn’s <i>Violin Concerto in E minor</i> , Op 64)	

Table 3: Line up of the semi-structured interview

With these interviews the aim was to explore the relationships between the process of the young listeners’ perception and the process of constructing musical meaning. It also aimed to analyse the role of metaphor and the creation of musical meaning in the way children perceived the *new music* piece.

### 3.3. Results of the interviews

At the end of the première 8 children were interviewed, four of each group, “Children that did not know the story” and “Children that previously knew the story”. The transcriptions below represent only a fraction of the total interviews carried out. It is accepted that the sampling group is too small for any statistical significance to be inferred, this is an unavoidable consequence of limited interviewees, and finding receptive interviewees. However, as Ruquoy (1997: 103) proposes there can be value in an investigation’s output if the predefined aims make use of the diversification of the interviewees, in order to assure that no important situation is left behind, so when selecting interviewees the interviewer made sure to include a representative sample in terms of age and gender of the young listeners.

In the group of “**Children that that did not know the story**”, when answering Question 1 [Which music did you most enjoy in the concert? Why?], three out of the four children said that they preferred the first music they heard, the one with the story: “*I liked more the 1<sup>st</sup> music, the one with the story and film. I liked that each animal had its own music. I understood stuff*” (Francisco, 8). Only one child mentioned a preference for Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstance* because she “*already knew it well and could sing along*” (Luisa, 7). In Question 2 [Do you remember the 1<sup>st</sup> music?] all children from this group remembered well the 1<sup>st</sup> music. Children not only recalled vividly some moments of the 1<sup>st</sup> piece *Pedaços de Lua (moon chunks)*, but they also commented on the duration of the piece, as the Mendelssohn’s piece was a much longer piece: “*The images with the music showed the climbing up of the animals, and the instruments also went up*” (Francisco, 8); “*What I prefer better was the fact that it was not very long*” (Matilde, 7).

As for question 3 [To what did you pay more attention to?], children referred that they paid attention to everything in the story, meaning the text, the image and the music: “*It was important to hear the music, the images and the story. The music and the images helped with the following of the story*” (Luisa, 7).

Finally, in question 4 [The 2<sup>nd</sup> piece also had images. What was different between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece?], two children (Luisa, 7 and João, 6) mentioned to recall the images presented during *Pedaços de Lua (moon chunks)* but they did not remember that there were any images during the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece, Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto in E minor*, Op 64. João, 6 years old, even denied, and did not believe when told that there were images projected for the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece. Images projected in the Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto* did not seem to connect as well with the children: “*In the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece the images were different because they only had countryside*” (Matilde, 7); “*The 1<sup>st</sup> showed the story and the other showed things from another time.*” (Francisco, 8)

In the group “**Children that previously knew the story**”, when answering Question 1 [Which music did you most enjoy in the concert? Why?] two children used metaphors in order to express what they felt such as “*The animals climbed a mountain and the music helped them climb*” / “*I liked better when I saw the music*” (Maria João, 7), “*Because it had sound. It was a sound story.*” (Mariana C., 7). Once more one child

(José, 6) when referring to Elgar's piece mentioned *"I liked the last piece better because I already knew it"*.

In Question 2 [Do you remember the 1<sup>st</sup> music? ...] children said if we took the images from the piece it would not be the same. Images and music seemed important to this group of children. They all mentioned that because they knew the story if they had only seen the images and heard the music they would have liked the piece anyway. It sounds that because children knew previously the story they paid more attention to new objects, in this case the music and the projected images: *"If I had listen just the music and only seen the images I would have liked it just as much, and understood everything"* (Mariana C., 7)

Finally, this group of children when answering to Question 4 [The 2<sup>nd</sup> piece also had images. What was different between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece?] mentioned that images in the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece did not told tell them a story and they were just images: *"In the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece the images were different because they had the seasons of the year and didn't tell a story."* (Maria João, 7).

#### 4. Creating compositional meanings

Interviews with both groups of children (the ones that knew and the ones that didn't know the story) indicated that most of them vividly recall the 1<sup>st</sup> piece along with some musical aspects that they had heard. It was observed that the younger listeners seemed to find it easier to follow the music in connection with the image and text, as it helped them to shape meaning in several ways, generating individual musical understanding.

As a composer, I chose to use in *moon chunks (Pedços de Lua)* musical material that tried to better communicate the meaning of the composition with the younger audience. The listener should experience this material as a guided interaction, and the construction of the musical narrative should help understanding. Image, text and music seem to be an enabler that perform the completion of this perception. Children seem to find it easier to follow the music in connection with the image and text, as this material helps them to shape meaning in several ways. Words seem to change the pictures, pictures seem to change the music, music seems to change the words, and so on.

It was observed that when the experience is not significant it is not recalled. More specifically, children seemed not to remember well the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece of the concert, Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor*, Op 64. Some children did not even remember that the piece was presented with images, and what those images were. The difference between the 1<sup>st</sup> piece and the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece played is in the way the child experiences the music. When a child experiences temporality through the visual and auditory movements by the animals climbing the mountain, the text is enhanced and the child is able to enact the music. The child's personal view will *shape* their own experience, which will generate individual musical understanding. Therefore, when a music piece is helped with specific multimedia and narrative elements, it creates stronger emotional attachments from the audience to the musical work, and



“narrative acts as a potential link to important aspects of human experience” (Almén, 2008: 41). Children like stories, stories are familiar to them, and familiarity builds on our common understanding of things.

I find music composition inseparable from a communicative attitude, and for me composing is an “oriented narration of dramatic action” (Maus, 1997:129). Usually while composing, I imagine the future performance, and this guides my compositional decisions. Writing this piece I was truly embedded in the book and images. I used a narrative to communicate personal experiences in music, and the way I constructed the music showed how I hear particular moments in this same narrative. The idea was to create a communicative musical narrative that, with the help of a narrator and image projection, would create musical significance in the audience and in the performers.

As explained, the orchestral piece was constructed to have specific “protagonists”, which had specific roles in the story in order to create a hybrid language, the result of the connection between text, images and music. The established connections happen at different levels, and function in a symmetrical form to amplify, compliment or counterpoint. By focusing on specific compositional ideas, musical narratives were shaped to highlight different aims, such as the use of leitmotifs and specific themes, which helped to portray characters, actions, spaces and the time passing. Musical narratives were used in a plural musical-verbal-visual interaction, in order that the contemporary music language would better communicate with the younger audience, and not as separate and disconnected entities. This symbiotic idea allowed the artistic development of the young listeners and the young performers, and fostered an emotional connection between the children and the music. The simplicity of the musical material, together with story and image, ensures that even the less experienced listener will almost immediately comprehend the music language, consolidating a genuine invitation to a more independent, enjoyable and meaningful understanding.

This paper explored and analysed the way the book was written and illustrated, and showed how it could be transformed and enhanced with music. The music story, accompanied by the pictures, maintained the younger listener’s curiosity alive, and helped the musical meaning creation of the young performer. The series of musical narrative sequences’ fed the imagination of the plot and also helped the growing curiosity of resolution of the story.

It is intended with this piece to invite the explosion of the senses - to tell, to see, to hear and to participate, in order to get a more complete interaction. *moon chunks (Pedacos de Lua)* wants to drive the young listener, to listen to a less traditional musical language with enjoyment, and help the young performer in playing and understanding new music, its compositional ideas and concepts.

Through a compositional musical narrative process, the present research tries to open new doors to possible pathways in musical composition, as an expressive tool for communicating musically. The simplicity of the musical material, together with story and image, ensures that the less experienced

listener, consolidating a genuine invitation to a more independent understanding. If a composition is set in an analogous way to a literary work, and uses images and words to enhance the musical experience, it helps establish a close relationship between several modes of perception. Therefore, perhaps as was observed in the interviewees, metaphors can be used to model music compositions, in order to allow young listeners to use their metaphorical music experience to understand structure in music and induce *imaginings*.

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