



# Training the Composer: A Comparative Study Between the Pedagogical Methodologies of Arnold Schoenberg and Nadia Boulanger

By Barrett Ashley Johnson, PhD

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While many teachers of music composition have influenced both the aesthetic and eventual success of their students, few have equaled the contributions of Arnold Schoenberg and Nadia Boulanger in the twentieth-century. A larger volume of a more comprehensive collection including all music composition teachers of the era would serve a certain purpose. However, the unique aspect of the current text examines, in detail, and herein presented for the first time in print, many of the teaching materials and approaches of these two famed musicians. Selection of these two teachers for comparison was made owing to the musical position so famously attributed to each: Schoenberg's predilection to the German School; Boulanger's favoritism to the French/Stravinsky aesthetic. In making the case for both Schoenberg and Boulanger, the Author has chosen two differing philosophies of music education practice of the late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century: those of Bennett Reimer and David Elliott. The Author examines the materials and methods of each Schoenberg and Boulanger in light of each Reimer's and Elliott's case for music education philosophy. Among the subjects discussed: the nature of musical creativity, the process and methods of teaching creativity/music, and the teacher/student dynamic, to name a few. In closing, the Author has presented his own suggestions for teachers, or would-be teachers, of music composition in a seven-step process leading to an effective pedagogy of the subject.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **About the Author**

Barrett Ashley Johnson, PhD, was born in Neuilly (Paris), France in 1960. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in composition from Baylor University in 1983 where he studied with Dr Richard M. Willis and received the Master of Music degree from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, in 2001, studying with Dr Robert Mueller. Johnson received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in music composition and a minor in music education in December 2007 from The Louisiana State University Agricultural and Mechanical College, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, studying with Dr Stephen David Beck, Dr Dinos Constantinides, and Dr Jane Cassidy. Following completion of his studies at L.S.U., Dr Johnson taught in the University of Texas at Austin String Project, focusing on music theory and composition. In 2004 Johnson was honored with membership in the national music honor society, Pi Kappa Lambda. Johnson's music includes many genres, varying from traditional chamber music, wind ensemble, orchestral ensembles, electro-acoustic works, and works of popular music. Johnson has also expanded his electro-acoustic interests into incorporating original music with original movies, namely *Les Acrobates* and *Time-Varying Travel in a Time-Varying Transport*. Johnson enjoys many interests outside music, including visual arts composition, wherein he has completed the first in a series of music sculptures called 'See Scores,' one of which was written for, and personally presented to, the late Andy Warhol. This incorporation of his aural and visual art is the subject of a recently proposed museum exhibit known as 'Songs Without Sounds.'

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