

# What's On

High note

Cezary's Picks

Music for young and strong

## Singing best therapy

By Cezary Owerkowicz  
Special to the Arab Times

The transfer effects are a subject of study for many scientists but it doesn't apply to communication (movement from and to the airport) or bankers (transferring money here or there). This was a subject for scientists to make a research on psychologists for more than a century.

The scientists analyze the influence of studying Spanish on those learning Italian, or the ability to prepare spaghetti with tomatoes or cooking macaroni with meat, the similarities of biking on different type of bikes and it is the matter of near-transfer effect.

However the scientists who are researching the far-transfer are concerned mostly about playing chess, learning math and music. (Anyway, the influence of playing football on swimming or biking is also considered.) The far-transfer has a much more interesting effect and far (no-men-omen) from the strongly based solution.

The first description of such researches (and speculations) came from Edward Thorndike and Robert



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Woodworth in 1901. They were sure that transfer appears if we have contact with two activities having common features, somehow similar to them.

The same they supposed that far-transfer is much more a rare phenomenon. However in many next researches with the participation of chess masters and professional musicians, including members of the orchestra has proved that those people are gifted with exceptional cognitive abilities, special intelligence, abilities of fast processing of information and excellent working memory.

Such abilities result in educational and professional success. Is it possible that these brain illuminations they owe to music or chess? Isn't it only a correlation?

### Researches

Giovanni Sala and Fernand Gobet, psychologists from the Liverpool University decided to definitely clear that problem. They provided the 'meta-analyses' available scientific researches testing the existing far-transfer and they really found many researches confirming such correlation.

Psychologist Glenn Schellenberg from the University of Toronto confirmed that there is a strong relation between studying music during childhood and the growth of general level of intelligence, which transmits later to development of the other mind abilities and achievements in many kinds of knowledge.

The researches of William Bart from the University of Minnesota suggest that children developing their skills to play chess or instrument, which demands a very good working memory and intelligence, have much improved those abilities.

The correlation, shown from those researches doesn't tell us yet anything regarding far-transfer. It would be also possible that the people with higher than average intellectual abilities more frequent would engage in demanding training of instrumentals of chess playing and would be able to persist in it, said Fernand Gobet, in the article he published in 'Current Directions in Psychological Science'.

What message do the researches send for parents? If you are interested only to improve your child's math skills, reading or writing and concerned about developing those abilities, what about chess and music? Is it worth considering or not? For sure it is worthwhile, first because of the pleasure of playing and developing passion, not only for better marks at school. Gobet says, "The most effective method of getting certain skills is an ability of well (and — much) practicing it. And we often forget about it. However because the Far Transfer Effect occurs, it would be helpful for your child anyway."

The strokes (cerebral vascular accidents) or head trauma quite often have become more frequent — but not only — among people 'since a very long time'. As a result we will sometimes suffer from aphasia, damage to the specific brain regions. Those people too often are left to their fate without essential help and rehabilitation. It is possible to help them and 'a miraculous medicine is — music, to be exact the singing music'.

### Traumas

'Between words' — The Foundation Supporting People with Communication Problems was established by two women, Neurologopedic specialists who earlier worked at a hospital. They noticed that the people after strokes, injuries, traumas of the brain stopped speaking. They are in hopeless situation without efficient

therapy.

'If somebody has inefficient hands or legs he has offered motion rehabilitation if he/she doesn't speak? That's a pity. They live the hospital and have to deal with it themselves,' explained one of those women — co-founders, Mrs Isabelle.

'Such people after leaving the hospital are brought home and made to sit in front of a TV screen and say, 'Have a look. He/she never would be better watching it, but quite the opposite, they will suffer from epilepsy.

Sometimes there are few meetings with the logopedic doctor. He will show a few pictures of beetroot or green salad and ask: What is this? This is childish. A person with aphasia knows how a beetroot looks because the person has not lost his mind.

It is only that he just doesn't know how to say what he thinks. He suffers and there is strain on his tongue and lips. A doctor asks him to say after him: la, la, la, clicks, smacks, snorts, blows. Everything for nothing, the words are not coming,' said the other co-founder, Mrs Katherine.

The foundation belongs to the people who could not speak for two, five or ten years. Aphasia deprived them from speaking, reading, understanding what one is talking to them. The women pull them out of their homes and organize group therapy.

The most difficult was to convince the men, especially those well educated. They would go out and show to the others that they are lonely, heavy wounded wolves. With women it was easier: they were more open and more determined in what they did.

'Here no one shall handle them delicately.' They will get on his nerves but he shouts and says they do not attach much importance to practice. 'Louder! Louder! Where are your voices,' shouts the composer and conductor.

Mr Taddeo conducts the only such choir in the country consisting of people who cannot speak. 'I came for the first rehearsal totally frightened. I couldn't imagine how it would be, all of them were affected by aphasia and some of them arrived in wheelchairs. There was no chance of placing them as 'an average choir'. This is a sitting choir but as everyone - grouped within kind of voices.

'When I was conscious, the doctor bent over me and said, do you hear my voice? Of course, I heard but I was unable to answer, even react with the blink of an eye, says Mme Irene (eight years after the stroke, until now in wheelchair).

Before she joined the foundation she couldn't speak. To remember the letters she passed the ABC book three times. Every day she practiced her vocabulary, once the choir. She tries to be close to the conductor. It is a competition between the participants. He is an excellent musician with perfect hearing, handsome and with such a beautiful voice: when he raises his voice the walls are waving... I admire these activities. My goodness, we try our best. As it would be a choir with healthy people only,' she added.

### Silent

'I don't know how it works, but when we start to sing, everybody, even the one who earlier preferred to remain silent, opens his mouth and produces some sound, in the beginning only the vowels, then the syllables, and in the end short words. A majority never sang before, some are not musical,' says the conductor.

Since he leads the choir, it means more than one-and-half-year only one person failed to sing anything and gave up. The others attend every meeting. Sometimes the weather is bad, windy, rainy, and I thought we would cancel the rehearsal because nobody would like to come, but they like and are coming.'

In December they were singing carols. In the repertoire they have popular and folk songs, rather well-known and popular. Men sing to women and vice-versa. It is a bit like talking, a bit bantering. When rehearsal is completed, some of them cannot pronounce what they were singing.

The right sphere of the brain is responsible for singing, left sphere for talking. It means that they deal well with choir, even using difficult words but with talking not. The therapy, accept the choir, contains also activities with psychologist, logopedist, reading aloud, logic riddles, dance, mindfulness and yoga.

There is no two the same brains (and the same strokes). However, singing looks the best therapy. Why... maybe because it is 'a language' primarily than speaking. And known to us from the first lullaby?

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**Editor's Note:** Cezary Owerkowicz is the chairman of the Kuwait Chamber of Philharmonic and talented pianist. He regularly organizes concerts by well-known musicians for the benefit of music lovers and to widen the knowledge of music in Kuwait. His e-mail address is: cowerkowicz@yahoo.com and cowerkowicz@hotmail.com



Sunset through Kuwait City. (Hassan Mahmoud — KUNA)

## Pioneers of Kuwait

### Hunting remains his lasting passion

# Dr Abdul Aziz an outstanding intellectual

This is the second in a series of articles on Dr Abdul Aziz Saud Abdul Aziz Al Babbain, a tycoon and a poet, an outstanding intellectual in the galaxy of Kuwaiti pioneers.

— Editor

By Lidia Qattan  
Special to the Arab Times

For Abdul Aziz Saud Al Babbain the love of catching birds lingers on; going hunting with falcons in the wilderness in the company of friends is always an exciting, thrilling experience that flares his imagination by the contagious emotional response he shares with his companions.

Every hunting trip is a discovery as well as a reminder of his youth in its wider connotation: the natural efflorescence of the physical and mental vigor synonymous of the old ideal of the Arabian man in the desert for whom hunting is an educating experience whose value depends upon the feelings it excites.

Incidentally Abdul Aziz inherited the hunting passion from his father, Saud Abdul Aziz Al Babbain whose enthusiasm in this sport was such that, whether it was summer or winter, hot or cold, even during the holy month of Ramadan while observing his fasting he always took his chance for going on a hunting trip.

The first time Abdul Aziz accompanied him was in 1949, he was then a 13 years old teenager eager for adventure; that first experience was so exhilarating that from that time he always joined the hunting party whenever it took place.

At first he hunted gazelles, then he found greater satisfaction in hunting with falcons.

Watching the strategies of both the pheasant and the falcon, the one trying to escape the predator and the other in hot pursuit of its prey, was an exhilarating experience far more gratifying than hunting gazelles.

Falconry became Abdul Aziz's lasting passion, because every hunting trip is a unique experience often leading to

fits of poetical inspirations due to the intensity of feelings it evokes and the strong of emotions it kindles.

### Wilderness

Usually every year in Spring Abdul Aziz loves to spend one month hunting in the wilderness, far from the entanglements of his daily life, to rejuvenate his spirit and to enrich his emotional life.

He may be going to Sudan, or to Algeria, or to Kazakhstan, Pakistan, or Afghanistan in the company of some friends.

On each hunting trip the experience that lingers creates new visions that kindles his imagination; the moral and mental bracing it affords and the stimulation of new ideas feeds the stream of his poetical vein.

One hunting experience that stands out among the rest is the capture of a live Thub in the desert of Arabia. The Thub is a large desert lizard, a ferocious little creature that when it bites, it will never let go.

Racing after it in his car Abdul Aziz was able to grab one by the tail, then his friends quickly immobilized it before it could strike.

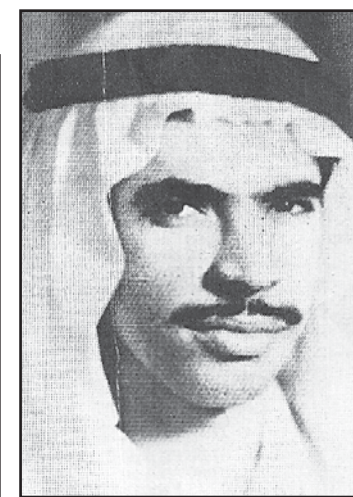
His father, Saud Abdul Aziz Al Babbain besides being a merchant, was a renowned poet, and a religious man with broad ideas.

In everything he did, whether by direct encouragement or through his example he nurtured

his numerous children on the higher principles of their cultural heritage and of Islam.

At the same time, being a man of the world he wanted to inculcate in his sons the basic principles of a successful businessman whether in the market or in a distinguished gathering of men.

In his diwaniya gathered merchants and the great poets of the day, hence Saud Abdul Aziz Al Babbain was very



Abdul Aziz Al Babbain

keen of having his boys attending it, from an early age, because he regarded the gathering in his diwaniya a powerful influence in the development of the noblest trait both intellectual and spiritual in his sons.

Indeed, as Dr Abdul Aziz Saud Al Babbain recalls — the intellectual atmosphere of his father's diwaniya taught him how to behave among people, how to sit in their midst, when and how to talk and how to listen. Those same principles inculcated in him in his early childhood while attending the diwaniya of his father and the influence he underwent in his formative years speeded his mental and emotional development helping him to become the outstanding personality into which he emerged. For while the intellectual atmosphere of the diwaniya influenced his behavior that made him welcomed in the midst of men, the knowledge and wisdom he gained enhanced his success in life.

### Faculties

Success is enhanced by mastering the art of dealing with people, hence, though Saud Abdul Aziz Al Babbain was allowing his sons to play with other children, he always sought to keep them in his shop as long as possible in order to train their mental

faculties through direct observation.

As all the youngsters of his age Abdul Aziz was always looking for a chance to escape, at the same time, while he was in the shop of his father he was absorbing everything that was going on in the market.

He was particularly keen in observing how people behaved, the way merchants were talking or discussing business and how they were carrying out their deals; this trained him to recognize, appropriate and assimilate those principles in human communication that became of great help to him later on.

At the same time under the watchful eyes of the father any subtle change in his son's behavior did not go unnoticed; one day Saud Abdul Aziz Al Babbain decided to put Abdul Aziz to a test, he gave him some money and watched his reaction.

Abdul Aziz was about nine or ten years old at that time, taking the money his father gave him he bought some cucumbers to sell.

Impressed Saud gave him a sack to display them on; in no time Abdul Aziz sold his cucumbers at a profit, returned the money his father gave him and keeping the rest he bought more cucumbers to sell.

This incident revealed his talent for business that grew into a passion as he got older.

Perseverance and a sharp intellect are needed in life for they enhance the propensity of the individual not only in detecting a passing chance, but also in creating an opportunity that might lead to success.

The early training and the influence Abdul Aziz underwent in his formative years together with his happy family surrounding and loving care of his parents, enhanced his development into a well balanced personality unhindered by mental complexes that could have spoiled his chance for a better life.

Luck is nothing but a passing chance, which some people are more alert than others in detecting it and make good use of it.

To be continued

Male visitors should wear long pants. Shorts and sleeveless shirts are not allowed. Female visitors: should wear head cover and long loose clothing (available at the mosque).  
■ Foods and drinks are not allowed

inside the prayer halls.  
■ For school visits, teachers are responsible for their students and are required to cooperate with the staff members of the Grand Mosque.  
■ Photography is allowed inside the

Grand Mosque (please note that disrespectful poses are strictly prohibited).

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Notes: 1. Please send your story only to the above mentioned email. Story shared in Instagram, Facebook or Twitter will not be considered.

2. Please write your story or memory and sign it with your full name, and your contact number.

3. It will be great if you send us your personal photos or those of the place related to the story (optional). Your story will be part of a new book to be published by DAL.

I am confident that your contributions will be an essential part of the history of Amricani. Share with us!

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## General

round on official working days between (9-11 am) and (5-7 pm), within a special tour program designed to cater to the needs of different age groups. The program is as follows:

Reception; Auditorium show; (according to age group); Touring the Mosque; Q & A; Art workshops; (according to age group — between 5 and 18 years old); Snack break; Distribution of the Grand Mosque publications and souvenirs; End of tour.

According to these age groups:  
Age group: 5 to 9 years old: Morning: 60 visitors max; Evening: 20; 10 to 15 years: Morning: 100 visitors max; Evening: 45; 16 and above: Morning: 140 visitors max, Evening: 105;

Tour language: Arabic- English- French; Arabic (English upon prior request); Arabic- English- French; Arabic (English upon prior request); Arabic- English- French: Arabic (English upon prior request)

Rules and Regulations:  
■ Please arrive in time for your visit.  
■ All visitors are kindly required to abide by the mosque's dress code.



A flyer of the event