

ELEMENTS OF MOVEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL CONCERT

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SUMMARY. The focal point of our study is the importance of introducing kinaesthetic elements in the educational concerts of the modern age. After a short historical introduction about the evolution of children's concerts, we stopped in the present, describing the manifestation of this genre in our home country, Romania. In the second part of our paper we focused on the role and presence of active-participative kinaesthetic elements in educational concerts.

Keywords: educational concert, *Do re mi START!*, interactive elements, kinaesthetic elements.

Introduction

The educational concert is an event with an educational purpose, which distinguishes it from the traditional concert, which gives the audience a strictly musical experience. The term "educational concert" designates concerts for children and young people, presented outside of school by professional musicians, aiming to familiarize the young audience with classical music, as well as adult concerts with explanations and musical examples. In our study we focus on educational concerts for children. They are not intended to replace the musical education in pre-school and school education, but to complement it with the experience of participating in an artistic event.

Although the context of an educational concert is fundamentally different from that of school education, the process of music mediation in the concert for children is based on similar pedagogical elements (Stiller, 2008:127). Mediation has the general meaning of "intercession, arbitration" ("Mediere," 2009) in the musical field being necessary to overcome the

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possible difficulties of perception and understanding existing on the level of the audience. In recent years, the notion of musical mediation is associated with musical-educational activities aimed at stimulating the interest of the attendees and facilitating the knowledge of music, having as its main purpose the education of children and of the uncultivated audience. The opinion of music mediation specialists is that these activities must gain more and more importance as they contribute to educating future generations of audiences. In order to be able to offer high-level artistic and pedagogical activities, it is especially important that professional musicians who conceive and present educational concerts for children should know both the literature on the educational concert and numerous examples of such concerts as well as the methods of music mediation, the teaching principles specific to musical education in pre-school and school education, respectively.

Elements of Movement in the Educational Concert

1.1. The educational concert

Among the musical-pedagogical activities aimed at raising the curiosity and the interest of the audience an important place is played by the educational concert, which has gained momentum in the last decades. It is particularly important for younger performers and conductors to become active in the field of music mediation at educational concerts for children. In the United States of America, where educational activities occupy an increasingly important place in the orchestra's activities, planning, moderating and conducting educational concerts are often part of the young assistant-conductors' contract.

The educational concert is a valuable addition to the music education classes in schools, the frequency of which is currently in Romania of usually one hour per week. Collaboration between teachers and concert organisers is vital for a successful music education. The concert can be the "sparkle" that kindles school activities, representing a culture different from that of the education system, where people dedicate their life to a form of art, while the music teacher gradually shapes skills and enriches the students' knowledge until they learn what success and personal satisfaction means about music (Booth, 2009:9).

The names of educational concerts range from one musical institution to another, but they generally avoid the "educational" attribute, travelling titles such as "children's concert," "concert for families," "concert

for schools,” “youth concert,” *Family Concert*², *Familienkonzert*³, *Konzerte für Schulklassen*, *Family Matinees*⁴, *Symphonies for schools*⁵, *Young People’s Concerts*⁶, *Concerts for very young people*,⁷ *Kinderkonzert*⁸. Some institutions use creative titles that appeal to the younger audience: *Musical story telling for under 5s*⁹, *Rainbow concerts*¹⁰ or *Lollipops*.¹¹

The first musical manifestations for the young audience took place in the second part of the nineteenth century in the USA (Mark & Gary, 2007:190), the list of personalities who contributed to the development of the educational concert by setting up the tradition of the series of concerts for young people including Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York orchestra since 1885, who held many educational concerts; Conductor Emil Oberhoffer, who founded the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra and initiated a series of educational concerts for schools in 1911, and Ernst Schelling, who took over the educational concerts entitled *Young People’s Concerts* at the New York Philharmonic in 1924 and began the longest series of educational concerts in history, that still continue nowadays. These concerts become famous under the leadership of the famous conductor Leonard Bernstein, who designed and presented fifty-three educational concerts entitled *New York Young People’s Concerts*, televised by CBS television network between 1958-1972. Bernstein himself testified that “these were the favourite activities in his life, which he valued most” (Burton, 1995:295). Bernstein’s educational concerts represent a culmination in the history of the educational concert and a source of inspiration for future generations.

In the UK, the beginnings of educational concerts are associated with the name of Sir Robert Mayer (1879-1985), who introduced the series entitled *Robert Mayer Children’s Concerts* in London in 1923, and in Germany the initiators of the concerts with explanations were conductors Richard Barth and Gerd Albrecht, both of whom were influenced by the reformist concepts of 1890s pedagogy.

² Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony orchestra, San Francisco Symphony

³ Berlin Philharmonic, Beeethoven Orchester Bonn

⁴ Chicago Symphony Orchestra

⁵ Los Angeles Philharmonic

⁶ New York Philharmonic, Nashville Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Toronto Symphony orchestra

⁷ Boston Symphony orchestra

⁸ Hamburger Symphoniker

⁹ London Symphony Orchestra

¹⁰ Cleveland Orchestra

¹¹ Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, Greenville Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony

1.2. The educational concert in Romania

The beginning of educational concerts in Romania is not very well documented, but today they are part of the offer of many music institutions. There are currently fourteen philharmonic societies, five¹² of which present educational programs on their official website. These concerts are called either “educational concerts”¹³ or “lesson concerts.”¹⁴

The “Gheorghe Dima” Music Academy from Cluj-Napoca initiated the children’s education program *Do re mi START!* in 2010, within which are organised educational concerts held by students and young musicians. The concerts in this program are dedicated to kindergarten and primary classes children who speak Romanian and Hungarian, and are organised either for children from general education schools (supervised by teachers) or for families. In addition to educational concerts, the program also offers music mediation workshops for teachers and interactive music workshops for various groups of children.

From 2012 until now, we have worked in the *Do re mi START!* Programme by assuming the role of conductor-mediator of the educational concerts. During this period, there were ten different educational programmes devoted to children, with multiple representations in different cities in the country:

- *Carnavalul animalelor [The Carnival of the Animals]* educational concert (9 performances, 2012-2014, Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest, Bonțida, Craiova)
- *Bagheta Fermecată [The Magic Wand]* educational concert (2012, Cluj-Napoca)
- *Vine, vine primăvara [Spring is coming]* educational concert (2 performances 2013, Cluj-Napoca)
- *Punguța cu doi bani [The Little Purse with Two Half-Pennies]* educational concert (5 performances, 2013-2014, Cluj-Napoca, Bonțida, Satu-Mare)
- *Melodia Costumată [The Costumed Melody]* educational concert (4 performances, 2013-2014, Cluj-Napoca)
- *Cenușăreasa [Cinderella]* educational concert (2 performances 2014, Cluj-Napoca)
- *Poveste de iarnă [Winter Tale]* educational concert (2 performances 2014, Cluj-Napoca)

¹² Arad, Târgu-Mureș, Craiova, Sibiu, Oradea

¹³ Arad, Târgu-Mureș, Sibiu

¹⁴ Craiova, Oradea

- *O vioară mică de-aș avea [I wish I had a little violin]* educational concert (5 performances 2015, Cluj-Napoca, Bontida, Satu-Mare)
- *Invitație la dans [Invitation to the Dance]* educational concert (7 performances 2015-2016, Cluj-Napoca, Bontida, Satu-Mare)
- *Arca lui Noe [Noah's Ark]* educational concert (3 performances 2016, Cluj-Napoca)

The diversity of these concerts can be seen both in the themes approached and in the various musical ensembles that interpreted the works. Educational programs were attended by AMGD student chamber ensembles, students from AMGD's canto specialisation, the *Notes and Ties* symphony orchestra and the *National Opera Orchestra* from Cluj-Napoca.

1.3. Elements of the educational concert

The receptiveness of children to cultivated music cannot be achieved only through the contact with music itself; therefore concerts organised for young audiences must include a number of specific elements that are not found within a regular concert.

In today's society, concerts dedicated to children need to develop and adapt constantly, as the demands of the audience are constantly changing due to technological developments and significant educational and social differences between generations. For example, although the concerts for children created and moderated by the great conductor Leonard Benjamin represent a climax in the history of the educational concert and a landmark for those presenting such concerts at present, specialists believe that the identical repetition of these concerts might not to have the same success nowadays. Children attending the *Young People's Concerts* had a certain level of music education, as did their parents, who knew how to appreciate the cultural and educational value of concerts. Heidi Waleson notes that these concerts are unlikely to induce similar experiences to contemporary audiences (Waleson, 2004:34-35), and Mitchell Korn believes that those concerts suited perfectly a society in which all children received music training (Korn, 2000:58).

Given that most often the conductors are the ones who imply themselves with children's concerts, they need to study in detail the constituent elements, and the innovations that ensure the success of an educational concert, respectively. The constituent elements of a concert for children consist of **musical moments** combined with **spoken moments**, as well as **visual elements** and **added interactive elements** related to music.

Barbara Stiller, a professor of musical pedagogy at the University of Bremen (since 2002), and a lecturer at Detmold and Linz Conservatoires for the course “Music Mediation, Concert Pedagogy and Music in Context” (since 2003), considers that a successful educational concert, which aims to develop the musical perception in children audiences, involves the alternative use of different forms of approach of the contact with music, such as: listening to music, music and movement, music and voice, music and playing with materials, music and stage play, music in dialogue with the visual arts, instrument demonstrations, music and language. These approaches include “receptive, reflective, productive, reproductive, interpretive and transformative” components (Stiller, 2008:127).

The music repertoire is chosen according to the objectives of the concert and must also take into account the musical preferences of the children (which have been studied in detail by psychologists). Songs with musical features preferred by the young audience ensure much of the concert’s success. Children generally prefer instrumental music, with fast tempo, constant metre, and varied dynamics. From the point of view of melody and harmony, tonal-functional melodies, especially those with relatively high frequency, consonants and classical forms are the most appreciated. Romantic music, music of moderate complexity and especially familiar music (the one children know) are the most appropriate for gaining the interest of the little ones (Țițeica, 2014:67).

The **spoken moments** that are interposed between musical pieces or examples are spoken by a moderator or the concert performers, who generally have the advantage of seeming more credible to the audience of children because they are directly involved in the interpretation of music and not someone from outside. Concerts can be presented by a main moderator, usually the conductor, who speaks to the audience; the moderator may also include other concert performers in the staging.

Numerous studies dealt with the influence of visual stimuli on aural perception and found that the **visual elements** of a live (or audio-visual) concert have a significant effect on the perception of music. The deliberate addition of supplementary visual elements in the educational concert is not in itself a new idea; if thoughtfully used, these visual additions can facilitate the understanding of certain musical aspects but, inappropriately, they may distract the audience from the music being played (Țițeica, 2014:67).

The **interactive elements** added to an educational concert have not only an intrinsic educational value, but also help to maintain the children’s attention, whose ability to concentrate continuously is rather underdeveloped. The most important forms of interactivity in the staging of a concert for children are the verbal interaction and the active-participatory

elements. Among the latter are the collective singing of a song (preceded by the recollection, and the learning of the song with the help of the moderator, respectively) as well as the active-participative kinaesthetic (motion) elements.

Verbal interaction, involving at least two characters, is usually performed between the concert moderators and the children in the audience. If a moderator addresses the children offering them various examples and didactic information, that does not constitute interaction, since verbal interaction must involve questions, issues and tasks formulated by the moderator, to which the audience responds through verbal communication.

Learning a song or a rhythmic text and interpreting it together with the attendees represents the most direct involvement of children in the interpretative act, the moment when the creation of music exceeds the limitation to the stage space, in that the activity becomes collective, the interpreters and the listeners participating together in an interpretative mutual act.

1.3.1. Active-participative kinaesthetic elements

The research of the kinaesthetic elements added to the educational concert does not benefit from rigorous scientific documentation, probably because their practice is a relatively new phenomenon. In the literature there are publications of some practitioners from the field presenting case studies with various applicative aspects of integrating the active-participative kinaesthetic elements in the educational concert for children.

The moments of movement with the audience have the primary role of facilitating the conscious listening to music and helping to better understand it. In the book *entitled Reaching Out: a musician's guide to interactive performance*, David Wallace, a violist, music mediator and music mediator professor at *Juilliard School* in New York, draws the attention to a trap in which often fall the novices who plan and present educational concerts: the interactive elements have nothing to do with music (Wallace, 2008:46). The author details the positive example of an activity that led to an optimal understanding of the music. In 2001, during an educational concert performed by the New York Philharmonic for general school classes, conductor Bobby McFerrin made a seemingly unexpected movement to relax his body to the amusement of those in the hall. McFerrin continued by asking the adolescent audience to execute a certain movement, which is traditional in the United States in the breaks of baseball matches, like a "wave," so that it starts from the last rows of the

hall, going through all the levels of the audience reaching the stage and the members of the orchestra. Following this demonstration, the conductor asked the audience: “What does this wave have to do with the second part of the *Italian Symphony* by Mendelssohn?” “How is the music we just played related to the waves?” (Wallace, 2008:46) After a pause the attendees began to discover connections between body movement and the music, finding that musical themes moved from one instrument to another, that music is fluent and that there were waves of dynamics, the sound being intense and becoming weaker (Wallace, 2008:46). After the comments formulated by the audience, McFerrin’s answer is, “*Good! Now have these in mind while we continue to play the third and fourth part of the symphony.*” (Wallace, 2008:46). Wallace confesses about this happening that, in addition to revitalising the body, the movement raise awareness in the audience to perceive the “waves” of the music they listened to.

The kinaesthetic activities achieve various functions in a concert, such as illustrating music in general – in which case the motion must be in harmony with the rhythmic movement or the dynamics of music – the simulation of the melodic movement with physical movement or the rhythmic activity coordinated with the music. They also have the important role of activating children in order to gain and keep their attention.

In the work titled *Erlebnisraum Konzert: Prozesse der Musikvermittlung in Konzerten für Kinder* (Stiller, 2008) based on the study of music mediation processes, Barbara Stiller analyses the series of concerts entitled *Concertino Piccolino* for children aged four to six years. The six concerts (in the subscription) were presented in the 2003/2004 season by the students of Detmold Conservatory’s Music Mediation/Concert Pedagogy program of study. The author records the frequency with which the various forms of music approach appear in the six concerts analysed and notes that the use of motion in combination with music, although present in all concerts, appears at a fairly low frequency throughout each concert. The author’s explanation is as follows: the venue where a concert for children is held most often has limitations that the organisers should conquer if they want to offer coarse motric activities to the attendees for a better perception of music. Further, Stiller emphasizes the importance of movement in the concert for children and proposes “on-the-spot” movement (Stiller, 2008:207) or rhythmic activities that require less space as a means to solve space constraints in concert halls.

We present below two examples of music and movement from the concerts described by the author. In the *Concertino Piccolino 3* program, a pianist plays *The Snow Is Dancing* from *Children’s Corner* by Claude Debussy; during this time on a screen there are projected images with

continuous snow, and the audience listens to the music that illustrates the fall of the flakes. After listening to the musical piece, the moderator urges the children to move their fingers in the air like a dance of snowflakes according to the music (Stiller, 2008:207). And in the *Concertino Piccolino 6* program, the pianist plays the *Ballet of the Chickens in Their Eggshells* from *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky and the children accompany the music with hand movements. Consistent with the music, with a hand symbolizing an eggshell, and the other one a chicken's beak, the beaks look curiously from the shell or peck in the shell; in the second section of the piece, the "chickens" fly through the air.

In our own educational concerts, held within the *Do Re Mi START!* Educational programme, we regularly included active - participative kinaesthetic elements. In the programme entitled *The Carnival of the Animals*, presented for the first time in 2012 at the "Gheorghe Dima" Music Academy, we included a part of the pieces in the cycle composed by Camille Saint-Saëns, ordering them by the way animals are portrayed musically, from simple (imitation with musical sounds of animal noises), to complex (the musical representation of the character of the animals). Before interpreting the piece entitled *Personnages à longue oreilles*, in which the composer imitates the donkey's braying with a melodic leap from a high sound (flageolet) to a low one in the two violins, we intended to raise awareness by introducing a motion element. After the audience was asked "how does the donkey bray?" The "hee-haw" response came promptly and unanimously; we then asked the children to imitate the donkey's bray, accompanying the sounds with hand movements: to raise the hands above the head on the "hee" sound and to lower them on the knee on the sound "haw". The children modelled, with sound accompanied by movement, the melodic leap – modelling being one of the most effective forms of music mediation.

The staging of the *Invitație la dans* educational concert presented in Cluj-Napoca in 2015 at the Mozart Festival is based on the presentation of several dances specific to several historical eras, through an imaginary journey in time and space. In the moderation of the concert, we pointed out that in the old days travelling was different than in our days: in Mozart's time people travelled in carriages, later on the train was invented and now the ocean can be crossed by plane. We introduced the theme of the *Sailor's Hornpipe*¹⁵ dance played in different tempi, to illustrate musically the ever faster means of transport. To facilitate the perception of

¹⁵ Traditional British song quoted by composer Henry Wood in *Fantasia on British Sea Songs*; the piece is played by repeating the theme of the folk dance in ever faster tempi.

differences in tempo, we added a kinaesthetic active-participative element: imitating the movement of the carriage wheels, respectively the train and the airplane propeller, by rotating the forearms in a circle like a vortex on the tempo of music. The activity was repeated during the concert four times (27'47"; 40'27"; 59'15" and 71'07"), the total duration of which was 95 minutes, being not only a music mediation element but also an invigorating one at regular intervals during a long concert. The programme was repeated in Satu-Mare in 2016 at the *Rest Art Festival*. If in Cluj with *Contredanse* KV 609 no. 3 by W. Mozart on the stage activated a group of four trained children who performed some steps from a historical dance, this dance could not be presented in Satu Mare. We decided to replace the dance on stage with an active-participative element with the audience in the form of simple dance steps on the spot. Thus, a dance received by the audience of Cluj children only in an audio-visually manner, represented for the audience of children from Satu Mare an opportunity to coordinate their own movements with the rhythm of dance music. In this way they perceived the relationship between music and movement in the art of dance.

Noah's Ark educational concert was presented in 2016 at the "Gheorghe Dima" Music Academy during the Mozart Festival. The staging of the concert follows the musical illustration of the biblical legend as well as the presentation of the animals that ascended to Noah's Ark. We compared during the concert the dancing of a butterfly with that of an elephant. Saint-Saens, who humorously used many musical quotations in *The Carnival of the Animals*, cites the theme of the *Dance of the Sylphs* in *The Damnation of Faust* by Hector Berlioz, transposing it from the high register in the double bass register in *L'éléphant*. In the educational concert, the theme of the original Berlioz dance was interpreted in a re-orchestrated version for the butterfly portrayal in order to be presented alongside the "*Elephant Dance*," thus illustrating the difference between the two animals through the character of the music. For a clearer perception of the difference in character, we invited the children to mimic the dancing butterflies with the palms of their hands, and then dance on the spot a heavy waltz, like an elephant trembling on its feet.

These examples highlight how the connection between music and movement can be used in educational concerts for a better understanding and a clearer perception of some aspects of musical content.

Conclusions

In the classical music concert, the natural quintessential reaction of the listener, that of moving, dancing or applauding on music is generally

suppressed due to traditional conventions. An innovative element of the twenty-first century educational concert is the introduction of the movement as a participatory activity with the public.

Knowing the manifestations in which the relationship between music and movement is used in education is necessary for those who organise and present educational concerts, for enlivening musical knowledge by avoiding theoretical explanations but using sensory experiences. The correct integration of active-participative movement elements into an educational concert programme is a tool that can provide a successful musical mediation.

The presence of movement elements that imply the physical modelling of rhythmic movements through body movements may bear entertainment value and are proof of the evolution of the educational concert in a direction that is both accessible and loved by children.

Translated from Romanian by Dora Felicia Barta

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