

MUSICAL EDUCATION VERSUS MAN OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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SUMMARY. The achievements and use of the new technologies provide contemporary education with a new structure of the social requirements. Owing to the social progress, education has become much more active, an operating factor of progress, preparing people according to the requirements of the future society. Music education prepares the individuals to understand and adequately adapt to the contemporary social culture and, through specific actions, it ensures the formation and development of their cultural creativity. Along with the other forms of art, music contributes to the society's cultural continuity and stability. In addition, it gives birth to a vigorous dynamic interaction between the members of a group sharing the same national, religious, cultural or ideological identities. Music plays an important part in contemporary education, as part of the human culture, as a powerful means of emotional expression and interpersonal communication, as an expression of national, religious and cultural identity, as well as a means of contact, communication and exchange between different cultures, nations and religions, as a means of recreation, entertainment and aesthetic enjoyment.

Keywords: music, education, society, contemporary, man.

Education is a means of passing on the cultural values, production experience and social conduct to future generations. It is not merely a preparation for the upcoming life, but life itself.

The achievements and use of new technologies provide contemporary education with a new structure of social and human requirements. Thanks to the social progress, education has gained a far more active pace, turning into an active factor of progress and preparing the man in accordance with the requirements of the future society. The alert pace of today's society requires that the pupil assimilate knowledge that is as selective and concentrated as possible. Given the necessity to update to the new requirements, new teaching tools, methods and techniques are emerging.

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The new methodologies aim at increasing the intellectual potential and they put emphasis on the pupils' effort in discovering the laws of the real world through observation, investigation, experimentation and the drawing of conclusions.

The rapid changes occurring in today's society have contributed to a broadening of school education, by completing it with spontaneous education (which is not organized within the social-cultural environment) and with the organized education during off-school hours. All these help broaden the scope of knowledge and contribute to the formation of the contemporary man.

What role does music play in shaping the personality of today's society?

Music helps people become cultivated personalities. It shapes people in the sense of helping them adjust to the conditions and specificity of the cultural existence. Music education helps people to understand and adequately adjust to the contemporary social culture and, through specific actions; it ensures the formation and development of their cultural creativity. As an art and science, music is part of the human culture, as well as a part of the society's everyday life. As Gilles Deleuze used to say: "The traces culture leaves imprinted on the human spirit cannot be erased; man is "doomed" to culture and its permanent "mark" is education" (Antonesei, L., 1996, p.19). Music influences people by making the most subtle waves of their spirit vibrate, shaping and developing their artistic imagination and creativity. It is a form of expressing and releasing the human emotions. Recreation and entertainment are dimensions of music that directly influence the spiritual education of the individual. The musical experience is a source of unique joy and delight, able to color up the monotony of everyday life, also helping us to use our spare time creatively. This creativity is quite important nowadays, when young people have a growing tendency to isolate them from society, preferring to spend endless hours in front of the TV set or find refuge in the virtual world of the computer.

Music has a great power of communication. All those who have been part of a musical ensemble, a choir or an orchestra have definitely experienced this communicative dimension of music. Furthermore, the constitutive elements of music such as melody, rhythm and dynamics play a decisive role in the primary form of human communication, that between a mother and her baby. The fact that music plays an important part in the emergence of the first signs of communication gives us reason to assume that it is going to continue to be important in human communication, all through our lives.

Music represents playing with musical sounds and, as any other game, it can be for a single person or for a group; it can also be an intellectual or a physical game. Playing is a natural necessity of both

children and adults. It exercises the mind and body, it creates a feeling of pleasure; it entertains and relaxes people, making them feel creative and developing their sociability. Through the musical game, the child enters the world of music without effort. By learning the language, they develop their imagination, creativity, their senses and feelings and discover their own way of expression, in accordance with their personality.

In preschool education, music helps the children develop their thinking, their acoustic-phonetic perception of sound, their kinetic activity, as well as improve their memory and love for study. As an art and form of communication, it can be a fertile land for developing a strong connection between the members of a social group.

The melodies' words clothe the sounds of music, giving them a much deeper meaning, enriching communication through musical models, symbols, notions and socio-cultural meanings.

Often, some people draw the wrong conclusions in saying that language is the sole system of expression through symbols, forgetting the fact that music is the route through which we can symbolically represent a whole.

Aside from its connection with our mind and emotions, music has a direct influence over the human physical activity. The vocal and instrumental performances contribute to the development of the motor and breathing apparatus, ensuring a better oxygenation of the blood. Playing an instrument, learning the musical concepts, music history and literature, etc., all these contribute to the overall development of the human intellect, creativity, aesthetic taste and moral qualities. Performing in music is a form of creativity that unites the mind, the body and the emotions.

Over the last few years, an in-depth research has been made on how to approach music in the process of education and its influence upon improving the pupils' performance and behaviour in school. It is undoubtedly interesting to analyse the results of the psychologists' research, who have been investigating on whether music has the capacity to improve the activity of some complex brain functions and those of the pedagogues' research, who are more interested in the performances gained by pupils, after a musical audition. At the 1994 Congress of the American Psychological Society, a group of researchers from the University of California presented their conclusion, after several experiments on adults and preschool children. Their conclusion was that the human brain works better when it is somehow connected to music – whether its owner is the interpreter or the listener of that music. Music fortifies the brain's activity centres.

According to Francesc Rauscer, one of the authors of the study, there is a close connection between music and the delineation of space. Rauscer and his colleagues made an experiment with college students,

who, after listening, for 10 minutes, to a part of the Sonata for two pianos in D major by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, were submitted to an IQ test related to classifying objects in a given space. The results were better than in the group of students who hadn't listened to that Mozart piece. A similar experiment was conducted on 84 students, who were divided into 2 groups. One of the groups listened to the same Mozart piece before starting the experiment. The group who had listened to Mozart before solving the tests produced much better results than the other group, which had not listened to it. Researchers believe that listening to Mozart's music awakens the nervous circuits that the brain uses for the perception of space and for a much more effective learning of mathematics, geometry, architecture, linear drawing and chess. The experiments described above have also proven that the impact of Mozart's music upon the human brain lasts for maximum 15 minutes, after which time the difference of performance between the two groups disappears. In order to see whether music could have a permanent influence upon the human brain, the researchers from the University of California conducted another experiment with preschool children. Out of the thirty-three children that were selected, twenty-two took music lessons systematically, for 8 months. The results of the research showed enhanced abilities in the brain functions of the children who had studied music. As a result of this research, professor Allistar Smith introduced an experiment project in the UK schools, according to which math classes were being conducted while listening to Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms, etc., in the background. The results were as follows: the 6th grade pupils who had studied math for 3 months while listening to Mozart made considerable progress in terms of intellect and behavior, as compared to the non-listening pupils. Thanks to this project, there was discovered that the music of Chopin and Brahms, if listened to during class hours, helps the pupils to concentrate better. Also, Beethoven's music induces them a state of calm. Paul Sydney, the music teacher from the school where these experiments were conducted, states that, although it is still early to draw a final conclusion on whether to make such a project permanent, the children seem to respond to music – they are much calmer and patient. In 1997, Don Campbell, the author of nine books, released the book "The Mozart Effect", which has largely been accepted ever since and it is now being used in 19 countries. In his book, Campbell presents evidence regarding certain sounds and rhythms that affect the human being, both mentally and spiritually. Moreover, he reveals his opinions regarding the way in which music helps improve memory, enhance resistance and patience and facilitates the learning process.

A series of polls made by musicologists have confirmed the positive impact that systematic music education has in the development of cognitive abilities, in cultivating critical thinking, in socialization and emotional

adjustment, both in general and in the particular case of education. According to the researchers, music is a valuable instrument in the intellectual development of preschool children. It contributes to an improvement in performance and in the speed of acquiring knowledge. Music has a direct effect upon the brain, influencing the child's behaviour and it can help the education process and the achievement of its goals.

The 21st century is looking for new opportunities for education, as the latter needs to meet the requirements of our times. The teachers of today are expected to prepare a new generation for a world in which everything changes at a fast pace; they must develop the youngsters' flexibility, resistance, creativity and cooperation, in this overall changing environment, as well as their ability to accept diversity. In this regard, music and art, in general, are the major force. By using the power of art, the music teacher, who embodies two souls – that of an educator and that of an artist, can teach the pupils to find refuge and peace in music. He/she can train their creative thinking and freedom of expression, as well as teach them to feel the beauty and aesthetics in everything, by promoting cooperation and social interaction, in an era of alert competition and stress.

Music, together with the other forms of art, contributes to the society's cultural continuity and stability. Moreover, it generates some vigorous dynamics between the members of a group with common national, religious, cultural or ideological identities.

As part of the human culture, as a powerful means of emotional expression and interpersonal communication, as an expression of national, religious and cultural identity, or as a means of contact, communication and exchange between different cultures, nations and religions and as a means of recreation, entertainment and aesthetic enjoyment - music plays an important role in today's education.

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