Musical culture, a finality of musical education

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Abstract

The human nature reveals itself in the trinity of his biological, social and cultural essence. The cultural component allows the man to express himself in the existing world. Music, a symbolic system culturally defined, preserves the creative contributions and transforms or develops them by using cognitive process, personal traits and motivation. The educational activity is considered a cultural activity.

Keywords: Musical culture, musical education, intellectual activities, listening, emotional level, musical levels;

1. Introduction

The human nature reveals itself in the trinity of his biological, social and cultural essence. The cultural component allows the man to express himself in the existing world. Music, a symbolic system culturally defined, preserves the creative contributions and transforms or develops them by using cognitive process, personal traits and motivation. The educational activity is considered a cultural activity.

The concept of culture derives from the Latin term „colere” meaning „to cultivate / to honour”, generally with a reference to human activity. The concept of culture is used in its two senses: for one thing, in terms of ethnology, culture is circumscribed to a set of distinctive spiritual and material, as well as intellectual and emotional features of the norms, representations and behaviors specific to a society., while the sociologic dimension can also include aspects such as: language (education, posterizing), architecture (styles, symbols), arts (sculpture, painting, music, literature), toponimy, time and duration (years, weeks, holidays), institutions (schools, democracy, marriage), values (liberty, equality, man’s fundamental rights), history (heroes, ancestral and contemporary creators, holidays), traditions and beliefs. A culture analysis brings to the fore the factors which mould individual patterns of thought, behavior and feeling, thus becoming a major component of group identities reconciliation in the context of social cohesion. At the same time, it is a heritage transmitted across generations by means of specific communication codes such as gestures or words, arts, media, interactive media (telephone, computer, digital film, photography). It can be assimilated through various forms of subjective memory (words, images, reflections), but also through objective memory (objects, books, scenery, rules).

Musical culture is the set of spiritual values derived from the various forms of musical knowledge and activity: listening – creation – interpretation. The cathartic function of music contributes considerably to human soul purification by setting it free of primitive passions and negative emotions, and in so doing, to its uplifting, while also...
as a finality to highly refined and complex intellectual activities. The fact that the values to operate with are genuine artistic ones that are part of mankind’s spiritual assets is also noteworthy.

Education is, without doubt, an important prerequisite in shaping a cultivated personality. The education concept assumes the student’s commitment to a continuous training – development process conceived and achieved according to a set finality, while education can be both process and outcome at the same time. In order to be more explicit, the outcome quality of artistic education will be regarded as the finality of the training activity – musical culture, while as a process – as a continuous training and development towards a personal dimension of musical culture. Education treasures up values involved in conceiving the education system and process designating the totality of the systematic efforts through strategic actions aimed at forming people capable of appreciating various cultures.

2. Methods

Listening to a musical piece is one of the contemporary man’s most common encounters with music. It has also become part of the process of musical education in the tuition system. Listening should be active and involve the student at the emotional level. The theory according to which, of all the factors of influence, sound environment and listening are of tremendous importance in musical education has propelled musical audition from a mere entertainment to its acknowledged role of a highly formative education factor.

The interest, the artistic taste, the capacity of appreciation can be cultivated only within musical practices, starting from increasing awareness up to passion for musical art. The intonation-listening methods can be adjusted beyond the domains of musical morphology (pitch, duration), according to cross-disciplinary themes such as: music and nature, music and dance, music and literature, musical and visual arts, musical image, musical dramaturgy, academic music and entertainment music.

Musical experience includes the whole range of emotions triggered off in the listening-interpretation-creation process. An information network involved in developing and implementing artistic education provides possibilities of gaining a relevant musical experience and assimilating the various musical levels: monodic-, polyphonic-, harmonic music; religious music; secular music; concert music; folk-, cultivated-/academic music, vocal-, instrumental-, vocal-/instrumental-, vocal-symphonic- and symphonic music.

If musical experience is regarded as the qualitative side of musical culture, then musical competences are of a quantitative type. As it follows from the specific character of artistic knowledge, and summing up the considerations above, the two component parts underlying musical culture are: musical experience and musical competences, out of which the former is of higher priority. Musical experience stands for the totality of the emotional sensitivity states as experienced throughout the musical act in process (listening, interpretation, creation), and sensitivity states express the emotional responses, the artistic receptivity triggered off by the external agent, namely musical art, in our case. Emotional building up contributes to the generalization of an emotional universe and confers perception a permanent character. Emotional perception contributes to developing a conviction or a value within the trainee’s personality [cultivated person’s personality]. Pleasure, needs, reasons are operators acting within emotional perception.

After emotional accumulation and integration, the subject puts the origin and cause of the emotional situation down to another element of the situation. This attribution leads to developing a belief which gets generalized, becoming a permanent conviction with the status of a modus essendi. The faculties of hearing, listening, living, perceiving music are prerequisites of shaping attitudes as motivational structures, actually underlying them. Thus, musical experience makes the most of the student’s personal autonomy as a result of having “discovered” spirituality in the sound message, of creating and prompting the needs for cultural values which can be defined as ideas and conceptions – either implicit or explicit. More recent approaches try to account for the high performances obtained in a certain field by integrating into their conception as many as possible a factor influencing the individual’s development. More and more researchers draw the attention upon the must of accepting the idea that the
potential for musical performance is innate, and that there is a relatively close connection between early stimulus and subsequent success. Musical experience and the influence of musical stimuli, irrespective of the culture type (Eastern or Western), starts as early as before actual birth. There are many data suggesting that musical abilities are formed within a natural process of culturalization during the first years of life.

The specific character of musical-artistic knowledge and education leads to the following remarks:

- the types of results in musical education correspond to the structural components of musical culture – personality traits configure musical experience (emotional experience and attitudes), with the remark that intellectual capabilities and skills as a whole correspond to the capabilities/skills as elements of musical competence;
- the capacity of experiencing emotions, in the subtle balance of intellectual capacities, can be considered a result of the education process;
- personality traits are the result of a build up of musical experience and represented by musical sensitivity, music perception, the feeling of music, musical intelligence, motivation and attitudes.

The two components of musical culture have led to a classification of musical education results into two content accelerators that, in turn, include the following subcomponents:

**Traits of personality (musical experience):**
- Musical sensitivity: the sense of rhythm, of melody, of intensity, of mode etc.
- Music perception: hearing/listening, spiritual experience;
- Musical feeling: a taste for music, emotional reaction to music, emotional self-expressing through music etc.
- Musical intelligence: free musical association, musical thinking, musical analysis;
- Motivation: needs, intentions, interests;
- Attitudes: musical consciousness, concepts/convictions about music, appreciations, evaluations, valorizations, behaviors etc.

**Knowledge and capabilities of applying knowledge into the musical-artistic act:**
- Musical knowledge: elements of musical language, means of musical expression, musical syntax and punctuation, forms and genres, musical creation as a process, intonation as meaning, development in the sound message, emotional dramaturgy, artistic image, music in the context of other arts etc.
- Knowledge about music: main areas of expressivity, European composition schools, trends, styles, composers, creations in the national and universal music heritage.
- Capabilities of applying the knowledge into the musical act of vocal/instrumental interpretation, audition (hearing, listening, perception), creation (focused on music, musical proper, impromptu, composition), reflection (argumentation, motivation, characterization, artistic/value appraisal, attitude etc.). Musical knowledge brings a direct contribution to the access into the world of music. Besides passion for music, the capacity of listening to it, interpreting and feeling it, musical culture necessarily calls for a system of knowledge. There are two levels of knowledge to distinguish between:
  - Knowledge contributing to building a personal *outlook* on musical art;
  - Knowledge which helps the subject with *music research*, as well as with perceiving musical image and metaphor.
The two levels of knowledge are in a dialectical complementary relation, making it possible, through their synthetic interaction, for a generalizing degree of knowledge to be reached. In musical pedagogy, knowledge determines two types of knowledge, namely musicological and particular (technical).

Musicological knowledge is fundamental in establishing the relation between life and musical art, the laws governing musical art and the subject’s musicality. In relation to what is appropriate, the students find their way by acquiring knowledge such as: music as a world-dominating phenomenon, styles operating within musical language-provided elements, expression forms in the relationship with non-verbal signs and with other factors (pragmastylistics), intonation as a musical meaning, style development as a deviation (to be noticed what gains in expression when getting out of the unanimously agreed on rules), musical image and music in the context of other arts.

The habitual utilization of certain musical terms should rely on the student’s building an intimate musical-auditory experience. At a first stage, the phenomenon will provide the satisfaction of private feelings and emotions, of discoveries on the occasion of practical concrete musical situation. The configuration of an inner experience can turn one’s personal knowledge (they are aware of) into the choice over a certain musical style. We are speaking of syntactic choices in a given language, accounted for by the assumption that human behavior as a whole comes as a result of a particular choice.

Musical experience as an activity can follow the outline of personality traits, the results obtained bearing thus the personality print. The acknowledgement of this relation provides freedom through the variety of the musical act: listening, interpretation, creation – as quantified in terms of musical practice.

In a mirror-like view, the capacity of “hearing”, listening, perceiving music, designates the level reached by the experience-condition, which determines the subject’s affect in relation with the musical phenomenon. The affect is derived from the power of imagining music, playing either a practical role, or one of soul delight, or both. This effect is related, for instance, with opera characters and their arias playing the role of catharsis and, at the same time, of delighting (Lamento d’Arianna by Claudio Monteverdi, 1608), or bringing about counter reactions. Therefore, experiencing music emotionally becomes a combinatory approach of musical education clearly cut - through listening / interpretation / creation - against the subject – object relationship, developing various variables according to cognitive experience, the psycho-mental state in the intentional affective representation, its particular milieu.

3. Findings and Results

Art’s educational valences are a major tool in the artistic cognition approach. They set off the act of experiencing and thinking which rounds off the access to the essence of music in a unifying grammar bearing a specific stamp. The permanence of the interferences and of the inter-influences of the musical - artistic language concept adds to knowledge subtle mechanisms smoothing the way to a convergent point between experience and understanding, between the sensitive and the mental. The absence of concepts from the artistic language does not necessarily entail the absence of thinking; it gets materialized in a musical thinking which calls for specific concepts.

As an output, artistic education both provides a mooring point and triggers off the finality of the training and formation route – musical culture. The stake of this process – the way of the esthetic process of humanization, training and development – is further enhanced towards defining a musical culture. The outcomes obtained upon the completion of the education process determine not only the degree to which the students have acquired musical culture, but also the objective perspective setting a hierarchy of the past times’ values. Irrespective of the unavoidable evanescent character of certain new practices and trends, the basic idea derived from the very philosophy of music hints at recapturing the past in various modalities in an approach generated by the tendency of releasing the capacity of experiencing emotions doubled by the intellectual capabilities which may be regarded as
education finality, an intention turned into actual fact by taking several ways in order to cover the musical phenomenon.

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