

COMMUNICATING THROUGH MUSIC: ASPECTS OF INTEGRATIVE AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Intercultural education, by activating a training integration process, enhances in various ways different cultures of belonging: musical culture is just one of these. Music is a very interesting language, capable of integrating diversity, create a sense of belonging and orient life projects. In the rhythms and songs, there are representations very close to reality, such as those of anger and calm, strength and balance, as well as other moral qualities; this is proved by the fact that listening to certain music, because of their nature, we feel a soul transformation. In view of this, it seems clear that music can have ascendancy on the soul's character and that is why we should bring the music to young people and educate them about it.

We should never stop wondering what exactly is the content of music, this intangible reality that manifests itself only through the sound. We cannot define it as something that has only a mathematical, poetic, or sensual content. In fact, it has a connection to the human condition because it is written and performed by human beings who express their innermost thoughts, impressions, feelings and observations. This applies to all music, regardless of the period in which the composers lived and their obvious differences in style. Bach, for example, who lived three hundred years ago, has created worlds that we, as listeners, make contemporary; the fact that music can not be put into words does not mean that it has no content that may be articulated only through sound, and any verbalization is nothing but a description of our subjective reaction to any musical composition we heard.

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1. Introduction

The educational world is plenty of methods that may be applied in various contexts, but it is possible to tailor the teaching to each individual way of learning by adopting differentiated teaching strategies. Today, teachers pertaining to a wide variety of fields are called to be updated and especially to ask themselves how they can activate a formative integration process, capable of enhancing in various ways different cultures of belonging. One of these ways is through cultural music. It is a language capable of integrating diversities, create a sense of belonging and orient life projects.

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listening to certain music, because of their nature, we feel a soul transformation. In the rhythms and songs, there are representations very close to reality, such as those of anger and calm, strength and balance, as well as other moral qualities; this is proved by the fact that listening to certain music, because of their nature, we feel a soul transformation.

2. From thought to practice: teaching music in a pluralistic modern society

Pedagogy is the science and practice of “well-education” that tries to explain in a practical way how to achieve good teaching in different environments, which is not for granted. Teaching becomes truly productive when it succeeds in its goal to achieve a change, a sort of “added value” that did not exist before or that has not yet been realized. Every person has its potential, whether it be an adult, a teenager, a parent or a teacher, who may be prepared and constructive in the school environment².

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Wondering about similarities and differences between music and language has always been a more or less conscious need of the Western musical thought. The encounter between words and intonation in voice, reading, theatre acting, and poetry, has rendered the language a code allied to music. From the educational point of view, language and sound communication belong to humankind as words and everyday gestures are necessary to survive. The effectiveness of these forms of experimentation contributes to the interchange between different ways of expression; further, the use of differentiated strategies allows tailoring the teaching and learning of each individual. The educational world is plenty of various methods, coming from different sources, applicable in educative contexts.

Think of the fact that music teaching was based on oral tradition long before its massive spread by the press. Think about Pestalozzi, Swiss pedagogue operating between late '800 and early '900: he reports about some recommendations regarding music teaching, which were applied in his schools. For example, in the Stans institute, reserved for orphans and the poor, he manages to bring the child in contact with sounds without rotational mediation, but only using an active and conscious listening. He separates perception and rhythmic production from that melodic and expressive, therefore emphasizing his idea ever founded in practical implementation first of all.

Democratic currents of the first '900 moved in the name of principles of peace and unity for the common good. There is no musical learning that does not involve an education to integrate diversities or that does not orient everything to sharing common goals. Therefore, it is significant referring to the research of activism in Europe to affirm that authors like Claparède, Cousinet e

²H. Heinrich Eggebrecht, “Musica come linguaggio (1961)”, in: *Il Senso Della musica: Saggi di Estetica e analisi musicali*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1987, pp. 27-67.

Freinet, just to mention some of them, have offered their decisive commitment with studies, practical applications in laboratories and interest in “other” cultures. In particular, we can recall the work of Freinet³ in the music field; in fact, recognizing the importance of music's ethnomusicology and anthropology, he gave cultural dignity to popular interests and, in particular, to children's interest⁴. At the same pace, after World War II the cognitive sciences have nurtured the creative research of musical vanguard, meaning that there was an attempt to bring out a match between practice and theory, which determined a real treatise on new musical languages⁵. Unconventional sounds started to be accepted and placed outside the category of 'noises'; it was an important and decisive change referring to the sounds of the African cultures. All of this, in connection with integration policies orientated toward an openness and equality between cultures, and becoming an opportunity to diversify even, and especially, teaching strategies along with communication skills.

Music in this case is one of the most significant experiences aimed at creating links among diversities. The challenge is to foster a spirit of human solidarity and tolerance on the part of the hosting community, such as teachers, students and supporting staff⁶.

From what said above, it is clear that the success of educational variables about music, although not difficult to detect are still easy to handle and manipulate in view of educational success. The goal to be reached is the success in integration; there are different methods for doing so, but a good teacher always knows the right ways to achieve it.

3. Sound – music communication: a welcoming tool

The musical language has an intercultural communicative value because it constitutes an important vehicle for integration not only between people of various cultural backgrounds but also of different ethnicities. Music is an inclusive activity par excellence, involves the body over the mind. It allows retrieving from memory traces of sounds associated with life events that in turn, provide a further recovery: that of one's own identity.

It is an additional communication channel beside the verbal one, full of opportunities for expression and socialization for everyone in general, and especially children.

Currently, the musical repertoires are enriched with messages of freedom compared to the rules of the tonal system used in the past; contemporary hearing provisions are more tolerant given the variety of ethno-geographic music. What is needed is the attempt to re-establish the technique by using the music, without asking the students hours of study with arpeggios and metronome, but asking for their own interpretation: music should become a functional tool for communication.

In this way, the reception of foreign students, particularly those with a culture very different from the Western one, takes a path that includes the demonstration of skills already possessed. Secondly, there is an effort to change the situations unfavourable to child's integration through

³ C Freinet , *Le mie tecniche*, Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1969.

⁴ C. Montedoro (a cura di), *La personalizzazione dei metodi di insegnamento e di strategie didattiche*, ISFOL, Franco Angeli, Milano,

⁵ G. Borio, (a cura di), *L'orizzonte filosofico del comporre nel ventesimo secolo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2003, pp. 241-322.

⁶ G. Rouget, *La musique et la transe. Esquisse d'une theorie generale des relations de musique et de la possession*, Gallimard, Paris, 1968.

the use of individualized educational interventions or with laboratory work involving small groups⁷.

Finally, it is possible to activate a series of “educational projects” also in collaboration with other schools integrated with educational disciplinary proposals; the goal is to create new social situations and new training opportunities. Activities are cross between the various disciplines, to be held in some cases even in extra-school hours, including music courses. At this point the education to the ground and music becomes one of the winning instruments: music is an important language capable of integrating diversities, create a sense of belonging and orient life projects.

4. Conclusion

We should never stop wondering what exactly is the content of music, this intangible reality that manifests itself only through the sound. We can not define it as something that has only a mathematical, poetic, or sensual content. It is all these things together and much more. The fact that music can not be put into words does not mean that it has no content that may be articulated only through sound, and any verbalization is nothing but a description of our subjective reaction to any musical composition we heard.

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⁷G.Rouget, *La musique et la transe. Esquisse d'une theorie generale des relations de musique et de la possession*, Gallimard, Paris, 1968.