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THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF MUSIC AS THE INFLUENCE FACTOR ON THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The article is devoted to the analysis of music as a factor that influences the social environment and at the same time structures it. The article articulates the interaction problem of the music phenomenon with social communities and the specificity of the music spread in the modern world. The need to study music is emphasized, which is of particular importance in the world of supranational and transnational streams. It is noted that music acts as a condition for the person's inner world formation, influence on the individual consciousness, and as a factor in the transformation of the social structure through changes in the value components of the personality. It is emphasized that the problem of interaction between music and the social environment is multiple and multidimensional, which makes it impossible to create a single, unchanging configuration of these interactions. The main approaches to the analysis of a musical phenomenon in the context of such a direction as musical philosophy are considered. The methods such as semiotic, linguistic, hermeneutic, comparative are used. The importance of the semantic meaning of music is emphasized. It is emphasized that music is viewed as a sign system capable of conveying a certain meaning, which enhances the importance of using linguistic methodology to analyze music, the consequences of its influence and the contradictions that are generated by it. The phenomenon of music acquires special significance in the context of global social transformations of our time. Music acquires the ability not only to influence a person or society, from now on it broadcasts both information and psychological states of a person / social community, thereby creating a single space, eliminating any restrictions for its perception. It is emphasized that a musical phenomenon is always associated with a certain activity of people, thereby giving it a symbolic meaning (moral, religious, political, etc.), as a result of which there is a kind of control over a person and social structure. This allows us to assert that music overcomes the limitations of its own configuration in the sense of an exclusively spiritual dimension of society. We are talking about the social and managerial markers of music that significantly affect the development of humanity.

Keywords: man, music, philosophy, linguistics, society.

Today the most serious question appears trying to investigate music in the social sphere. It is no doubt that music is a spiritual phenomenon. That phenomenon has a direct influence on our inner life, our feelings, thoughts and emotions. So it influences the mind of the entire society. T. Adorno even interprets music as information about social reality¹. Especially today, when society becomes global, it is very important to understand the mechanism of music influence, its ability to translate certain information or psychological states. That is why we need philosophical comprehension of music as a phenomenon of our inner and social

¹ Адорно, Т. В. (1999). *Избранное: Социология музыки*. Москва; Санкт-Петербург: Университетская книга, 82.

life; so this kind of art creates a new form of reality – musical reality. “In the XX century from accompanied phenomenon music turned into an integral element of the information environment. Never before it, influence has been so significant and global. The influence of music on consciousness and feelings is becoming more significant and persistent”¹.

The philosophical analysis of the musical phenomenon as one of the meaning-forming factors of social reality leads to the consideration of music as a kind of language or a sign system. According to A. Mazel² music language is a complex of historically formed means of music expressiveness. An example of a systematic comparison of music and language is the work of J. Svein “Musical Languages”. He explored possible parallels between music and language in aspects such as phonology, syntax, and meaning³. A. D. Patel carried out a deep and detailed study in this area. In his book “Music, Language and Brain”, he compares two unique sound systems inherent in humans – language and music, comparing empirical data and data from cognitive neuroscience⁴.

We can also find such an opinion that music does not express any sense. S. Langer defined music as a meaningful form. According to S. Langer, the functions of music associated with emotional impact (in which they often see the meaning of music) and the like are by no means basic for it. They fail to explain the importance we attach to music. S. Langer believes that the “meaning” of music is, in a sense, the “meaning of a symbol”⁵. B. Kutschke offers to understand music not as a language, but as one of the sign systems. In this case, the problem of music “ineffability” in natural language is solving, but other problems arise, not less important⁶.

First of all the problem of interaction between music and the environment in which it exists, is quite extensive and multifaceted even to try to present its integral structure. Therefore, in this article, we will try to highlight only some, but, in our opinion, the most significant aspects of this issue, as well as talk about why the study of such a phenomenon as music is very important for modern humanity.

Music is a rather controversial phenomenon. More precisely, while we are just listening to music, there are no special questions (except, perhaps, questions of taste). The music is obvious to us, although in many ways it relates to the music of our own culture. Difficulties arise when we think about music. Moreover, such that some researchers are trying, as far as possible, to deprive music of all conceivable properties and thereby deprive our minds of the opportunity to talk about this phenomenon. Nevertheless, music is the subject of research in many sciences. First of all, it consists of sounds that are part of the physical world, and if so, they are the subject of physics research. These physical objects are in certain relationships that are interesting for mathematics. The aural reality of music and the content we suspect of it lead to comparisons with language. And so on. The specific science of music is musicology.

However, studies of music within the framework of one of the sciences have not yet generated an exhaustive or at least consistent, description of it. This situation leads to the idea that there must be a certain area of knowledge that could integrate all the knowledge of particular sciences. Until now, philosophy has played this role.

However, today the philosophy of music is a very heterogeneous trend. Its conceptions and theories belong to different epochs and philosophical trends. Therefore, it is quite difficult and may be impossible to compare them and find common grounds. The philosophy of music has some common themes, for instance, music and emotions, the structure of musical compositions, music and mathematics, music and a world structure, music and language, but the content of different approaches is also very different.

Therefore, the philosophy of music is not a system of knowledge. This means that it could not give us precise results. Musicology also can be described as an empirical generalization of musical experience. These trends both find and explain many problems about music, but represent no solution.

The philosophy of music is far from an exact science. In most cases, we are faced with rich empirical material and various attempts to give it at least some explanation. In many ways, the existing problems

¹ Kobelieva, D. (2020). The Music of the XXI Century: Possible Discovery and Moral Responsibility. *Perspectives of Science and Education, Proceedings of the 14th International Youth Conference (New York, 17 January 2020)*, 276.

² Мазель, Л. А. (1986). *Строение музыкальных произведений*. Москва: Музыка, 27.

³ Temperley, D. (1999). Review of Joseph Swain, *Musical Languages*. *Music Theory Online*, 5(3). <www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.99.5.3/mto.99.5.3.temperley.html> (2021, June, 10).

⁴ Patel, A.D. (2008). *Music, Language and the Brain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵ Лангер, С. (2000). *Философия в новом ключе: исследование по символике разума, ритуала и искусств*. Москва: Республика.

⁶ Kutschke, B. (2014). Music and Other Sign Systems. *Music Theory Online*, 20 (4). <<http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.14.20.4/mto.14.20.4.kutschke.php>>. (2021, June, 10).

of understanding music are related to the fact that, apparently, the structure and many properties of this phenomenon are due to human perception. Although, on the other hand, a pattern is also observed in these perceptions. One of these patterns is that within the framework of a certain culture, certain pieces of music have some special effect on a person and society as a whole. This is the question that we would like to consider in this article.

Undoubtedly, music can be studied by itself, as an art form. This is exactly what many researchers do, and in a sense, this approach is justified, since it allows us to consider some of the formative properties of this phenomenon. However, in our opinion, the ultimate goal of studying music should be the interaction of this phenomenon with the “human” world. In any case, humanity takes part, if not in the creation (according to some), then at least in the structuring of such phenomenon as music.

The study of music begins with the question of its origin. One of the most common concepts says that music emerged as one of the ways to streamline the joint activities of people. Until now, we distinguish march, dance, and ritual music. All of these genres are steadily repeating types of music that connect them to reality. The musical phenomenon has always been associated with a certain activity of people, absorbed the semantic load of what is happening. Since then, the “vital” component has always been present when listening to music, continuing to fulfill its function.

An interesting and important question is how music manages to influence people in such a way. Starting with Plato and maybe even earlier, it was noticed that music is associated with the emotional world of a person. It is able to inspire certain feelings, as well as call for any action. Plato expressed some judgments about the influence of certain modes on the state of mind of a person¹. Until now, the direction that considers the connection between music and human emotions is one of the leading in the philosophy of music. Although, unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to establish the nature of such connection. The influence of music on the inner world of a person and his/her social behavior is obvious, and moreover, it has very serious consequences for both the individual and society as a whole. This is perhaps the main reason we need to study such a phenomenon as music.

Music was used in various religious practices and was part of life until the 18th century. At this time, people began to listen to music on their own. Public concerts appear. Pure instrumental music appears. This kind of music is not directly related to human activities. Nevertheless, music retains its social properties.

Thus, one of the main properties of music is that it is able to control a person and the social structures that we create. The socio-functional role of music is extremely diverse, ranging from the symbolic embodiment of socially significant concepts of a moral, religious, political nature, to the most specific practical situations.

In our opinion, this property deserves the attention of researchers. The answer to the question of why this is happening can become the main practical application of the knowledge about music that exists within the framework of various fields of knowledge. This research topic is becoming especially relevant in our time.

Firstly, a huge number of different musical trends appear, expressing certain aesthetic or ideological ideas. Secondly, it becomes possible to replicate musical works. Records, cassettes, radio and television discs provide free access to almost all segments of the population to all existing musical works. This is already changing the relationship between man and music. If earlier music was either the result of some kind of joint creativity, some process (for example, people got together and sang), or it was reproduced in certain (chamber) conditions, and also involved a person in this process. More precisely, certain conditions were required for listening to it. Now, it has become possible to listen to music in any conditions and at any time. The creation, performance and listening of music are increasingly moving apart from each other. Music as an expression of ideas and music as an element of influence on society receives a huge field of activity. The music gains mass character. Never before thousands of people have gathered at concerts. On the one hand, it was physically impossible (there was no equipment necessary for this), on the other hand, it was not needed.

Thus, the influence of music on society and vice versa is becoming the most significant in our time. This is a fact, and it seems to us very important. At each time there are certain factors in the formation of the spiritual dimension of society. Today music is such a factor. We are almost constantly in a heterogeneous sound space, which means that we receive some information and are exposed to a certain influence. Therefore, today the question of studying music is more relevant than ever. Undoubtedly, music in itself, music as an art deserves attention, is an interesting and important subject of study. But, first of all, it is necessary to think

¹ Фомина, З. В. (2011). *Философия музыки*. Саратов: Саратовская государственная консерватория, 21.

about the real situation and the world in which we live, about its properties and ways of development. Otherwise, the theoretical and aesthetic comprehension of its phenomena can forever disperse from reality.

With the help of music, it is possible to control a person and society. Despite the fact that this process has not been described theoretically, practical steps in this area are obvious. Like the “ancient people” empirically (and not unsuccessfully) who found out under what conditions the stone will fly the farthest, we are trying to determine what kind of music and how it affects a person. The lack of accurate knowledge in this area leads to sad social results and the detriment of individuals. Revealing the social and managerial properties of music can significantly affect the spiritual development of humanity. Although, it is worth noting that, as in any other area, this influence will be both positive and negative, which is most likely associated with the structural properties of our civilization. In any case, in our opinion, this research direction and the application field of the cognition results are very important and promising.

The main question of the music philosophy is “What is music?” Certainly, we can ask the same question about every phenomenon of the world, and about the world as a whole. Concerning our perception, this question transforms into a question about what does music mean for us. Music means something only because it is a part of our picture of the world. Each phenomenon is meaningful for us. So, it will be the main question of the music philosophy.

Exploring this problem, researchers come to the conclusion that the question about the sense of music can be asked only if represent music as a special language. It has much similar to language. Music, like language, consists of sounds, meaningful sounds, and relates to the same kind of perception. Music has some structures, which are very similar to the language structures such as phrase, sentence.

This approach gives us an opportunity to discuss the semantics of music. What does music mean for us, and what is the nature of its great influence on our minds? Some researchers suppose that the solution can be found in the linguistics methodology. Most likely, that this is a matter of different ideas and theories that compare music and language. In some conceptions, music is explored as a language. Some researchers investigate the language of music. Others try to apply the methods of linguistics to music, which may have a lot in common with language.

Music is perceived by human consciousness as “expressing something” or “telling about something”, and sometimes even “as depicting something”. According to A. Mazel, music language is a complex of historically formed means of music expressiveness¹. On the one hand, at least within the framework of everyday perception, the content of music seems to be self-evident. After all, it is difficult to imagine that huge masses of people spend colossal time, effort, money to create and consume something meaningless. However, on the other hand, when the question of what meanings are hidden in music enters the level of scientific discussion, such evidence dissipates. The beauty and sonority of the statement “music is language” fades when trying to analyze this phenomenon from the point of view of grammar, and, especially, semantics, when trying to analyze using linguistic methodologies².

A deep and detailed study in this area was carried out by A. D. Patel. In his book “Music, Language and Brain”, he compares two unique sound systems inherent in humans – language and music, comparing empirical data and data from cognitive neuroscience³. An example of a systematic comparison of music and language is the work of J. Svein “Musical Languages”. He explored possible parallels between music and language in aspects such as phonology, syntax, and meaning. J. Svein suggests comparing tones with words. Tones, like words, have certain properties that, with the help of certain rules, allow you to build unions that are more complex. Thus, the melody can be understood as a sentence⁴.

A striking example of considering music as a semiotic system is the study by S. Langer. According to S. Langer, the functions of music associated with emotional impact (in which they often see the meaning of music) and the like are by no means basic for it. They fail to explain the importance we attach to music. S. Langer believes that the “meaning” of music is, in a sense, the “meaning of a symbol”⁵.

However, despite similarities music has its own features. Besides this language has its own problems and unsolved questions. So maybe this point of view does not have any sense. Linguistics methodology

¹ Мазель, Л. А. (1986). *Строение музыкальных произведений*. Москва: Музыка, 27.

² Кобелева, Д. Л. (2016). Музыка как знаковая система. *Философия языка: в границах и вне границ*, 9, 157.

³ Patel, A.D. (2008). *Music, Language and the Brain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴ Temperley, D. (1999). Review of Joseph Swain, *Musical Languages*. *Music Theory Online*, 5 (3), 5. <www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.99.5.3/mto.99.5.3.temperley.html> (2021, June, 10).

⁵ Лангер, С. (2000). *Философия в новом ключе: исследование по символике разума, ритуала и искусств*. Москва: Республика.

in any way helps us to put in good order numerous musical phenomenon and theories. But if we look attentively, we will see that the main problems of language (therefore music) do not have the final solution. Moreover, the main of these problems is the question about semantic components in music.

R. Scruton, for example, thinks that music does not have any representational abilities. It is not able to describe the environment, different objects and phenomena of the world. But music can express life, the stream of life and actions, as we percept it in our mind¹. B. Kutschke offers to understand music not as a language, but as one of the sign systems. In this case, the problem of music “ineffability” in natural language is solving, but arise other, not less important problems².

Thereby despite music and language are both social phenomenon which translates certain information, they have many differences. Moreover, the main is that musical elements do not have the fixed sense as language elements. Maybe we simply transfer the properties of language to music, and it is a part of our psychological abilities. It is high time for the science of music to decide whether it is studying music itself, or whether it is studying the perception ability of listeners. Undoubtedly, only that part of the music ‘theory’, which describes its structure and properties, exists, but the part that explains it is very problematic.

Thus, having examined the musical phenomenon through the prism of its social existence, one can come to the following conclusions. Undoubtedly, music is integrated into social life and public consciousness³. We can say that music and society are in a state of mutual influence. Social relations affect the nature and structure of musical works, and musical works, in turn, are directly involved in the construction of the worldview of both individual and social groups of different scales. But, the relationship that has developed between music and public consciousness cannot be considered based only on the experience of our time. This relationship is rather one of the stages in the long evolution of this phenomenon. This relationship is based on a certain “feeling” that with the help of music it is possible to convey some meaningful messages. This tradition of music perception gives researchers a basis to draw analogies between music and language.

Music is not a means of communication in the literal sense of the word. In different historical periods, there were different connections between musical elements and the designated phenomena. There were periods when musical structures approached words in their functions, that is, they had a concrete meaning. There were also periods when the elements of music only approximately meant certain emotions, states of the inner world of a person, or referred to external phenomena. However, almost always the human consciousness was determined to look for some “meaning” in musical works. After all, most likely, the feeling of “meaningfulness” of music determines its incredible possibilities of influencing the inner world of a person, and through it, on society as a whole.

In the search for the meaning of music, researchers are faced with insurmountable (at least for now) difficulties. On the one hand, questions of meaning refer us to understanding music as a language, on the other hand, music is not a language, and such analogies do not bring the desired result. The meaning of music remains incomprehensible to the modern philosophy of music. But in any case, the philosophy of music should investigate this problem because of the great influence that makes music on modern society.

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