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The Development of Musical Perception Through Physical Activities

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Prague**THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL PERCEPTION THROUGH
PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

Key words: *music education in primary school, musical perception, physical activities, dance choreography to the composition, music and painting*

The subject of music education in primary schools in the Czech Republic, according to the curriculum, should motivate, develop and cultivate the natural need of children to encounter music. Music helps to develop movement skills. Music and movement education are thus part of a system of musical activities and musical educational process.

The current music education prefers the development of the formation of the relationship to music through active musical expression. This is made possible due to individual activities: interpretive and perceptual activities, further on singing, listening to musical works and instrumental games, and also music and movement expression. Music and movement education in the Czech Republic can draw on the great wealth of folklore and on the extensive collections of folk songs, nursery rhymes and dance games (Karel Jaromír Erben, František Bartoš, František Sušil, Karel Plicka, Čeněk Zíbrt and others). It has a long tradition, which has been influenced by the Swiss music educator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Swedish gymnastics, dance of the directions of Rudolf von Laban and Isadora Duncan. Nowadays the main impacts are Barbara Haselbach and Rudolf Nykrin. On the other hand, of course, it also draws on Orff Schulwerk, both on the works of Czech composers Petr Eben and Ilja Hurník in the so-called *Czech Orff school*¹. Of other Czech authors, we cannot forget the work of Jarmila Kröschlová, Božena Viskupová, Věra Mišurcová, Libuše Kurková, Eva Kulhánková and Eva Jenčková. In her book *Hudba a pohyb ve škole* (Music and Movement at School)², Eva Janečková – thanks to her integrating attitude to music and movement issues – summarised all of the above mentioned ap-

¹ H. Filipová, *Hudebně pohybová výchova na pozadí Orffova Schulwerku, Libuše Kurková a její přínos hudebně pohybové výchově*, Praha 2009, diploma paper, p. 41.

² E. Jenčková, *Hudba a pohyb ve škole*, Hradec Králové 2005.

proaches to the movement at school as a whole. According to Jana Šimáková³, Eva Jenčková does not only deal with the movement, on the contrary, she is trying to present the movement as a natural and equal component of school music education, through which children not only get emotionally enriched, but the movement helps them well to understand the issues of music theory, musical forms and genres, or the history of music. The movement is always associated with the reception, the movement expresses rhythm, meter. Eva Jenčková transforms musical forms into movement, she creates games based on graphic scores, and dramatizes opera librettos. Through nursery rhymes and songs she prepares children's dancers and listeners of music for more demanding works of art, with regard to the children's psyche. In her instructions how to create the choreography on the famous musical work *Kartinky* (Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky)⁴ she forms, in my opinion, a didactic axis and she formulates methodological and didactic principles of the MUSIC – MOVEMENT relationship. "Cesta dětí k hudbě a jiným druhům umění prostřednictvím pohybu může mít celou řadu různě motivovaných a různě náročných setkání. Klíčem k úspěchu je respektování dítěte, vydatná míra tolerance i náročnosti k úrovni jeho múzických aktivit a k jeho stránce lidské. Pak teprve může být rozvinuto bohaté spektrum různého vrstvení a akcentování zvolených prostředků, které vyplývají z integračních vazeb mezi druhy umění"⁵.

The development of music and movement creativity of young children is the optimum starting point for a basic (elementary) aural analysis of musical works, which naturally builds children's spontaneous physical reaction. This spontaneous movement reflection can then be more pronounced than, for example, a verbal assessment in the evaluation and understanding of the meaning of music. Children's music and movement speech then works as a specific form, which facilitates communication about the music, about the depth of its perception and understanding, and about the creativity. As a whole it has a strong feedback on the instructor, which informs about the perceptual level of the pupils. I have expanded this equation: A piece of MUSIC-----LISTENING-----PERCEPTUAL ANALYSIS-----MUSIC AND MOVEMENT -----: lower type (controlled) -----: higher type (improvisation as a result of the emotional experience) = INFORMATION to the TEACHERS on the EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE of CHILDREN = INFORMATION to the TEACHER on the PERCEPTUAL LEVEL of the CHILDREN.

As a music composer, in this part of the article I would like to think about creative practices for the emergence of music to ballet (musical movement choreography). There are basically two creative approaches:

- 1) Music, based on a certain theme (a ballet libretto), is created as a distinct, separate unit, which may, but need not necessarily follow exactly the vision of

³ J. Šimáková, Recenze knihy Evy Jenčkové *Hudba a pohyb ve škole* [*Music and Movement at School. Eva Jenčková book review*] – UP, epedagog.upol.cz/eped2.2003/recenze_01.htm (18.6.2014).

⁴ E. Jenčková, *Hudba a pohyb...*, Hradec Králové 2005, p. 275-299.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 303 [The way of children to music and other forms of art through movement can include a wide range of differently motivated and differently demanding steps. The key to the success is the respect for children, substantial tolerance to and high expectations of the level of their performing activities and human aspects. Then, a wide spectrum of chosen means can be developed. These means can be layered and accentuated in various ways, which results from the integration links between the art forms].

the choreographer. It often emerges in smaller or larger units, in close cooperation with the choreographer, or the set designer and the director.

- 2) The music arises independently, it can arise even before the choreographer starts to work. Choreography can then be in complete contrast to the original composer's idea. Despite this apparent "disharmony", however, both of these artistically distinct units can, under certain circumstances, create a single entity of higher quality. Sometimes the opposite is the case, the music and dance complement each other, dancing finishes telling what the composer only finely outlined in the composition. It completes the whole idea.

It is known that the motion rendition of music is able to portray emotionally tensed situations through a unique physical expression, so to say "in one gesture, in one pose", which we would hardly express verbally. In the combination of music and movement it is the rhythm which is of fundamental importance, even in case of nonmetric music (e.g. timbre music).

Certain rhythmic impulses, which can be directly linked to the movement, always appear. Ideally, according to the Václav Holzknecht⁶, the equation COMPOSER = ARTIST(dancer) = LISTENER may be closed. Rhythm generally was applied in the music and movement education for example by the music composer Kurt Sacher, who used simple percussion instruments, e.g. different kinds of drums, a triangle, castanets, a gong and the like. In addition to these purely rhythm instruments, he also used melodic percussion instruments – chimes and xylophone. He did not hesitate to use the so called play on the body, which is the easiest musical instrument for children in elementary music and movement education.

Stomping, clapping and patter – these rhythm impulses form a kind of intersection of music and its kinetic grasp. The next starting point of the music – movement relationship and the solution to the rhythm formula – can also be rhythmical speech. If we look back into the past evolution of the relationship between music and movement, we will find out that it has always been developing and changing. The rising intensity of movement leads dancers and choreographers to create even more personal physical manifestations. The relationship between music and movement does not necessarily have to be balanced. Mary Wigman (1886-1973) created a lot of her works in silence, she considered music to be a disruptive element, but over the time she only worked with small rhythmic accompaniment. Martha Graham (1894-1991) worked with a music composer Lios Horst. His music was created simultaneously with the movement of Martha Graham. Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) was of the opinion that music, costumes, decorations, lights and dance have their own separate logic and identity. Music, dance and other components of the choreography had been created separately and then they were brought together in the performances. His movement was not at all dependent on the music. In her musical and educational work Eva Jenčková greatly prefers the area of current production for children⁷. Another significant Czech personality in the field of music and movement education, who also prefers the current Czech works "tailored to your body measurements", is Li-

⁶ V. Holzknecht, V., V. Poš et al., *Člověk potřebuje hudbu*, Praha 1969.

⁷ M. Motl, *Hudba a pohyb v díle české hudební pedagožky prof. Evy Jenčkové*, [in:] *Teorie a praxe hudební výchovy III (Sborník příspěvků mezinárodní doktorandské konference hudebních kateder pedagogických fakult)*, Praha 2013, p. 159-164.

buše Kurková⁸. The work of this Czech educator, which consistently follows the logic of musical development of movement compositions in her music and movement games and children's choreographies, is the result of her cooperation with contemporary Czech music composers⁹ (especially Peter Eben and Zdeněk Lukáš).

Conclusion: the relationship between music and movement can be analyzed from different angles. It is certain that the perception of music through movement brings another new emotional plane, whether it is a pupil of the elementary art school or a student of the conservatory, or where appropriate, a dance professional.

The final presentation of the musical composition Paintings of Salvador Dalí – the combination of music and movement of the Czech composer Jindra Nečasová Nardelli and choreographer Yvetta Hubičková.

The composition has three movements named after the paintings of Salvador Dalí: *The Discovery of the America by Christopher Columbus*, *The Archaeological Reminiscence of Millet's Angelus* and *The Hallucinogenic Toreador*. The choreography was created to the music of the author after the concert of Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra and it was performed by students of the Dance Conservatory of Prague at the National Theatre in Prague.

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⁸ J. Nečasová, *Libuše Kurková – fenomén české pedagogiky v oblasti hudebně pohybové výchovy a hudba Petra Ebena v jejích publikacích*, [in:] *Teorie a praxe hudební výchovy III (Sborník příspěvků mezinárodní doktorandské konference hudebních kateder pedagogických fakult)*, Praha 2013, p. 185-188.

⁹ P. Eben, L. Kurková, *V trávě*, Praha 1963, p. 8-74.

Summary

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL PERCEPTION THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

In her paper the author deals with the use of music and movement within the school environment, for pupils of basic schools of art, as well as students of conservatories. It deals with the relationship between music and dance, with didactic principles and methodological approaches, and with the theoretical base and practical models. It briefly introduces contemporary dance choreography to the composition Paintings by Salvador Dalí composed by the author of this article, performed by the students of the Dance Conservatory of Prague and Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra.

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