

## The Function of Music Education

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**Abstract.** As a valuable spiritual treasure of human beings, music not only enriches the spiritual life of mankind, but also plays its proper role in different fields. The use of music to educate college students giving play to the aesthetic, moral and other functions, and improving the overall quality of college students, has become one of the important means for college students education.

### The Connotation of Music Education

Music education is the education activity with music as the medium embracing the joint participation of teacher (music teacher, performer, singer...) and learner (student, audience...).

Broadly speaking, "the music education refers to all education activities building or changing the aesthetic consciousness, cultivating the sentiment, developing the thinking ability of the learners through passing on and studying music knowledge to make education become the comprehensive development of the social activities". It includes the school and family music education, social music education with personal and community music education. With the development of human society, the emergence of new forms such as TV music education, network music education expands the coverage of the generalized music education, and offer the opportunities of music education to all the members of the society.

In a narrow sense, " it means the music education with purpose, being planned and organized under the guidance of the syllabus". Music education can be divided into general music education and professional music education. The ordinary music education refers to the school music education aiming to cultivate people's general music literacy in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, general secondary school, vocational school, colleges and universities. Its purpose is to make music art as a means of aesthetic education, and to develop the students' mind and body harmoniously. Professional music education is a music education aiming to cultivate the specialized music talent in singing and playing music, music research, music teaching in professional music institutions and colleges and universities." The biggest difference between professional music education and general music education is that professional music education raises professional music talents, while general music education is only a universal education of music knowledge.

### The Function of Music Education

There are many aspects of the function of music education, which can be analyzed from different angles. The following are four different perspectives observed and analyzed.

#### Music Education and Moral Education

Dewey once said, "the ultimate aim of all education is to form personality." Bubar also believes that "the greatest task of educators is to help shape character." The use of music to make moral education has already begun from the ancient China and the ancient Greek period. For example, Confucius declared that "poetry makes a man, courtesy develops a man, while music fully matures a man.", meaning the people's moral origin from the "poetry", based on the "ceremony", and completed in "music". He also said: "Culture is carried by propriety and music can also make a perfect one" actually emphasizes the rites and music can enrich the human being's morality. In ancient Greek period, the ideologists represented by Plato regarded education as the basis of national construction, and music as the basis of education. In his "Utopia", he said through

Socrates's words, "music education is much more important than any other education..... Rhythm and melody have the strongest power to invade the depths of the heart,..... A person with good musical education..... once see something beautiful, you appreciate it, and you happily absorb it into your heart as a nourishment, and your character becomes noble and graceful". According to the records of provisions of Arcadia people in ancient Greece: "every citizen younger than the age of thirty must learn music", which makes the Acadian become very educated and became "the most polite and honest people" in Greek. Another basic NAT, "they despise music and still in innate barbarism till now". This record is enough to explain the moral education of music education.

Music can edify the human's sentiment and purify the people's mind. In ancient times Confucius heard "Shao" music and for three months he did not know the taste of meat. Listen to the music "Shao", he was absorbed in mesmerization and unable to restrain the emotions which is occupied by music. He had praised "Shao" like this: "perfectly beautiful and perfect goodness", meaning that not only it has magnificent melody, and it's also very noble. So, we can understand the beauty of music in music education, at the same time, enable students to further comprehend the inner thoughts of music and get the goodness of education, so as to make the students get the purpose of purification. The moral function of music is irreplaceable for any other art.

### **Music Education and Emotion**

The music education plays an important role in the development of human emotion.

First, music directly influences people's mood, and through music education it can cultivate students' noble sentiments.

As early as two thousand years ago, ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras said: " music, some melody and rhythm, treat human temperament and passion, and restore the harmony of inner ability....."; in music theory of the ancient Greek, Plato believes that Dorian music can make people become strong; Phrygian music can make people ecstasy; and Mixolydian music can make people sad. Aristotle also believes that different modes in music can change people's moods, such as C makes human harmonious, E makes human violent, D make human calm and so on..... Experiments have shown that each piece of music can cause a different emotional change in the listener. In our lives, there are also many examples of musical effects on human emotions.

The legend said that the great Alexander enjoyed the music at a banquet and imperceptibly attracted by it, suddenly he jumped up and grabbed the weapon will be ready to fight, to see this scene, the musician immediately changed another mood music and returned him to the seat back.

Xiao Fuxing, deputy editor of "People's Literature" often sang folk songs in the Great Northern Wilderness production team, such as "Ao Bao Xiang Hui", "Red River Valley" and other songs. The lyrics and melodies of such folk songs are very beautiful, and the homesick mood of him and other youth was aroused and even cannot bear to burst into tears which shows the power of music.

In 1980, the outbreak of the oil crisis lead to the long queues in gas station, people burst into quarrel in restless mood for worrying about no enough oil. A gas station owner organized a band playing elegant music for the customer and eliminated people's bad mood.

Adjusting the mood and expressing human emotion is a unique function of music art, which is unmatched by any art. Therefore, we can educate the students music to cultivate students' noble sentiments.

Second, music can stimulate mood and encourage morale.

Music can influence the moods of people by making use of the cues of sound to render a particular emotional atmosphere and psychological environment. Studies show that the strong attraction and permeability of the sound waves of the music can cause the changes in the heartbeat, and nerve cells of the body which can lead to emotional stimulation. Here is a posthumous paper written by Beethoven to his brother: "..... Deafness has isolated me, and I have been trying to get beyond it, but how difficult it is!..... I am on the verge of despair, and death is the only way to free me....." The pain suffered by Beethoven is beyond our imagination, then how did he overcome it? He said: "art is the only way for me to avoid the road to ruin, and I can't leave this world before the completion of all creation." It was music that made him go beyond everything and continued to write strongly as if everything could not make him yield. That's why Beethoven's music works are

out of the ordinary. Throughout the ages, examples of arousing people's minds and inspiring morale by music are abound.

Xian Xinghai's Piano Concerto "the Yellow River", with high spirited melody, inspired countless Chinese people with high ideals to put themselves into the Anti Japanese struggle. the strong struggle raging like a storm shown the revolutionary ranks full of confidence. Its majestic tone and strong melody still inspire the high morale of the Chinese descendants today.

"La Marseillaise" has played a huge role in the war of Paris people overcame Louis XVI Dynasty palace in August 10, 1792. The next day on the battle started, the revolutionary government ordered ten thousand copies of "La Marseillaise" to send to the country and a general in the report required for one thousand soldiers or one thousand "Marseillaise" to strengthen the power.

Napoleon once said, "a good March is worth one hundred cannons."

Music can stimulate the emotion and inspiration, so does the music education. Encouraging students to achieve morale, cultivate the quality of defying difficulties by music education will be a valuable asset in their life.

### **Music Education and Team Spirit**

Music can not only express people's feelings, but also coordinate people's relations, thus promoting interpersonal communication and cooperation. In schools, music education can be used to enhance the team consciousness of students. In the course of music teaching, Duet---chorus or Quartet---ensemble and collective participation in music activities, each person as an indispensable part of the entirety has its own personality, each individual needs close cooperation and complement. But with their own characteristics and functions, they are still insurmountable and more irreplaceable. Especially in the learning of polyphonic singing or playing, the perplexing harmony interweave together and jointly issued the sound is wonderful. If the chorus or ensemble players cannot listen to each other or cannot cooperate with each other in harmony, the singing or playing is out of order, the wonderful music will be nowhere to be found. If everyone can cooperate with each other and find their place in music, the fun of it can not be realized unless it is personally involved and cooperate and exercise after a long period. All singing with one voice is characteristic of sing in chorus. Because there is no more voices, sing a song together is easier compared to the multiple voice chorus. The duet - Chorus is all sound with different voice. But this "difference" has inherent need to achieve a good singing effect. You must form an organic combination with homocentric in different voice in order to get one heart and one mind. The training value and aesthetic value is much greater than in sing in chorus. Therefore, the meaning of counterpoint music education can not be over described. All in all walks of life in China today emphasizes the team strength, especially in the army. Under the conditions of present, the implementation of joint operations between the various arms requires close coordination in order to win. They have to complete their own tasks and cooperate with each other to assist other units, which is the same with the chorus of music education. So it is meaningful to teach music education especially to develop the training of chorus in military academies. The significance of Chorus-ensemble education is realized by involvement of the people and form the common feeling and consciousness. "The practice and education of music have the most powerful function and value of cultivating community consciousness. This spiritual power is commendable and difficult to obtain". So we can not underestimate the music education function of collective participation of the activities. The music educators should use this education means to cultivate students' common sense and consensus to enhance the students' awareness of the team.

### **Music Education and the Cultivation of Aesthetic Ability**

We introduced three kinds of function of music above. whether it is moral education function and the cultivation of the team consciousness belong to the utility function of music education , but we should not ignore its non utilitarian aesthetic function. It is aesthetic function. "it refers that the music education can improve the learner's musical aesthetic ability, learn to feel the beauty of music, appreciate the beauty of music and create the beauty of music, so as to make people realize the harmonious comprehensive development". Fundamentally speaking, people's aesthetic consciousness ability is a comprehensive judgment including many kinds of psychological activities,

such as perception, association and understanding. What we call music education is the cultivation of people's aesthetic ability, which refers to the ability of hearing, perception, association and imagination, and music comprehension. The activity of music learning is actually a kind of musical aesthetic experience under the control of musical aesthetic consciousness. In the pleasant aesthetic experience of music, people's aesthetic ability of music will be greatly improved. Once the music education neglect its aesthetic function and focus on its utility function, it will lose the significance when the students who can not feel the beauty of music. So the utility function of music education are realized based on its aesthetic function.

There are many functions for music education, for example, the function of education, fitness and the development of creativity and so on. We hope that our broad educators will study carefully and play their role in order to achieve the purpose of music education.

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