

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

MUSIC AND ITS WHOLISTIC EXISTENTIAL RELEVANCE TO HUMANITY

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Abstract

The phenomenon, music, remains one of humanity's most visible existential activities that cut across cultures, tribes, religions and nations, to the vest end of the universe. Thus, music-making has been known to be part of human life, and it finds representations and inclusion in his socio-cultural cum religious experiences or activities. If music-making has not been of any great use to man, its use and service would have been jettisoned from the scheme of man's existential affairs. By existential relevance of music to human life, is meant, the observable concrete ways in which the phenomenon, music, is in the service of utility, or is useful to human life. In other words are there some ways, music as performance art, in its various forms, either in listening to its recorded form, or engaging in its making can influence, affect, control or sedate or soothe, human beings for their wellbeing. From the investigations, researches, and confessions of many attracted to the musical phenomenon, the answers, have often been in the affirmative.

Keywords: Music, Existential Relevance, Humanity

Introduction

Music and its practice and use touch almost the whole labyrinth of human lives and endeavours, to the extent that many have casually, irresistibly, yet meaningfully affirmed that music is life, implying that humanity has unavoidably benefited from its nature, practice and use. Little wonder great figures in the ancient world like Plato, had affirmed that music is the food of the soul, while Shakespeare projected it the food of Love and demanded excesses of it. Thus, despite the form or level it is operated, either in simple folk songs, gospel pops, highlife pop, reggae, or classical art music, or religious songs, all assume or form one rich musical base, and banquet through which humanity is nourished, sustained, and entertained by talented artists, and musicians, and their recorded forms.

This presentation seeks to highlight and underscore the various aspects of music-making or singing, via its various forms, inescapably nourishes, sedates, and benefits humanity, while gallantly projecting, and affirming it as a wonderful endowment, and culture humanity especially enjoys. It also conclusively enjoins all and sundry to benefit from its riches and 'magic' for their well-being and wholistic stability.

Music, definition:

The Wikipedia dictionary defines Music as an art of sounds in time that expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony and colour. In other words, Music is the art of arranging sounds in time through the element of melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre. Thus, it is one of the universal cultural aspects of all human societies. For Cyril Scott (1998), the role of music in the evolution of humanity reveals how a hierarchy of initiates' evolved spiritual intelligence, as delves actively influenced the musical

compositions of geniuses. These Devas-Scriptures of the Hindu religion were often rendered with musical accompaniment, and they in return, the initiates or the participant into more musical compositions and harvesting of spiritual wisdom. The spiritual energies and influence of music in the "Occult" diaries progress along cultural lines. As a result, we can make bold to see more, the influences of music, in the spiritual, social-psychological, educational, recreational and even commercial lives of human beings.

Spiritually, following platonic assent to the fact music can determine human character, based on the form of music, one often cherishes, sings or listens, St Augustine (354-430) a Neo-Platonist, saw more of musical influences on the soul, as a lure a catalyst to the spiritual exercise of prayer. Little wonder why he is credited to have said in the 4th century, " Qui bene cantat, bis orat"- "he who sings well, prays twice" This beautiful singing, especially for him, meant, the devotion of the soul, man's inner spiritual being (self), to the glorification of God, via songs of praises, adoration and worship. Here the psycho-spiritual action or exercise, of worship is compared to the spiritual exercise of prayer. Thus, there is an inseparable relationship or connection between the spiritual act of worship, and praying, because adoring God becomes the common object of 60th activities hence, good sacred music inspires worshipping and praising God and praying or communicating more with Him. And what is Worship, if not being inactive communion with God, in praises, contrition, thanksgiving and petitions, thus, at religious houses and churches music appears like the form or mode for worshipping God, and prayers. However, this does not imply that every prayer must be sung.

Furthermore, in line with the spiritual influence/ power of music, mike Talbot had confessed, that "Music can convert a soul. A single musical phrase from a powerful sacred song that flies into the psyche and heart of a listener who has been staying away from God, and Godly affairs, could tame him, or her, bringing him/ her back to God, to start living a life of reflection on the mystery of God, life and the future life. William Shakespeare (1564) had held that music, (Of Course, good music) is the food of the soul; the food here implies, nourishment, which means music spiritually nourishes the soul. In fact, good music that is weaved with consoling, and inspiring words, with scintillating tunes, provide or give man's inner, spiritual self, called the soul, the refreshment, nourishment, and comfort it needs, which is felt by the person both in the mind, the brain, and in his whole being.

Socially, when human beings gather together for celebrations music is used to provide entrainment to them at any socio-cultural events or gathering, and as such, strengthen their social ties and flexibility with one another, in precious moments of relaxation and joy. At times, hearing the sound of music reverberating at a particular location has away been a wake-up call to an event in view. Thus, when they come together to celebrate under the powerful influence, and sustenance with such music, they enjoy a wonderful peaceful mood, that can open them up to good thoughts of fellow-feeling, and zeal for mutual human, and community development.

Psychologically, music in its powerful influence, can touch, control, change or moderate human behavioural tendencies, and mood. Hearing or listing to particular music, that has wonderful melodies that elicit joy, in the listener, can magically and soddenly change someone presently in a sad mood, into a normal, relaxed and composed mood. This is because musical sounds are known to influence the human mind or the psyche starting from the response of sensory neurons to a certain type of music heard. And of course, it's the mind that directs or controls the various states or moods of a person. if the mind has accepted the direction of sadness or pain, as transmitted to it, by the sensory neurons, the whole person is likely to wear a sad, or pale disposition or moos to the

extent that it shows, and can easily be noticed and vice versa. According to research conducted by some bio-neurologist: in Canada "Music with a rapid tempo and written in a major key correlated precisely with the induction of happiness. A slow tempo, and a minor key induced sadness, and a rapid tempo combined with dissonance induced fear. Hence, they concluded that the effects of music are determined and accessed in the outer layers of the brain- the temporal and even the visual cortex, the places the signal to the sounds heard are being dissected and processed. This place is in the brain's emotional core-the limbic system.

Through their various experiments on different people, they discovered variegated reactions of peoples when different types of music were played, and the parts of the brains that were involved in eliciting such reaction on the persons thus, according to Robert Zatorre, and Ann Blood, of McGill University, in Montreal, Canada, who also used the positron- emission scanning (PET_ to pursue the emotional effects of music into the middle of the brain; featuring new melodies involving consonant and dissonant patterns of notes, and playing them to a series of volunteers, who agreed to be.

When individuals hear dissonant melodies, areas of their limbic system are known to be responsible for the unpleasant emotional core. Thus, the music bears much psychological influence on man or woman since its sound can control human mood, by changing it from sorrow to joy, from anxiety to calmness or peace of mind. Music, according to an anonymous German T.V journalist, also inspires actions, meditations, or reflection, and actions from a dull mood, to activity. According to Fredrick Nietzsche in Marcel (1963) "Music liberates the spirit; gives wings to thoughts that one becomes more of a philosopher, the more one becomes a musician". If music inherently expresses ideas, it is nevertheless only since Beethoven, that one discerns explicit verbal messages in musical compositions" As the Sound of sweet music spiritually nourishes the Soul, so also such sweet music, refreshes and balances human emotional life. Good music offers stable and pro-active emotional life to any lover of any sweet music, in that it can be the music in question. The interested listener could be inspired to step up to the emotional frequency the music elicits.

Therapeutically, music fosters the healing process of patients in the hospitals through its mélange of good sound and words of consolation, prayers cum positive encouragements. This often happens within the patients, and don't need much mediation of the third party to occur. The job of the third party, the nurse or the doctor, or even a helper, would be to have the music on display and often remind the patients to be believers or welcome, internalize or move along, with the psycho-spiritual energies elicited in such great therapeutic music.

In education, Plato, the great philosopher, from time immemorial, had recommended full doses of music in teaching children. This is because the sweetness of the sound of music easily appeals to the mind of children. Therefore, since such children whose minds are developing tend to capture such music first, it means that associating learning to music, or teaching children through music, or teaching children through music, tends to foster a faster, and unforgettable learning process, because the music becomes a gate-way or catalyst to internalizing, and memorizing what is taught and learnt. Hence, Plato maintains, advises that educational curriculum for children in kindergarten and primary school should be musical-charged and wired.

Music, instrumental or vocal has been found to provide workers in the factory, industries, or in some organizations, a necessary mental-emotional recreation and as such delivers them from boredom, or weakness resulting from the long duration of work in a factory where there is a division of labour, and each worker, Sticks to his or her area of job, there inbound to be a

diminishment of strength. But then, the steady playing of music for them in the background can always keep them mentally alert, to keep working. This is realistic, especially with the music one loves also; this applies to drivers of both commercial and private cars, who must cover a long distance on the road. Accompanying them with music, can keep them active and in the best of mood to drive well, and better without feeling tired.

Moreover, during football matches, the relevance of fans' clubs, who support their club side with some music; cannot be denied. The music they provide in solidarity simply can give their player extra-ordinary strength and support to perform beyond expectations. The recreational value and need music gives cannot be over-emphasized. Farmers too can enjoy such by either simultaneously singing and working, or listening to music from their radio sets while working.

Lastly, as a result of the fact that society needs music, to keep her social life active, composers have often sold their music to music companies, or marketers to make a living, or better their economic condition or life. If a composer's music wins the acceptance of the majority of the people, he or she is likely to earn more money to help his family and career. Since the time of the music masters of Baroque and Classical periods, like George Frederic Handel, Johann Sebastian Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, etc, music compositions on demand and even, not on-demand, has often received visible commercial patronage and economic upliftment of their composers. Think also of the band group who plays music on occasion. Think also of the band group who plays music on occasions, a financial charge is made before you can receive their musical services. Even a simple D.J (as commonly called) would not offer his services for anything through he didn't compose the music or songs he has in his gadgets Bringing his musical gadgets and operating them to keep an event musically active means a lot financially. In this way, music-making and provision, has become a career for some talented young adults, and elderly adults, because, it is a supernatural endowment to humanity. They are naturally engineered through practices and learning. They can also naturally be developed through interest; constant practices, learning and devotion, for practices keep one on the road to perfection.

Conclusion:

Music is a unique existential cum divine endowment to humanity. Its usefulness to man touches almost all aspects of his life; cultural, religious-spiritual, psychological, social, commercial, etc. It behaves then on individuals to use this endowment for the betterment of one's spiritual and emotional life and health. Negative music that emasculates the human mind and makes them slaves of passion, which Plato had warned against must be avoided for the good of our souls "If music is the food of love, give me more of it" (William Shakespeare).

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