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MUSIC IN AN AGGRESSIVE MASSMEDIAL SPACE

In the course of his/her lifetime one pays different attention to different social events, situations where music plays role. In these s/he displays his/her relation to a certain kind of music, an attitude to certain values because music due to the peculiarity of its material, structure and communicational possibilities has various impact on a person. Music creates space also for its various usage e.g. music as a background setting of different situations as a complement of other activities etc. The ability of music to satisfy broad spectrum of human needs also displays via exceptionally wide spectrum of its functions. One and the same single musical expression can be even “used” in different ways for different needs which accentuates its polyfunctionality. In the course of human development we meet not only new musical expressions and an abundance of new functions of music but also with more complex structure of human needs. In brief, the more complex, more differentiated, more layered is the structure of human needs the richer is also the functional spectrum of music.

The development of sound technique supports the forementioned standpoints since with its development new possibilities of music existence were created which allows listeners to perceive music of all genres, composition, styles, trends as well as cultural traditions of different nations. With the diverse offer of music not only the well known fact that the orientation in the world of music in our over technologized space becomes more complicated but also the individual him/herself is being drawn into his/her own privacy etc. Along with the development of technology we thus also “feel” the disruption of many social customs of music presentation. Researchers in general do not always pay appropriate attention to this phenomenon (e.g. the study of the influence of new technologies on musical communication). Trying to unveil the causes of this state as well as to propose effective therapy is nowadays already unavoidable requirement of our times. We are convinced that traditional upbringing is not able to be sufficiently competitive against the functional influence of massmedial sources on perceptive, sensitive but insufficiently immunized young generation. This obviously is a consequence of new, more complicated relations within the human society into which the new generation is entering and this is reflected in their attitudes and sometimes also in

different ways of escaping the real world such as sects, drugs, PC games etc. For the education process this represents a signal for the teachers of music besides realizing the complexity of situation not to get isolated within the boundaries of their subject – into a kind of professional isolation – since the forementioned problems apply also to music with which younger pupils come to contact on a daily basis. We would like to broaden the introduced problem with an interesting opinion of Philipa Glass which may not be in full accord with the previous text. According to him it is possible to perceive music as a pure medium built up through sound or as a sound event which demands from the listener a different way of perception since it is not characteristic by a plot or dramatic structure. According to John Cage it is sort of a “liberation of the sound” from under the human intention. From the methodological point of view it presupposes an increase in the effort especially “mapping” our native research activities, a research in the field of the influence of modern technologies on musical communication, a new way of formulating of hypotheses and empirical verification as well as projecting new elements into the education of music experts etc. From these thoughts, stand-points and opinions the task of searching for a new music education paradigm steps forward.

We could go on in listing the tasks, our current confused world leads us to this by raising up hundreds of questions to which we find answers only very complicatedly. We have brought up as an example the dynamic development of mass media which we obviously perceive as an exciting product however we are losing orientation in the methodology of its origin. To say it in other words the glittering attractivity makes the background obscure. For the same reason we obviously ask the following questions: What is and what is not tabloid? Does or does not have the current programme structure of TV destructional influence on the development of a child? How about violence, commercials, aggressive brutality of broadcasting? And how about after all the youth in schools? Does it not have a right - in the contemporary turmoil of improvisation, deceits, value inversions, bad taste and alibism – a right for a discrete but purposefull orientation?

In the situation of anarchy, I suppose, neither the well meant different seminars nor a preachers’ moralizing about the prevalence of erotic, nor a call for the fire and sulphur on devil’s head. These are only little efficient partial activities substituting the need of creating global, perfectly elaborated project of media education as a part of “education for the 21st century” built up through and with the help of a creative personality of the teacher (being in its way a media employee and also a bit of an expert) facing new information technologies and after all the world of media itself which surrounds us practically non-stop and is paradoxically becoming more and more obscure.

The absence of a media education project is thus accompanied with an unpleasant stating regarding the minimal preparadness of a mentally and morally immature individual to wisely and above all selectively – regarding his/her values –facing the aggressive and servile brainstorming media massage. On one hand there is, as we know, amazing content and formal attractivity of TV shows, in-

ternet, magazines etc. the temptation to take part in a light amusement, entertainment, excitement, thrill, relax on the other hand building up a fake illusion about the uniqueness of such programmes for the leisure time and the incapability of an intelligent but first of all critical selection from the gigantic offer. Obviously the saying what is not forbidden is today allowed fits into this picture as well. The truth is also that today we want have much of a success by noting about the ever growing emotional emptiness of the coming generation and the “unfortunate influence” of the media on youngsters.

The content of media education should be determined by common denominator: the media are the object of the analysis not the mean of it. The goal of this educational programme is the ability of the young person to judge the media scene in such a way that the media will not govern us but the other way round. The target is thus – let me be brief here – to be prepared to reason critically and make evaluation analysis of content, form, goals and importance of media products, further on to define the communicational status of different types of media production and to research social, psychological, sociological and historical circumstances of the relations between an individual, groups or a whole society and the media.

All these factors within the framework of a well prepared education programme and its actual application opens a space for achieving up-to-date media literacy as a part of general education. The goal media education is to put into effect the methodological and expert potential of an individual to perceive, analyze, evaluate and communicate contents broadcasted by media (news, documentary, infotainment and entertainment products), to create an ability of critical interpretational feedback multiplied by the preparedness to define the value and taste level of media production. One can approach this production approvingly, with reserve, distrustfully almost refusingly. To say it simply and baldly: to indicate appropriately to the media that we are not a mass of omnivorous and for all thankful mass of anonymous consumers.

Naturally an actual analytical encounter with this aggressive world presupposes an outstanding orientation of the educational team in the field of media and their multilateral experiences with the interpretation of partial problems respectively phenomena of media communication. In so structured programme of media education the goal will be to recognize the basic principles of intermediation mission of media; the insights into the backstage of preparing news material, to get an explanation as to what is the purpose of journalism, to learn the legal aspects in medias but also to acquire stylistic, publication skills and from our point of view an orientation in the wide spectrum of music. We should be also prepared to understand the manipulation principles in so called ideologized, politically tendential or tabloid sensational press. The main goal of so formulated spheres of interest is basically to take control over the world of media, to look at it so to say “from above” without the feeling of manipulation, resignation and passivity. To accept the gauntlet thrown down by our rival who intrudes for couple of hours every day into our privacy means to have an up-to-date knowledge of the newest

media technologies and acquire protection mechanisms so that we can withstand this omnipresent attack. Perhaps a so prepared recipient of TV news will have sometimes doubts about the reliability of a coercive reporting conformed to a slogan “the best new is a bad new” and will realize that s/he can easily become a victim of a global information terror.

Our opinion as to the goal of education is to reason and not to campaign – like warn against the danger of “programming” the recipient his/ her change into a non-thinking orwellian victim who can in a long run (hopefully only in an extreme case) lose the ability to perceive the world around him/her differently then through the media filter.

But how is it in democracy? Shall we accept the opinion of R. Scruton according to whom “a man in democracy wants to pull everyone to the level in which he lives even when he knows, that on this level the dignity is rarity and politeness is only reward” or shall we try to fend off threatening collapses of equal communication of media and recipient with an well elaborated conception of media education? We all for sure acknowledge that it is an acute problem first and foremost nowadays in the era of often unrestrained and practically uncontrolled boom of various variants of medial culture in the last decade in which our relationship to the media from childhood to adulthood oscillates between blind almost slave like confidence and rejection of its loud often meaningless signals. The mass media have similarly an ambivalent attitude to the game itself, to entertainment and to the core of estetical culture which is art. Every new medium / be it film, technical recording of the sound etc./ was after its development used to present art possibly gave a birth to new more specific types of artistic creations. Despite it the well known relation of production and consumption prevails in media for example the disproportion between the pop and classical music. Within the conditions of mass plural culture despite all the good intentions always appears the cordial problem the so called unesthetics. If it is possible to explain the esthetics in the most general sense as the relationship given by the ability of a humans senses and their whole psychic equipment to react in a specific way to the stimuli offered to subject the reality, then unesthetics is a state of not reacting e.g. the subject does not evaluate the stimuli. This state originates if an body is exhausted, psyche dulled the relation between the subject and the world is blocked etc. In conditions of mass culture each one of us is offered plenty of estetic stimuli and mass media in the process esteticize every single news or information whatever it may be. Thus we are muted via overdosage of stimuli which are accompanied by “coloured” grandeurs of the world. The picture of the world mediated through media is basically “more estetic” than the world itself. The result of this confrontation with the reality and its reflection in the media is often the unesthetics which affects an individual and often whole social groups.

I assume then, that the time has come when into the situation of media being not interested in a systematic critical and evaluational self reflexion we shall enter with an analysis of their programme, structure which can be – provided the cooperation between scientific and educational as well as other research units and

the media itself perspectively accepted into the complex plan of the education of our young generation.

I dedicate this text in memoriam to my colleague and friend prof. Jiří Fukač.

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The author of this article is pointing at the widening functional spectrum of music, which disrupts many social customs of music presentation and its perception. The text opens up the space (for a discussion) for solving the questions of media education. An accent is put on acquiring preparedness to reason which would enable students to both analyze critically and evaluate the content, form, aims and the meaning of media production as well as to research relations between the society and medias.