

## Music, culture and identity

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### Abstract

At the time of globalization it is difficult to pretend avoiding music culture and identity from political, cultural and social developments. Thus, it is impossible for the music to be unshakable and to represent national identity by not taking and giving nothing to culture. The dynamics of life and the rapid development of technology make it impossible for the culture to remain unaffected in terms of sharing experiences social experiences. Culture represents our current course, both in terms of politics, also in the social and human aspects.

Through the technology it is possible for our children to be equal with children of all other countries, to exchange information and to connect directly with all countries of the world. Musical education is one of the main factors of cultural development and preservation of national identity. Identity consists of everything we posses and reflect. We are those who distinguish from each other and have a common denominator compared to other nations.

**Keywords:** Globalization, identity, song, culture, music.

### Introduction

Music represents the spiritual side, surrounded with all the situations that the man experience. It is an integral part of the individual, collective and national development process. Artistic creativity is the path that connects people within the family, social and human environment. Through expressive language of music we recognize, identify and reflect on others. We reflect the identity, culture, and unification of the environment around us. Man is creative, unique and reflective, while art is created by him. "The man is an esthetic object and subject. Esthetic situation is conditioned by many factors, mainly social - humanitarian development processes, within the historical, psychological, ethical, political or artistic" (Hysi, 2005).

Music, as part of the art world, express feelings, emotions, general and special opinions, and is structured according to the spirit state, materialized through musical sounds. Art is the product of psychological thinking. "Art, in all its manifestation, folk or professional, is prone to update and make its appropriate place in the structural composition of a society" (Hysi, 2005, pp. 113-114). Populations throughout the history of human existence have been interacting with other populations, in all areas of life where music expresses feelings of experiences in different situations where man lives and works. The well known philosopher Moravski states "We know no society without art and aesthetic experiences" (Moravski, 1947, 17).

### Music

Music plays an important role in the process of production and reproduction of

national culture and national identity. Music follows man in all situations of his life, from birth to death. Music enables the connection of people with different traditions, different habits, different concepts of art and the world. It is present in us and we are sensitive to it.

"Music plays an important role in everyday life, we hear it on the radio and television, in the supermarket and in the church; we dance to it, rest with it. We seem to need it; in fact it is difficult to imagine a society without a form of music. Such an imperative need would justify its involvement in any school program. Sadly, this is an area that is often neglected, usually because it is equated to a high level by the teachers" (Gilbert, 1981, p. 6).

Musical art goes beyond the generalization of opinions of people of the time, finding new paths and innovative ideas to express a spiritual state. Since ancient times until the present day it has gone through different periods by mobilizing and emancipate people. Through it, distinguish are identified the traditions of nations, as in the garment, in ritual, in the manner of singing, dance, weddings and death. Communication through music is as natural as conservatory, as ideal as the mobilization. The value of music is presented in all musical works which are estimated for the message transmit to the public. It develops feelings, physical and psychological side of man, love and hate, individual and teamwork, human side of men, creates communication culture and identity.

### **Culture through musical education**

*John Dewey: "Each men is an artist...  
Art is a dimension of the born".*

Music is part of the education process, through which it's aimed to develop the abilities and skills of children. Music is absurd to understand, but it is pervasive and stimulates curiosity in children. In comparission with other teaching subjects, musical sounds require musical skills and talent. Denis Diderot says: "How much talent, unfortunately, died without having the opportunity to show who he was". While, the acclaimed Albanian artist and director Pirro Mani, states: "Talent is like emberthat stays below the ash. You need to wipe it, to cleanse that glow like a huge pearl ". During the educational process they reveal their talents in individual forms as well as in groups. One of the main objectivs of this subject is presenting the students national musical values. Recognition of national musical values serves to reflect the wealth of the people and the possibilities of integration and the impact of other people's cultures. Green (2010, 33) suggests that "musical education represents a goldmine for research" and it is important to investigate the musical tastes of teachers, practices, relations with their lives, social class, gender, ethnicity, and other categories of sociological investigation.

Small children, alone or with other children can explore the movements, emotions, and thoughts just by music (Trevarthen & Malloch, 2002). "The culture of a society is the path of life of its members; collection of ideas and habits that they learn, exchange and transmit from generation to generation " (Hysi, 2005, p. 242). Artistic works have strong influence in education by introducing the spirit of patriotism, tolerance,

solidarity, humanity etc. For example a patriotic song regarding a historic personality, for instance Skanderbeg, or Adem Jashari incites patriotism, bravery, courage, more than all verbal lectures in the younger generation. The value of music education is in strengthening national identity, through which to feel part of the civilized world. Nettle (2000, p.8) asserts that "music is part of the functioning of culture ... and a microcosm of cultural structures which reflects labor relations and events". Luther insisted that music and physical education are integral components of the school program (Frost & Kissinger, 1976). Musical engagement at the center of practice and experience of everyday circumstances "Many children and young people are a powerful force in cultural development"(Barrett, 2009). When children experience high quality music, it positively affects their quality of life (Achilles, 1999).

Exposure to a rich musical environment can be crucial for the development of children and therefore should be emphasized (Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001). There is no doubt that music has great value in terms of promoting cognitive, emotional, and social function (Hargreaves & North, 1999).

First "Music has a significant value in developing cognitive and artistic attitudes of the people, and the cultivation of their feelings through creative thoughts and actions" (Gulbenkian, 1982). Second, music contributes to a child's education by developing intelligence to different people (Gardner, 1985). Third, music was seen as a special form of knowledge in a system in which the acquisition of knowledge is the purpose of general education (Ucan, 1997). Fourth, research evidence shows that music can improve overall academic performance of children (Yok, 1998).

### **National identity**

National music, any genre of folk, art, classical and entertainment music, directly affects the emotional side of man and develop a sense of patriotism, because it has the power to penetrate directly the human spirit. Songs that are dedicated to heroes, country, martyrs, patriots, arouse massive interest to consume, increases pride and people feel more sensitive towards the defense of the homeland. Such musical works are created on a pompous melody and with a text that touches the soul. Even in the classical music pieces composers are inspired of heroes and create melodies based on a text that is dedicated to homeland. In all arts from the Renaissance to the present days, we have dedicated songs and poems to the country and by combining texts and music to reflect the identity of the Albanian people. Since the first generation of Albanian composers until today (it is estimated to be the third generation of educated composers) is created a rich folklore music by combining folk and modern. "The expression of identity through music would be a very special atmosphere of sensitivity, specified with special means of artistic expression" (Hysi, 2005, p. 249).

Albanian classical music started around the early 50's, with composers Tish Daija Nikola Zoraqi, Tony Harapi, Feim Ibrahim, Thoma Gaqi etc., giving classical music its importance in the spirit of Albanian melodies, which till then was impossible.

Many researchers have analyzed the ways in which individual and collective identities are constructed and expressed (Bhabha, 1987; Bhabha, 1996; Bohlman, 2004; Bourdieu, 1991; Green, 1999, 2011 Habermas, 1990; Post 2007, Ruud 2006 ; Smith,

1993, Stokes, 1994, Wood, 2012) and argue that national identity is often built and articulated through music, which is considered as individual and collective identity. "Identity is beyond the nation and is a cultural expression not only of it, but of all the 'genetic map'" (Hysi, 2005, p. 251).

Ernest Hemingway (1954), quoted by Fatmir Hysi (2005) states:

"The world moves, generations change; but the earth is the same... the sun rises and sets and hurries to reach the place it arose... while the wind moves forward to the South and gets back in the North; it revolves around the ongoing turbulence and subsequently returns to the same cycle ... All rivers run into the sea; while the sea still remain unfilled; and rivers return to the country of".

Albanian people relations with other ethnic groups are related with the geographic position as well as the history that joins all other ethnic groups ruled by several invaders.

"Connections of our people with other European peoples have always existed, as fortunately they exist today. In the cultural and literary aspect they are strengthened with the collaboration we had during history as well as with the resistance we had to their aspirations.... Cultural influences, especially artistic and literary exist even when the influences are interrupted partially or completely... National cultures without mutual influence will be much poorer, and the human world will become disintegrated" (Qosja, 1988).

Singing Albanian folk songs strengthen, reinforce and nourish the collective identity of Albanians. While Stokes (1994, p. 3) states that "music is not only something that happens" in "society", but "social and cultural world can not be imagined without music". He also argues that "music consists on completely understanding the society, mainly because it provides means by which people know the identities, locations and boundaries that divide them". Flash (1993) admits that music should be part indivisible part everyday life.

National identity can be discussed in several aspects. Considering the troubled situation in the world, in the context of global problems it is necessary to pay attention to the geopolitical aspect. In this context, national identity represents the relationship between the states and territories and includes concepts related to ideas of action toward globalization. This concept of national identity is associated with strong feelings of belonging to a group and sharing in the 'others' and 'us'. Another concept for defining the national identity is that of Anthony Smith. In his book he describes these factors in creating a common national identity: historic territory, same religion, mythology, ideology, history, culture, language, economic union and common political institutions that are capable of taking actions in confronting other countries. However, global culture and cosmopolitanism today is facing new challenges and trends of thinking and acting. By feeding the national identity we manage to create common social values..

## Conclusions

Man by his nature is sociable and has a mission to distribute his values and to coexist with other values of the surrounding peoples. At the time of globalization sharing

something with others it is not only a matter of individual interest, but is a way of life, way of communication and way of thinking. Representation of a value from individuals means a valuable community and this is reflected in their appearances, in their communication with others. Song and music unites people in a living organism, where singing, playing instruments together, and dancing creates mutual trust.

The culture of a people is the history that has passed and that generation after generation carries with all the specificity that has passed through the centuries. It sums up joy and sorrow, triumph and disappointment, honor and betrayal. Culture represents all areas of man, from birth, development, until death. It is spiritual and individual, it is the mirror of a nation. Music as part of man culture describes the agony and joy, representing all sections of a nation, communication way and is a way of life. Music affects people and also people affect music. Communication through music is a unique and special, is the opportunity for reflection and responsibility, all revolutions are led by songs and music.

Music creates identity and also allows to transform this identity into global identity. Globalization is a way of unifying identities of all peoples. Music, culture and identity is us with all the characteristics that we have, are those who share and preserve our identities, are those who create bridges thanks to technology development and dynamics of life.

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