

ABSTRACT

Movement in music

This study concerns four music teachers' opinions of, and use of movement as part of music learning at the Arts programme in Upper secondary school in Sweden.

• Background

A historical retrospective shows that the notions of movement have shifted. In ancient times, movement was part of, and a condition for, music (Ling 1983), while from the 17th century onwards, mastering dance, fencing, riding and music was a way of demonstrating your position in society and social standing.

The ambivalence that the church felt towards movement and physical form has very probably also shaped our attitude to movement. Whereas dance and movement was once a natural part of church ritual, some members of the clergy believed that sitting still and listening was a qualitatively superior form of worship (Klingfors 2003).

“Chaos and order” was a theme that made an immense impact on the bourgeois culture of the 1800s (Ehn & Löfgren 1982, s 35 f). “To the bourgeois way of thinking, the concept of order was linked to two other fundamental principles, the dichotomies between nature/culture and primitive/civilized” (ibid). Bourgeoisness represented such values as civilization, order and refinement, while the “vulgar” masses represented undisciplined and chaotic nature, or even pure primitiveness.

The classification of music into the folk, art and popular categories was made some 200 years ago, and to a certain extent our attitudes and values (“high” and “low”) still rest on this view of music and movement, despite the ongoing debate (Klingfors 2003, Lillestam 2006).

In the 1970 upper secondary curriculum (Lgy 70), we find “Movement” as a subject on the Music programme. In the new curriculum from 1994 (Lgy 94), “Movement” was replaced by “The body as a means of expression” under the subject heading of “Arts orientation” on the Arts programme. In the revision of 2000, “The body as a means of expression” also disappears as a course. Today, there is no compulsory subject or course on the Arts with Music syllabus where movement is used as an educational method for the teaching of music (Georgii-Hemming 2005).

• Central concepts

The values of different cultures and ages and their significance for our choice of methods as teachers, and our view of music and the consequences it has for our role in the learning process are the key areas of this study:

- Informal and formal learning (Davidsson & Correia, 2002; Lillestam, 2006)
- Absolute and relativistic views of musicality (Brändström, 1997)
- High and low (Klingfors, 2003)

- Nature and culture (Ehn & Löfgren. 1982)
- Thought and body (Gustavsson, 2000; Davidsson & Correia, 2002)

• Purpose and points at issue

The purpose of this study is to shed light on how teachers on the upper secondary Arts with Music programme use movement in their teaching of music, and how they approach movement as an educational tool, by investigating the following three issues:

1. What significance does movement have for teachers on the Arts with Music programme?
2. How do teachers on the Arts with Music programme regard movement as an educational tool in the teaching of music?
3. How do teachers on the Arts with Music programme use movement as an educational tool?

The objective of the study is to draw attention to ideas about and the use of movement in the teaching of music in general, and on the upper secondary Arts with Music programme in particular.

• Method

To obtain the answers to my research questions I opted for the focus group interview (Wibeck 2000) and observation (Patel & Davidson 2003) methods.

Four informants participated in the study, two women and two men, all of whom taught on the Arts with Music programme. They were all trained at the University College of Music and held both group and individual classes in classical music and jazz/rock. First, the teachers took part in a focus group interview and then I observed their teaching methods – this in order to tie interview and observation together and to ascertain whether what was *said* was consistent with what was *done*.

• Results

The focus group interviews and lesson observations returned the following results: The informants' choice of teaching methods is dependant on the sex of the teacher (cf. Bouij 1998, p. 191), his or her *previous experiences* (training, experience of movement, etc.), and his or her *attitude to music and teaching* (cf. Brändström 1996, p.12; Ehn & Löfgren 1982, p. 38; Klingfors 2003, p. 71; Gustavsson 2000, p. 73-76, 104-106; & Davidson and Correia 2002, p. 237). On these grounds, the teacher makes *conscious* and *unconscious* choices of teaching method.

The informants maintain that movement, as a tool in the teaching of music, could have the following purposes:

- Movement for performance purposes: To express music through movement to reinforce the impression made by the music on the listeners
- Movement for physical purposes: To warm up the body and voice through different kinds of physical motion and stretching

Although it emerged from the focus group interviews that the informants used movement for teaching purposes, there was no examples of this during the lessons, hence the italics:

- *Movement for teaching purposes: Learning music through movement.*

What I consider the most salient aspect of my study is that although the informants consider movement as important in both teaching and artistic contexts, it was not used to any significant extent as a teaching aid.

• What I found noteworthy

- That the informants do not use movement to any significant extent in the teaching of music.
- The relationship between sex of teacher and attitudes towards learning, teaching methods and choice of stage (cf. Bouij 1998).
- The lack of knowledge of the subject. Instead, the choice of teaching methods used by the informants is determined by personal experiences and attitudes (Davidsson & Correia 2002; Liljestam 2006; Klingfors 2003; Bouij 1998).
- The making of comments such as “*proper instrument*” and that “*rhythm doesn't reside in the body*” (cf. Brändström 1987; Klingfors 2003; Ehn & Löfgren 1982).

• Further research

I would find it interesting to examine

- The interaction between music, movement and teaching/learning
- The interaction between music, movement and gender

• Keywords

Music, movement, music teacher, Upper secondary school – Arts programme

• References

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