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Transnational Project “Vox Mundi” – Experience with Implementing Movement as a Pedagogical Tool in Working with Children’s Choirs

Extended summary

Starting from the fact that from the very beginning of formal education students encounter choral singing as one of the activities successively associated with general music education, the paper emphasizes the importance of implementing movement as a pedagogical tool for the development of immanent rhythm, vocal technique and intonation in the process of working with children choral ensembles. The main purpose of this research is the systematization of experience gained by participating in the transnational project “Vox mundi” in Timisoara – Romania in 2022 in order to indicate possible choices and future approaches to the movement within choral rehearsals at the level of general music education. In the course of a ten-day intensive youth exchange, five multiplicative events and the elaboration of three intellectual outputs, a research was conducted, the sample of which consisted of fifty primary school-age choral singers, members of five choral ensembles internationally renowned and active in the field of choral music: the choir of the Art Gymnasium “Jon Vidu” (Corul pe voci egale al Liceului de Artă “Ion Vidu”) – Romania; Girls’ Choir “Aurin” (AURIN) – Hungary; Girls’ choir “Skowronki” – Poland; choir “Les Choristes – Les petits chanteurs de Saint-Marc” – France; Children’s choir “The Stars” (Serbian “Zvezdice”) – Serbia. The goals of the project included: the development of informal educational activities in the field of choral music through the elaboration of three intellectual outputs, the organization of one youth exchange and five multiplicative events; Acquiring the skills and competencies necessary for the application of choral music

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in non-formal education activities, through constant participation in the development of three intellectual effects; reviving the choral tradition with the application of choral movement. The intellectual contribution of the project is reflected in a high degree of innovation and includes: a collection of choral music songs from the period before the Second World War; a set of four online tutorials that focus on developing young choir singers' skills such as literacy, music history, cooperation, coordination, discipline, volunteering, etc.; two educational games available for elementary school children, young associates and other educational practitioners using choral music as a method; the innovation is characterized by a holistic approach to choral music, as well as the implementation of the principles of play within choral singing; an interactive map designed with the idea of checking what was learned at the workshops within the ten-day exchange. Quantitative results include: three intellectual outputs, 150 participants in activities; one youth exchange - with 50 young choir singers of elementary school age, six activities of testing the content of intellectual outputs with about 200 young people, 60 announcements on websites and 60 announcements on social networks in the form of promoting and spreading the content of the project's activities. The qualitative results of the implemented project refer to increased diversity, dialogue and cultural mobility, increased participation in joint activities and the connection of young choral singers from different parts of Europe, introducing young people to choral music, but also to broader contents related to choral music (music history, musicology). By analyzing the examples and observing the participants of the youth exchange, a significant level of perceived benefits through the integration of movement and singing was registered, and one of the factors that was consistently present was the relationship between the deliberate and conscious use of movement, on the one hand, and the increased engagement of singers, on the other hand. Based on participatory observation, it was established that the tactile and kinesthetic experience of musical elements through body movement led to an improvement in coordination, fine motor skills and reaction to all musical components. In addition, it was discovered that movement and music can illustrate abstract emotional concepts and establish concrete interrelationships. Participative work in the group came to the fore, which led to improved breathing, created a sense of belonging and contributed to the improvement of the overall psychophysical condition of the participants. The project was implemented within five partner countries, but its scope is larger, because it can easily be repeated in other countries and turned into a continuous process of developing musical and non-musical skills and raising intercultural awareness among young people, which makes the results more significant. The final intellectual results can be part of informal education in working with children's choir ensembles, but also an element of teaching musical culture in the formal education system. In this sense, the proposal of possible ways of working represents a motivated approach to musical cognition and an opportunity to create new views on the nature of musical understanding and promote the future of choral music practice.

Keywords: children's choirs, music education, movement, intonation, rhythm

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