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THE INTELLECTUAL TASK OF MUSICOLOGISTS IN THE BUILDING OF A EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

The idea of European Union involves a notion of citizenship that goes beyond the current legal term. Civil, political, and social rights are guaranteed by each individual state; European citizenship provides an enhancement of these rights, creating a *sense of identity, of belonging* to a wide community with great linguistic and cultural diversity. This sense of belonging requires a solid education in the history, art, literature, and music of the member states. This process of cultural integration presupposes an unreflective, non-dirigiste mechanism – consistent with the principle of tolerance rooted in Enlightenment, which lies at the basis of the European project, and with a liberal tradition that limits direct state intervention in the cultural field. However, the risk inherent in such a process is that it may give free rein to spontaneism and consumer mechanisms.

The coexistence of the nations that form the European space requires that emphasis be put on unifying elements, but at the same time one should avoid underplaying diversity and differences (“unity in diversity” is the motto of the EU). It also requires that everybody be encouraged to contribute to our common ideal heritage; and it requires motivation to know and understand this heritage, the history it conveys, and the future that is written in it.

If we look at our field (music) we can say that Europe, and the West in general, possess a peculiar heritage, i.e. art music (*Kunstmusik, musica d’arte*). Music that has a *written tradition*, yet does not exhaust itself in writing, even though it cannot do without it. Music notation was designed to carry Gregorian chant from one corner of Europe to the other – and hence was born along with the earliest idea of Europe that took real shape in history, the Carolingian Empire. From there, for centuries, it evolved and arrived to us.

This European musical heritage has two sides. There is a *material* and an *immaterial* heritage. The *material heritage* is made of objects: instruments, scores, treatises, documents, buildings designed to host music performances. The *immaterial heritage* can in turn be roughly divided into two categories: (a) the *aesthetic* heritage, made of works and events, i.e. music pieces performed and listened to; (b) the *intellectual* heritage, which comprises music texts, writings on music, theoretical and practical knowledge, and performance techniques. The material heritage, made of paper and instrument supports, will have to be *preserved*, that is, known, described, protected, exploited; the immaterial heritage is best preserved by *taking care of it* and *passing it down*.

Let us pause first on the immaterial heritage, i.e. music played and heard. Most Western art music was conceived *for* listeners (most of whom are also spectators). With a few exceptions (for instance, the 15th-century madrigal), the European musical heritage consists of music that is performed to be listened to: if we want this heritage to be known and passed down, then we should train performers, but we should also train listeners. Schools and conservatories should play a key role in this. School, in particular, can have a deep influence on listening ever since childhood, accustoming students to directly tackle a musical work, and encouraging them to practice what can be described as reflective listening, or the ability to master the structure of a piece, to isolate its focal points, to build a mental map of it, and grasp contextual relationships with other fields of knowledge. The musical culture of the citizen, which has an essential starting point in listening, becomes an integral part of the general cultural background, interacting with linguistic-literary, artistic, historical-philosophical, and logical-mathematical culture – and even becoming a means to connect these different areas of knowledge.

Knowledge of the European musical heritage carries with it an important consequence: it is a powerful tool for inclusion, for acquiring citizenship – for at least three reasons.

(a) It allows citizens of the Union, who belong to significantly different cultural traditions (Cyprus is not Denmark, Poland is not Portugal) to identify with *one* shared musical (and hence cultural) tradition: art music, in its different national varieties. While on the one hand the opportunity of the EU lies in the motto “unity in diversity”, it is also evident that, despite the many musical traditions that people the culture of the 27 countries – at all levels, elite and popular, urban and rural –, art music offers an ideal framework, potentially unitary, consensually developed, and practiced all over the continent. The message of art music is not easy, nor is it superficial, but it is seductive, and possesses unparalleled irradiation power. In this perspective, it can strongly contribute towards the building of a European identity. A good music education helps create a more cohesive, participative society.

(b) The knowledge of art music can foster a more *inclusive* society, because through music – more immediately and intensely than other cultural forms, because of its high emotional potential – citizens from faraway countries (China, Korea, Malaysia, the Arab and African continents...) who come to Europe for study reasons, can better comprehend Western culture and encompass it in all its breadth.

(c) Finally, art music offers a reading key even to those non-European groups which move to Europe not to pursue their studies, but simply to survive: a good music education gives immigrant children the basic tools to get acquainted with, and participate in, a distant civilization that is different from their own, but is willing to welcome them. At the same time, a culturally engaged music education can offer tools to approach, know and respect other

cultural traditions. It reinforces a sense of citizenship in Europeans, and gives those who come to Europe the tools to understand Western culture – and it does this by respecting the differences and peculiarities of the musical traditions that every citizen, native or immigrant, carries with him/her.

If the *immaterial* heritage, i.e. music heard and played, is a powerful means of inclusion, a similar function can be performed by the *material* heritage: in a more limited way, but maybe with more intensity. The *material* heritage (scores, instruments, theatres) *concretely* reveals the constructive process, the ‘making’, the ‘acting’, the ‘operating’ of men and women in the world of music. A boxwood flute, a codex, a print score, are tangible proofs of how sound is produced, how writing is organized and handed down to its addressees. A theatre shows the link between building and sound, architecture and acoustics. Thus for students, children in particular, a musical item becomes observable, tangible, controllable through sight and touch as well as through hearing. In this process, the music museum is a primary educational tool, in that it shows and explains the complex artistic and cultural processes, which have led Western society to develop memorable music traditions.

What is the role of musicologists in these processes? What is their contribution to the European society? For half a century, Italian musicologists (Northern Europeans for over a century) have built a discipline that is formalized, elaborate, and highly organized from a theoretical, methodological, and historical point of view. They have looked into all aspects of music history, come up with surprising results in philology, fathomed the depths of philosophy and aesthetics, designed sophisticated tools for analysis and criticism. One aspect may have been neglected – Italian and international academic musicology never really faced the challenge of knowledge transposition. For too long, it failed to show a strong commitment to the branches of the discipline we refer to as Music pedagogy and Music didactics.

There can be no doubt that in Italy, but also elsewhere in Europe, a gap opened between Music pedagogy and Musicology, maybe even an antinomy. On the one hand, the educational discourse on music – which can be found particularly in conservatories, or in *Musikhochschulen* – developed without taking into serious account the cognitive contents that musicological research was gradually building, especially in universities. On the other hand, musicology neglected to develop the techniques and modes for conveying the very knowledge it was producing, nor did it take any interest in its educational consequences. In so doing, it gave up the possibility of exercising any real influence on the musical education of undergraduates, as well as on the training of educators. Music pedagogy grew in a closed environment, and tended to regard music as nothing more than exercise, or a phenomenon of everyday life; meanwhile, academic Musicology lost touch with the reality of ‘school policy’. In the next few years we will have to try our best, on a conceptual and political-operative level, to bridge this gap between Music

pedagogy and Musicology, which has turned out to be detrimental to the musical and cultural development of our countries and of the EU.

This, in short, is the point of this study session on the transmission of musical knowledge and the building of a European citizenship today.

Before concluding, let me mention two symptoms – one favourable, the other unfavourable – of the relationship that currently exists between Musicology and Music pedagogy.

The favourable symptom. As far as we know, this is the first time that the International Musicological Society welcomes to its congress a group of musicologists from European, US and Asian universities, for a discussion (which also sees the contribution of educationalists) on the transmission of musical knowledge. This could be the start of a permanent Study group within the IMS.

The second symptom. In March 2012 some Italian and non-Italian members of this group produced a PRIN (“progetto di ricerca d’interesse nazionale”, or “research project of national interest”, financed by Ministero dell’Università), with the contribution of the universities of Bolzano, Catania, Naples, Padua, Pavia-Cremona, Roma Tre, Teramo, and Turin, led by Bologna, and in collaboration with colleagues from Hamburg, Basle, Chicago, Logroño, Moscow, New York, and Tokyo. The project, which adhered to the ministerial directives and the European framework programme “Horizon 2020”, focused on “Music didactics as a tool to promote a European society of inclusion: theoretical perspectives, topics, methods, strategies for application”, and had a twofold purpose: to «bring the didactics of Music back to the general domain of Musicology, as the science that looks into the totality of musical phenomena, both historically and systematically»; and to «develop a model for quality music education, with the aim of spreading the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of our musical heritage as part of the European heritage».

According to the ministerial announcement, the leading universities had to *preselect* their own projects. The University of Bologna assigned the *prerefereeing* task to the European Science Foundation. The result was paradoxical:

- one referee gave the project full marks, 100 points; the project seemed to him excellent, although he felt the need to add that, since he is a musicologist, he is not very familiar with the subject – thereby confirming the existence of a gap between Musicology and Music pedagogy;
- the second referee gave a mark of 90/100, pondering the qualities and limits of the project with carefulness and competence;
- the third referee, whose comments prove that he is perfectly at home in Music Education, expressed several doubts; although praising this or that aspect, he gave the project a mere 68/100: a low mark, not consistent with the previous two. In his evaluation he makes generic charges – not without a touch

of malice, complaining especially that the proponents do not clearly explain what they mean by ‘Music didactics’: whether it refers to professional training, talent scouting, adult training, or something else. In other words, without saying it explicitly, the referee assumes that the focus is on “performed” music. His intellectual stance bears no relevance to the project – the reviewer cannot see that the core of the project is the transmission of musical knowledge seen as ‘culture’, not unlike historical, philosophical, or scientific culture. Our impression is that the referee’s approach is perfectly in line with the idea of Music education that still prevails in Anglo-American countries, one that is biased in favour of ‘making’ and not so interested in the transmission of musical knowledge in a historical-critical and aesthetic perspective. The critic’s approach is similar to the one advocated by ‘music educators’ associations, in which the word ‘musicology’ is unwelcome.

For the nine Italian universities involved, the final result was a heavy blow: by a whisker, the 68/100 given by the third referee cut the project out of the financing. The proponents will resubmit the project next time. But even at this stage, they aim at raising awareness in their field (which is precisely the role of the study session on the transmission of musical knowledge and the building of European citizenship) about a topic that concerns us all: the transmission of musical knowledge as a challenge all musicologists must take up. We have an intellectual task that is vital in making sure that large sectors of today’s society can have access to art music, in Italy, Europe, and worldwide.

(Translation by Elisabetta Zoni)