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MUSIC PEDAGOGY / EDUCATION, QUO VADIS? IMPULSES FOR A DISCUSSION ABOUT MUSIC PEDAGOGY / EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF KARL HEINRICH EHRENFORTH

Abstract:

In 2005, German music pedagogue Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth (born 1929) published a *Geschichte der musikalischen Bildung* (*The history of Musical Education*) "from a historic perspective on culture and ideas", which concludes with the essay "Ausblick – Musikalische Bildung, quo vadis?" ("Prospects – Music Pedagogy / Education, quo vadis?"; Ehrenforth, 2005). The presented theses as well as Ehrenforth's current, subsequent thoughts from a speech given at the Musikhochschule Lübeck on October 5th, 2015 contain valuable impulses for a reflection on the future of music pedagogy in Europe.

The main goal of the paper is to sum up some of the central thoughts of Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth's essay and to pass them on as impulses for discussion.

Key words: Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth, definition of music, music pedagogy, music education, listening, listening culture

Izvilleček

Glasbena pedagogika / izobraževanje, Quo vadis?

Impulzi za razpravo o glasbeni pedagogiki / izobraževanju s perspektive Karla Heinricha Ehrenforth

Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth (*1929) je leta 2005 objavil *Geschichte der musikalischen Bildung* (*Zgodovina glasbenega izobraževanja*) "s historične perspektive na kulturo in ideje", ki se konča z esejem "Ausblick - Musikalische Bildung, quo vadis?" ("Prospects - Music Pedagogy / Education, quo vadis?"; Ehrenforth, 2005). Predstavljene teze ter Ehrenforthove nedavne misli z govora na Visoki šoli za glasbo Lübeck (5. oktober 2015) vsebujejo pomembne impulze za refleksijo na prihodnost glasbene pedagogike v Evropi. Glavni cilj pričujočega prispevka je povzeti nekaj temeljnih misli Karla Heinricha Ehrenforth kot danih impulzov za razpravo.

Ključne besede: Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth, definicija glasbe, glasbena pedagogika, glasbeno izobraževanje, poslušanje, kultura poslušanja

Preface

From May 21st to May 23rd 2015, an international music pedagogical congress had taken place at the Akademia Muzyczna im. Stanisława Moniuszki w Gdańsku for the third time. Its topic was *Systematic and Pragmatism in Music Pedagogy*. I had been invited to give a presentation on the standpoint of musical education (*musikalische Bildung*) from the

perspective of Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth, the now 86 year old authority on music pedagogy in Germany (Richter, 2001), and I had chosen to give my presentation under Ehrenforth's motto "Music is a Symbol of Freedom" (Brusniak, 2016). The encounter between teachers and students of music pedagogy at the Academy of Music of the University of Ljubljana and at the chair of music pedagogy at the University of Würzburg¹ poses the opportunity to build on the Gdańsk presentation and to both pursue and intensify the fundamental thoughts of Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth, who has also influenced me in my own methodological positioning.

As a member of *Forum Europäische Musikpädagogik (FEMP)*, I have attended several congresses mainly in Austria, Germany and Luxembourg and come to the conclusion, that, as is the case in many other parts of educational sciences, the array of "music pedagogical research" in the contexts of *Historical Music Pedagogy*, *Empirical Music Pedagogy*, *Comparative Music Pedagogy* and *Systematic Music Pedagogy* has become very broad. The question "Music Pedagogy / Education, quo vadis?", which Ehrenforth posed in the closing essay of his now ten year old book *Geschichte der musikalischen Bildung*, is more pressing than ever (Ehrenforth, 2005). The scientific approach of Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth's book is the outline of a "history of culture, society and ideas from antique advanced civilizations to the present", in which he seeks answers to the two following questions: on the one hand after the future of the German school system "in an increasingly globalized information society", and on the other hand after "the role which arts are given in such a society".

For orientation Ehrenforth makes use of his definition of "music as a symbol of freedom". His historical retrospection starts in the time of reform pedagogy around 1900 in order to be able to better understand the role of Leo Kestenberg in the 1920s from the point of view of modern Kestenberg research and the discussion about the "Kestenberg-reform" from the end of World War II until today. He also points towards the "breaches and bridges" of music education in the 20th century. His first thesis promotes the idea that the cultural process of secularization of christian-European modernity strikes the arts "at their core of historically grown identity". Ehrenforth, other than Theodor W. Adorno, is of the opinion that "the religious-cultic roots of music are still present", since music has a "deep psychological dignity", which opens the door "towards an open world of hope for happiness, which not even the song of grief and death would be able to boycott". The fact that art has been given the role of an "art religion" amidst the process of secularization strengthens this claim. It is about the key question whether "music as art" will be viable in the future, while it is "undeniable" that "this deep crisis" will endure "music educational concepts being hit by more or less grave earthquakes as well".

The central question whether "music as art" has any future is surely viable. It should, in the context of both formal and informal teaching contexts, be discussed in the spirit of Ehrenforth's definition of music as "a symbol of freedom" and also in regard to

¹ This paper is a slightly altered version of a short speech given on November 19th, 2015 at the Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana, on occasion of the opening of an encounter between The University of Würzburg, Department of Music Science and The Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana, Department of Music Education.

perspectives which for example the international and transnational music education offer. It should be discussed cross-disciplinarily (as for example in interreligious dialogues) and with the utmost openness and tolerance, so that one can better understand foreign musical cultures and (musical) realities of life and the respective dealing with religious traditions and social as well as artistic-aesthetic contexts. Against the backdrop of an increasingly globalized musical world it would soon become apparent that cultural processes of secularization strike the arts "at their core of historically grown identity" in other parts of the world as well and that there is a need for solutions to this problem.

Furthermore, Ehrenforth takes this observation as cause for the fact that the "acceleration of not only technical-economical development, but of all processes of life and production" are "in growing tension with our knowledge about the 'natural' timespans of growth and maturity". School is in the midst of this increasing contrast between accelerated progress and the conservation of humanity. In the face of a "tendency to 'presentism' with a high amount of fun" in musical education (*musikalischer Bildung*), the task of teaching about "the coming-from (*Her-Kunft*), arriving-at (*An-Kunft*) and going-to (*Zu-Kunft*)" is in jeopardy. Pointing towards "the universally lamented devaluation of humane sciences" which has its origin in the "turn from history" (Wolfgang Frühwald, quoted from Ehrenforth, 2005), which "seems to underestimate the identity-creating, relaxing and the correcting safe function of knowing about the coming-from and to ignore the relieving repetition of ones own traditions in celebration and feast", Ehrenforth pleads for an "inevitable 'de-celeration' of our pace of life and development" which schools and music education (*musikalische Bildung*) could support. Someone listening to music (or making it) has to take the respective time and "be prepared for a silent dialogue with it": "He (or she) has to get off the 'jet plane' and decide on a mode of progress which is centred more on the inside and knows the word 'silence'. This could be the future of musical education (*musikalischer Bildung*)."

Education towards Listening and Listening Culture

A key requirement for a change in education is a new (not only) musical education towards listening and a listening culture, which Ehrenforth himself pleads for in his latest book *Hinhören Zuhören Durchhören. Musik als Einladung zum Dialog* (Ehrenforth, 2014). A differentiated "education towards listening" has been a survival strategy of humanity since its earliest days. It is at the same time - if you want to say so - the oldest and noblest task of music pedagogy.

The demand for a more intensive dealing with the old/new demand for an up-to-date "listening-, singing- (or choir) and pedagogy" is growing, and not only according to my own observations. More and more authors from different disciplines address themselves to the "listening human being", since a "self-sounding", "singing as a sound from silence" a "listening singing, a singing which hears the other", all these thoughts about "audire et cantare", "sonare", "resonare" and "personare", about the "homo audiens et cantans", remind at the same time of the founder of modern pedagogy, Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670), who in his work *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (Nürnberg 1658) with regard to

the "homo ludens" also named the "instrumenta musica" as "sound pieces which have a voice" (Brusniak, 2013).

In the light of "an unforeseen pluralization of the concept of music and the ways of dealing with it" as well as a "plurality of perspectives of perceiving the world", this is a discussion about the term *Bildung* (education) in its original sense: "To gain an image of the world and the self, that means: a stance and an attitude." The German term "musikalische Bildung" is - as Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth remarked in a presentation given only a few days ago at the Musikhochschule in Lübeck, the text of which he has thankfully provided me with for my speech in Ljubljana - no longer translated, but accepted as a scientific term by international music pedagogues, last but not least to be able to have a differentiated discussion about music pedagogy and music education. In this, Ehrenforth's, spirit a dimension of the world can be experienced through music, "which is close to us in its depth and at the same time very open and open-hearted": "We hear in it our own world, but in completely new and different colours and rhythms. [...] Music holds an internal mirror up to us, and opens up a new horizon of freedom at the same time. [...] Music is a symbol of freedom. This is the only way its power of transcendence can be understood" (Ehrenforth, 2005).

"Bildung (education) through music" is, according to Ehrenforth - with whom I wholeheartedly agree - "more than any instruction or teaching, even more than education. Bildung is mainly a term for personal character and inner stance, which lives by example, both actively and passively. Bildung therefore has an ethical tonic. It frames and primes the perception of and acting in the world" (Ehrenforth, 2015).

The most important principle of a future concept of Musikalischer Bildung is for Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth therefore "the invitation to be open for the foreign and the unfamiliar, to express tolerance. [...] No system of *Bildung* (education) can hinder people from staying with *Schlager* or popular music. And we as friends of classical music should try not to look down on lovers of popular music [...]. How we deal with music is deeply connected with the freedom of lifestyle and has its own right on all levels. [...] Metaphorically speaking, for many is music a window to openness" (Ehrenforth, 2015).

Conclusion

Contrary to the also in Music pedagogy / Music education often misunderstood and school-like "Bologna-principle", the understanding of "music as a symbol of freedom" and "openness" as a pedagogical principle in the spirit of Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth seem to me more hopeful and richer in perspective and therefore able to give better impulses for a discussion about the contemporary idea of *Bildung* in music pedagogy now and in the future.

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