

ESPAÇOS DE ESCUTA, RUÍDOS E PEQUENAS REVOLUÇÕES: VIVER COM AS CRIANÇAS ENTRE A MÚSICA, A EDUCAÇÃO E A INVESTIGAÇÃO

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Desde meados do século XX que o campo da Educação Musical se debate com uma questão que parece fundamental para repensar como se poderá, no presente e no futuro, desenvolver e sustentar esta área de estudos nas escolas públicas em geral, pertençam elas ao ensino genérico, ou ao ensino especializado: Como evitar a “alienação” (Green, 2008, p.90) que tantas vezes ocorre entre alunas e alunos relativamente às práticas musicais que são desenvolvidas nas aulas de música? O que fazer face à literatura que nos diz que, apesar da música ser uma das atividades em que crianças e jovens mais se envolvem fora da escola, nos contextos de educação formal ela continua a ser, não raras vezes, a área disciplinar de que menos gostam (Finney, 2011; Finney & Philpott, 2010)?

Partindo deste questionamento, que, na realidade, me acompanha desde a minha própria infância e adolescência, nesta conferência procurarei analisar o papel que o “escutar” e “dar a escutar” podem assumir numa construção pedagógica nova, alicerçada na empatia, na liberdade, na criatividade e no direito a que todas as crianças e jovens desenvolvam a sua musicalidade e identidades musicais, nas suas expressões mais diversas, de forma total e plena. A ideia de “escuta” – que será aqui analisada a partir de um universo multidisciplinar (Cox & Warner, 2017; Manyozo, 2016; Rinaldi, 2021; Solomos, 2020) – apresentar-se-á nesta comunicação como espaço que, convidando uma multiplicidade de vozes, se abre a todas as sonoridades, a todos os silêncios, a todos os ruídos, criando assim espaços para o surgimento de “Pedagogias Utópicas” (Wright, 2019), em que as crianças e jovens se assumem como protagonistas nas suas comunidades locais e únicas, criando “espaços revolucionários”, que contrariam as lógicas normativas e hierarquizadas do que é considerado adequado em termos pedagógicos e musicais.

Partindo destas ideias, e centrando-me em alguns incidentes críticos e episódios retirados da minha própria prática como professora e investigadora ao longo dos últimos 15 anos, tentarei refletir sobre as possibilidades de uma pedagogia que abrace alunas e alunos como criadores, “speakers” (Biesta, 2010; Rancière, 1991), participantes de pleno direito em todo o processo, e que perspetive a atividade musical como uma experiência transformadora, revolucionária, que possa fazer a diferença nos percursos das crianças e jovens com quem interagimos diariamente nas nossas salas de aula.

LISTENING SPACES, NOISES, AND SMALL REVOLUTIONS: LIVING WITH CHILDREN BETWEEN MUSIC, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

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Since the mid-twentieth century that the field of Music Education has been struggling with a question that

seems crucial in rethinking how this study area might be developed and sustained in the present and in the future, in both general or specialized state schools: How can we avoid the “alienation” (Green, 2008) that so often occurs among pupils in relation to the musical practices that are developed in music classes? What may we do in the face of research studies that tell us that, although music is one of the activities in which children and young people are most involved outside school, in formal education contexts it often remains the subject area they least enjoy (Finney, 2011; Finney & Philpott, 2010)?

Departing from these questions, which have been living inside me since my own childhood and teenage years, in this conference I will try to examine the role that “listening” can play in a new pedagogical approach, grounded on empathy, freedom, creativity and on the right of all children and youth to develop their own musicality and musical identities in their most diverse expressions, fully and completely. The idea of “listening” - which will be explored here from a multidisciplinary universe (Cox & Warner, 2017; Manyozo, 2016; Rinaldi, 2021; Solomos, 2020) - will be presented in this communication as a space that, inviting a multiplicity of voices, opens up to all sounds, all silences, all noises, thus creating spaces for the emergence of “Utopian pedagogies” (Wright, 2019), in which children and youth become the protagonists of their local and unique communities, creating “revolutionary spaces”, that go against the normative and hierarchical logics of what is, quite often, considered appropriate in pedagogical and musical terms.

Drawing from these ideas, and focusing on some critical incidents and episodes from my own practice as a teacher and researcher over the last 15 years, I will try to reflect on the possibilities of a pedagogy that embraces students as creators, “speakers” (Biesta, 2010; Rancière, 1991), full participants in the whole process, and that, at the same time, envisions musical activity as a transformative, revolutionary experience that might truly make the difference on the paths of the children and young people with whom we interact daily in our classrooms.

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THINKING ABOUT PITCH FUNCTIONS IN AURAL SKILLS TRAINING

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Any tonal melody is recognisable (in terms of pitch content) because of its configuration of pitches in relation to a central or tonic pitch. The theme from the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is the melody that it is, not because it uses the absolute pitches F#-F#-G-A-A-G-F#-E-D etc. but because it uses the major-scale degrees 3-3-4-5-5-4-3-2-1 etc. where 1 is the tonic. Transpose to any major key and as long as we use those scale degrees in that order (with the right rhythm) we will still recognise the melody (and Beethoven's work depends on this). This session thus adopts the premise that it makes much more musical sense to reckon pitches, for example when sight-singing, by their scale degree, rather than their absolute pitch or their interval from the previous note. This is a commonly accepted principle in aural skills pedagogy. Exercises presented in the Practical Class on Stage will show that not only does it make more musical sense, but adopting a scale-degree approach facilitates sight-singing.

The principle extends to include that all notes in a tonal musical texture relate not only to the tonic but also to local harmonic context which in turn functions in relation to the tonic. Again, class exercises will show that awareness of the harmonic function facilitates sight-singing and can help to negotiate difficult or awkward combinations of intervals between melodic notes.

But thinking of pitch in functional terms is also linked to musical expression. If a melody note is dissonant with an accompanying harmony it could be said to be in tension with the harmony; we might feel an imperative for it to resolve. In performance it may be desirable to express something of that tension and resolution by accent or dynamic, etc. By extension, a harmony might be considered to be in tension with the prevailing tonality and an entire chord may therefore 'want' to progress to another. So awareness of harmonic function can assist in approaches to performing with expression or greater 'meaning'.

So this session will also explore activities to extend awareness of pitch function to functions within chords or harmonies and the functions of those harmonies within the larger tonality.