

# Teaching Music In School And Music History: Possibilities Of Integration

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**Abstract:**

*This essay discusses the possibility of incorporating aspects of classical music and music history into basic education. It presents elements of the lives and works of two composers from the classical music tradition, Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven, bridging them with everyday life and proposing their integration into pedagogical-musical work. In this regard, biographical and compositional aspects of both composers are mentioned, whose historical and musicological importance can contribute to the development of music education in basic education. It also reports on a workshop aimed at teacher training, offered to teachers from the Municipal Education Network of Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), in which activities were developed, starting from Bach and Beethoven, with the purpose of uniting classical music and music history in pedagogical plans within school settings. As a result, it was observed that there are many possibilities for introducing biographical elements of composers, which can enhance and underpin the teaching and learning of music in schools.*

**Keywords:** *classical music, music in school, Bach, Beethoven, biography.*

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## I. Introduction

Educational approaches seek to understand the school routine in a broader sense, considering diversity, experiential culture, research, and school work as an intersection of cultures (Pérez Gómez, 2001, p. 16). In this sense, culture is understood as

[...] a set of meanings, expectations, and behaviors shared by a particular social group, which facilitates and organizes, limits and enhances social exchanges, symbolic and material productions, and individual and collective achievements within a specific spatial and temporal framework. Culture, therefore, is the result of social construction, contingent on the material, social, and spiritual conditions that dominate a space and a time. (Pérez Gómez, 2001, p. 17).

Thus, it becomes apparent the possibility of meaningful learning as we seek an interaction between the diverse cultures present in the school and the inherent educational function of this process. The various underlying, tacit, and imperceptible elements that are part of the school routine have a decisive influence on socialization and education. Therefore, it is important for the school to reflect upon itself in order to offer itself as an educational platform that seeks to clarify the meaning and mechanisms through which it exerts its influence on new generations (Pérez Gómez, 2001, p. 18).

From this perspective, it is opportune to consider educational actions that embrace the broad inclusion of cultural aspects, aiming to generate questioning and fostering dialectical and dialogical approaches to social representations related to knowledge construction, across all age groups and levels of education. In this sense, the inclusion of music in schools is understood to enhance educational actions that encompass the multiple aspects of culture, acknowledging the heterogeneity of musical types and genres, such as popular music, folk music, classical music, among many possibilities.

Classical music, in particular, is the focus of this article, materializing in the possibility of introducing music history content into pedagogical-musical proposals in basic education. It is known that there is currently a preference for the term "concert music" instead of "erudite" or "classical" music. Regarding this, Nogueira (2012) advocates:

The term "música erudita" (erudite music), which is less commonly used outside of Brazil, can refer to compositions that require both musicians and audiences to possess a certain level of erudition, which is typically acquired through reading, specialized courses, commented auditions of recordings, and the habit of attending concert halls. The term "erudite" is opposed to the word "popular" and, etymologically, means the opposite of

"rude" or "uncultivated." On the other hand, the term "clássico" (classical) refers to ideas or paradigmatic works that serve as models for others, in other words, they are worthy of imitation (Nogueira, 2012, p. 122).

According to the author, the term "música de concerto" (concert music) has been more commonly used, "probably due to its slightly more objective meaning in indicating the specific repertoire presented in concert halls" (Nogueira, 2012, p. 122).

However, Mojola (2018) argues in favor of the term "clássica" (classical). According to him, his choice is based on the fact that the term

[...] because, in addition to being widely used, the term is gaining more strength, surpassing expressions such as "música erudita" (erudite music) or "música de concerto" (concert music). In this case, "clássica" (classical) refers to the type of music performed at events (concerts or recitals) held in conventional theaters or similar venues. The repertoire performed also defines this definition; however, the distinction between a concert traditionally recognized as classical and another in which this classification may be questioned is becoming less clear (Mojola, 2018, p. 61).

Therefore, in agreement with Mojola (2018) and considering the purposes of this article, the term "música clássica" (classical music) has been chosen. Moreover, in everyday colloquial language, that is often how people refer to it.

Classical music is typically regarded as a more elaborate and erudite type, with each culture having its own form of classical music that is not associated with folklore or tradition. It is considered a studied and highly developed form of music. According to Kennedy (2013), classical music is characterized by orderliness, qualities such as clarity and balance, and an emphasis on formal beauty rather than emotional expression. However, it should not be assumed that this type of music lacks emotion. It is generally considered to have enduring value rather than being ephemeral, in contrast to popular music, which is often subject to trends.

In light of the aforementioned points, it is important and particularly meaningful to consider an approach to teaching music history in schools that allows for connections between people's lives and the musical events that have occurred throughout history. Freire (1994) explains that "History is an interpretive account, made by a historical subject and necessarily imbued with the meanings and perceptions of their time." Therefore, taking these meanings and perceptions into consideration in music education planning can bring students closer to learning about historical and musical aspects through the intertwining of composers' lives and compositions in general.

In this sense, one possibility could be to explore the musicological and biographical aspects that contributed to the emergence of certain musical works. It is well known that music education in the school environment does not consist solely of classes focused on music history. Pedagogical-musical proposals need to develop students' diverse potentials, such as activities involving composition, performance, and music appreciation (Swanwick, 2003). However, this is just one of the many possibilities that can be part of the everyday teaching of music in schools.

Considering these aspects, I recall a very interesting and unusual experience I had some time ago. In one of my activities as a music advisor at the Municipal Education Department of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, (SMED-POA/RS), I was challenged to conduct a music workshop focusing on music history for teachers working at the Municipal Education Network of Porto Alegre (RME-POA/RS). Up to this point, everything is fine. No problems. However, the challenging aspect was the date proposed for the training: the evening of June 12th, which happens to be Valentine's Day in Brazil!

Needless to say, I was apprehensive, assuming that very few, if any, participants would attend the workshop on that day. However, to my pleasant surprise, all participants showed up for the event. Nevertheless, there was still a challenge: to spark their curiosity. This concern had already occupied my thoughts in order to make the moment not only attractive given the circumstances but also enlightening and informative, considering the objective of reflecting on ways to incorporate aspects of music history and experiencing them, with a focus on classical music, in pedagogical-musical plans.

This interest was achieved through aspects of music history, including musicological and biographical elements, which will be addressed below. In this regard, some of the aspects covered in the workshop are presented, considering music history, compositions, and events from composers' lives that can be integrated into the school routine. To do so, the focus was placed on the lives and works of composers whose music is familiar to most people, even though many may not be aware of it.

Regarding the emphasis on biographies, their importance is understood, as they open up numerous pedagogical possibilities and contribute to people's lives. Bach Júnior (2019, p. 237) argues that "biographical work involves a very broad range of themes. In the training of educators, for example, topics related to education, human development, and learning are privileged." Along with this, according to the author, biographical work allows for:

[...] individuals that can access their potential for self-transformation through biographical work in different areas: the biography of the educational process, the biography of learning, the biography of personal

development, the biography of challenges and obstacles experienced, the biography of personality evolution (Bach Júnior, 2019, p. 237).

Based on these assumptions, the biographical approach was chosen when carrying out the workshop. And so the chosen composers were Bach and Beethoven. It is noteworthy that this choice was based on a prior consultation with the participants of the workshop, in order to find out which composers came to their minds, who for them were representative of classical music, and who were interested in knowing more. Bach and Beethoven stood out as the most cited.

In order to share aspects of the contextualization regarding both composers, a summary of their life and compositions is presented below.

## **II. Bach and Beethoven: Love and Triumphs**

Johann Sebastian Bach was born on March 21, 1685, and passed away on July 28, 1750, in Eisenach, Germany (Galway, 1987). During Bach's time, composers and musicians had perhaps only two possibilities for professional engagement. One of them involved musical work - composition and/or instrumental performance - for the church (both Lutheran and Catholic). The other possibility was through the creation of musical compositions or performing in instrumental ensembles. Bach engaged in both and was notably renowned as an organist and harpsichordist.

Being a musician during the Baroque period did not mean being a separate entity from ordinary people. Musicians held the position of artisans, with skills required and valued by the community. If talented, they would act like a goldsmith or a shoemaker, passing down their profession to descendants, as Bach did... (Nova Cultural, 1988, p. 61).

Initially, when people think of the names of great composers, they often imagine a life of ease and tranquility, free from the struggles that typically afflict society as a whole. However, upon gaining knowledge about the actual daily lives of many of these composers, including Bach in particular, perceptions inevitably change. Fame and glory came to Bach very late in his life. According to Gago (1995), his biography remains one of the most unknown among the great composers of Western music history, and the magnitude of his musical output continues to be a mystery to this day.

Another important point to note about Bach, which may often go unnoticed, is that he faced numerous setbacks in life, one of them being blindness. It is known that Bach spent the final years of his life completely blind (Miranda C., 2019). Studies indicate that Bach was likely nearsighted, which can be observed in portraits of him from that time, showing his narrow eyes and furrowed brow, a sign of straining his vision. It is also known that he spent a lot of time reading, writing, and composing, starting from childhood, which may have exacerbated the situation. In 1750, his condition worsened, and Bach began experiencing eye pain, prompting his family to seek medical assistance. Various treatments were employed, but in the end, he became completely blind and passed away soon after (Miranda C., 2019).

In addition to all this, it goes without saying how hard Bach worked. His compositions were numerous, creating a vast body of work. When discussing his compositional bias, it is worth noting that many of his pieces appear in various media outlets, such as radio and television advertisements, as well as in numerous forms of media. Another way of dissemination is through social media, computer games, the Internet, and mobile devices, just to name a few of the platforms where Bach's music has been shared. Among his significant works, "The Well-Tempered Clavier" stands out, consisting of 48 preludes and fugues, musical genres that reached their peak during his time. An interesting aspect of this work is that the composer aimed to create a piece within a system that was emerging at the time, the well-tempered system. This was revolutionary and radically transformed the music and composition techniques of the time.

At this point, we think of Johann Sebastian Bach as an individual, facing increasing blindness and having to fulfill numerous professional obligations. This aspect can evoke reflections and intersect with one of the aspects that have increasingly entered schools and educational planning: inclusion. It is possible and relevant, when organizing pedagogical-musical plans and incorporating classical music and music history, to include discussions, references, and various activities related to listening to Bach's works. Throughout the process, historical accounts of his visual difficulties can be shared. It is important to emphasize that often, when people listen to music, they do not think about or have knowledge of the biographies of the musicians. This connection aligns with what is advocated in contemporary times regarding inclusion in education, bringing our lives closer to the lives of great composers and reminding us that they were, above all, people who lived in a specific time and space. By establishing this connection, it can serve as an enticing link to musical listening, an invitation to contemplation, and, in this particular case, an appreciation of classical music.

Reflecting on Bach Júnior (2019), it is understood that education

[...] is the transformation of subjectivity with purposes stipulated by a pedagogical theory or method, guided by pedagogical intentions aligned with the social and cultural parameters of a particular era. Biographical education is self-education, where the individual transforms themselves based on their life experiences in order to

correct courses, overcome obstacles, and reformulate their individual tendencies. The biographical work is a dynamization of reflections on one's own life, aimed at gathering data, perceiving existential patterns, and recognizing what has been or is typical in their existential journey (Bach Júnior, 2019, p. 235).

In this perspective, if we were to point out characteristics of Bach, one of them could be his integration into the historical context in which he lived. He was truly a man of his time and was attentive and informed about all the new developments that emerged around him. Moreover, a significant portion of his work manages to "transcend mere historical contingency and rise above it" (Gago, 1995, p. 8).

Another monumental work by Bach is "The Art of Fugue," composed with the intention of bringing together examples and techniques of counterpoint. This work is a collection of fugues with different forms but based on the same basic theme. Unfortunately, this composition remained unfinished as the composer passed away, as mentioned before, in 1750, just two years after beginning it. In his final - and unfinished - fugue, Bach used his own surname as the theme. In music, the letters b, a, c, h represent the notes B-flat, A, C, B, respectively (Zahar, 1985).

Many versions of Bach's works have been arranged for various instruments and instrumental ensembles, including transformations into the Rock genre. Who knows, there might even be examples in Rap, Funk, and many other contemporary musical genres! This demonstrates the timelessness of Bach's work, which can be analyzed through his integration into his own era, as discussed earlier. Despite the passing of many centuries, his music remains relevant. This is one of the many possibilities for integrating historical content with contemporary elements, which can be incorporated into music lesson plans in schools.

Other dimensions of analysis regarding Johann Sebastian Bach relate to his own life, although in his case, life and work are intertwined. One fact that often astonishes people is that Bach had a total of 20 children! It should be clarified that he married twice. He married his first wife, Maria Barbara, in 1707, and they had a family of seven children during the 13 years they were together. However, during a trip, Maria Barbara suddenly fell ill and passed away shortly thereafter. In 1721, Bach met Anna Magdalena, a singer whose father was a trumpeter at the court. They married, and the couple had an additional thirteen children.

Bach's biographers recount that Anna Magdalena proved to be a delightful companion to the composer, so much so that one of his most well-known compositions, "Anna Magdalena Bach's Notebook," was a compilation created to assist his wife in learning the harpsichord. Some of his displays of love can be revealed in Anna Magdalena's diary entries:

When I grew old and my cheeks wrinkled and my hair turned gray, he didn't seem to notice. Only once did he make this observation: Your hair, which used to shine like the sun, now has the brightness of the moon. It is a light much more preferred for the pair of lovers that we are. But even if you were to have 20 children, you will always appear to my eyes as you did on our wedding day! (Pinto, n.d., p. 161).

At the end of his life, the composer had Anna Magdalena by his side. While the Lutheran pastor spoke about the composer's death, his widow bowed her head. Through Anna Magdalena Bach's mind, who would later write her husband's biography, scenes of a life dedicated to art replayed. Regarding the occasion, she would later write, "My husband, my great man, who now sings before the Lord of Heaven. I have no more reason to stay in this world: my true existence vanished with Sebastian. Time weighs heavily on me without him" (Pinto, n.d., p. 161).

After so many years since his passing, his magnificent work continues to be recognized as one of the most important in the history of music. And in that sense, as relevant knowledge to be included in the school environment, it is fascinating that his compositions can result in meaningful and enjoyable learning. Therefore, aspects of the composer's life and work can be integrated, not merely as encyclopedic knowledge or mere curiosities, but as significant elements that help students and people in general to realize that composers, as well as artists in general, also live their lives in various ways, and that the so-called "ordinary lives" can bear resemblance to the daily lives of these great masters. Moreover, knowing that Bach and other artists were integrated into their time can give a more human dimension to the artists, art, and the resulting works from that context. Perhaps this type of knowledge can bring the participants in this process closer together.

Many paths can lead to the appreciation of Johann Sebastian Bach's compositions. As a suggestion, one can choose to explore his compositions by starting with different musical genres, focusing on sacred music, orchestral music, chamber music, and keyboard music:

Sacred Music: St. John Passion (1724); St. Matthew Passion (1727); Christmas Oratorio (1734); Mass in B minor (1749); Magnificat (1723); over 200 church cantatas, including works such as Coffee Cantata (1735) and Peasants' Cantata (1742).

Orchestral Music: Brandenburg Concertos (1721); two violin concertos in A minor, E major (1717-1723); Violin Concerto in D minor (1723); Harpsichord Concertos (1738); eight harpsichord concertos (D minor, E major, D major, A major, F minor, F major, G minor, D minor); three double harpsichord concertos (C minor, C major, C minor); two triple harpsichord concertos (D minor, C major); one quadruple harpsichord concerto (A minor); four orchestral suites in C major, B minor (with flute), D major, D major.

Chamber Music: 6 sonatas and partitas for violin (1720); 6 sonatas for violin and harpsichord (1717-1723); 6 suites for cello (1720); Musical Offering (1747); 7 sonatas for flute, 3 sonatas for viola da gamba.

Keyboard Music: 7 toccatas (1708-1710); Orgelbuchlein (Little Organ Book, 1717); Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D minor (1720); The Well-Tempered Clavier (1722-1742); French Suites (1722); English Suites (1724-1725); Partitas (1726-1731); 15 inventions, 15 sinfonias (1723); 6 Partitas (1731); Italian Concerto (1735); Goldberg Variations (1741); The Art of Fugue (1745-1750). (Coleção Folha de Música Clássica, 2022).

Lopez (1995), when addressing Johann Sebastian Bach, summarizes his importance for the history of music. For the historian, it was

[...] the immense value of Bach's work that rescued it from oblivion and granted the recognition it did not have in his time. Currently, there is no debate that Bach is the greatest composer of the Baroque period, a member of a select group within an immense gallery of creators of musical forms, most of whom were mere bureaucratic artists, whose output did not rise above the fads and routines of their time and perished in the common grave of works that were quickly surpassed due to their ephemeral value. (Lopez, 1995, pp. 142-143).

Another composer chosen to work in the workshop was Ludwig van Beethoven. Born in 1770 in the city of Bonn, Germany, like Bach, Beethoven also came from a family of musicians. His father, Johann van Beethoven, was a musician and worked for the local prince. During Beethoven's time, the working conditions and professional relationships were similar to those Bach also experienced. The work was either for the court or for the church. It was only later, mainly with Mozart, that artists began to produce their compositions without being directly tied to the wishes and commissions of the clergy and nobility.

Of Dutch descent, the musician Johann, who had already lost several children, had only one ambition: that his son Ludwig would be a musical genius, just as it had happened in previous years with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. This was one of the great problems that Beethoven faced, because despite his great musicality and deep love for music, everything for him was always the result of hard work, which was not understood nor tolerated by his father.

An alcoholic and frustrated musician, Johann forced his son Ludwig to wake up very early and practice the piano from dawn. Moreover, Beethoven suffered many beatings from his father due to his drunkenness.

When he was 13 years old, Beethoven was forced to leave school and work because his father's alcoholism had become too severe. Thus, Beethoven's professional career began, always connected to musical activities, working as a theater organist and music teacher. His musical accomplishments were numerous. He studied with another great composer, Haydn, who had a significant influence on his work. On another occasion, he met Mozart, but it did not lead to significant results. Gradually, Beethoven began to be known in the aristocratic salons of Vienna, where musical life flourished intensively at the time.

He leads the life of a young court musician. He is fourteen years old. The dual tendency of his character asserts itself: he is cheerful, feels immense joy in existing, enjoys playing music, the so-called funny things, and freedom; but also solitude, long moments of meditation, and melancholic daydreaming, tendencies accentuated by the weight of the family atmosphere (Fauconnier, 2012, p. 21).

In 1797, however, Beethoven began to experience the first symptoms of the illness that would eventually lead him to progressive deafness. Regarding his condition, Beethoven wrote to Wegeler with great sadness on June 29, 1801, describing problems with his ears:

I can tell you that I lead a miserable life. For almost two years now, I have avoided social gatherings because I cannot tell people: I am deaf. If I had a different profession, it would still be possible, but in mine, it is a terrible situation. And what would my enemies, who are not few, say? (Fauconnier, 2012, p. 53).

In 1818, Beethoven was completely deaf. In the period leading up to his complete deafness, he experienced problems of depression, which even affected his musical output. At that time, it was referred to as melancholia or the malaise of the century, and it was the cause of many suicides in the general population. Artists and musicians were not exempt from its effects. In 1812, Beethoven wrote in his diary about his state:

"Resignation, deep resignation to your fate! Only it will allow you to accept the sacrifices that 'duty' demands. Oh, painful struggle! Prepare for the distant journey by all means. Do everything necessary for your greatest desire, and you will eventually achieve it. Be no longer a man for yourself, renounce being one for yourself! For you, there is no happiness except in yourself, through your art. Oh God, give me the strength to overcome myself!" (Fauconnier, 2012, p. 131).

Despite the setbacks Beethoven went through – which find resonance in the stories of countless individuals – romantic aspects also played a part in his life. I recall, during the workshop I conducted, we discussed this matter. Many of the names of Beethoven's so-called "beloveds" are known, and they have even become the subject of cinematographic productions. Several of the women whom Beethoven fell in love with found their immortalized presence in his works, such as Julie Guiccardi, Therese and Josephine Von Brunswick, Bettina Brentano, and many others, whose impact on the solitary musician evoked more compassion than true love. Famously known is the letter supposedly addressed to Beethoven's immortal beloved, whose identity remains a mystery. Yet, it was never delivered. Dated July 6, 1812, it possesses rare beauty. Here are some excerpts:

My angel, my everything, my very self! (...) Can you change the fact that you are entirely mine, and I am entirely yours? (...) Only by looking upon our existence with attentive and composed eyes can we achieve our goal of living together. (...) Keep loving me, never doubt the most faithful heart of your beloved L., eternally yours, eternally mine, eternally ours (Nova Cultural, 1988, p. 28).

Regarding Beethoven, it is also worth mentioning two other peculiarities related to his musical production. Both nature and political life permeated his creative inspiration. An example of a composition that focuses on nature is Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68, known as the "Pastoral Symphony.". Written in 1808 and published in 1809, it was dedicated to Prince von Lobkowitz and Count Rasumowsky and consists of five movements.<sup>1</sup> According to his biographers, Beethoven aimed to describe the sensations experienced in rural environments. He insisted that these works should not be interpreted as a "sound picture" but as an expression of feelings. The titles of the symphony's movements provide an insight into the work's themes:

1st Movement: Allegro ma non troppo. Awakening of joyful emotions upon arriving in the countryside.

2nd Movement: Andante molto mosso. Depicting the Scene by the Brook.

3rd Movement: Allegro. Joyful gathering of the peasants.

4th Movement: Allegro. Depicting the Storm.

5th Movement: Allegretto. Shepherd's Song. Joyful feelings and thanksgiving to the Lord after the storm. (Pinto, n.d., p. 188).

It is worth noting that this symphony sought to convey, through music, a kind of scenery. This was one of the proposals of Beethoven's contemporaries. This type of composition is called programmatic music (Bennett, 1985).

At the age of around 26, Beethoven began to experience the first symptoms of deafness, which later would render him completely deaf. Despite expensive, long, and time-consuming treatments, he realized that there would be no cure. Gradually, the composer withdrew from social life, becoming increasingly solitary and introspective (Ribeiro, 1965).

Although facing all these problems, it is intriguing to observe that Beethoven's last work, Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, also known as the "Ninth Symphony" or the "Choral Symphony," was composed when he was completely deaf, between the years 1817 and 1823, in the composer's third and final phase. This fact demonstrates, to some extent, the inner strength present in Beethoven's life. A strength that accompanied him from childhood, through the problems with his father, to the onset of his deafness. Dedicated to King Friedrich Wilhelm 3rd of Prussia, the composition consists of four movements:

1st Movement: Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso.

2nd Movement: Molto vivace. Molto vivace presto (scherzo).

3rd Movement: Adagio molto e cantabile; andante moderato.

4th Movement: Presto, presto allegro assai, allegro assai vivace (alla marcia). Andante maestoso. Adagio ma non troppo, ma divoto. Allegro enérgico sempre bem marcato. Prestissimo (Pinto, n.d., p. 194).

All the movements of this phenomenal work are of great beauty. However, the 4th movement stands out, as it is not only widely known for appearing in advertisements, cell phones, computer games, and the internet, but it also represents Beethoven's triumph over his deafness. The composer introduced human voices into his symphony, something never done before. The text sung by the choir, an ode by Schiller, adds to the grandeur of the composition. Below is the first stanza of the "Ode to Joy" from Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125, with the translation by Tasso da Silveira, according to data from 1945 by Rodolfo Josetti (Pinto, n.d.).

Oh! Jubilation, bright and ardent spark  
of divine radiance, essential light!  
Intoxicated by your all-powerful glow,  
we enter your ideal sanctuary.  
Once again, everything that evil separated in life  
is united by your enchantment.  
Once more, trembling men become brothers  
to the splendor of your celestial flame! (Pinto, n.d., p. 198).

To get to know Beethoven's compositional work, here's a suggested listening list, including sonatas, symphonies, quartets, and concertos, which can help you immerse yourself in his music:

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<sup>1</sup>A movement can be explained as a "self-sufficient part of an extensive instrumental composition, such as a symphony or sonata" (Zahar, 1985, p. 248).

Sonatas: Sonata Pathétique, Op. 13 (1789); Sonata in B-flat major, Op. 22 (1800); Moonlight Sonata, Op. 27 (1801); Sonata in A-flat major, Op. 26 (1801); Sonata for violin and piano in C minor, Op. 30 (1802); Appassionata Sonata, Op. 57 (1804).

Symphonies: Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major (1803); Symphony No. 5 in C minor (1807); Symphony No. 6 in F major - "Pastoral" (1808); Symphony No. 7 in A major (1811); Symphony No. 9 in D minor (1823)

Quartets: String Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 127 (1824); String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132 (1825)

Concerts: Piano Concerto No. 5, Op. 73 - "Emperor" (1809); Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 37 (1800) (Coleção Folha de Música Clássica, 2022).

Beethoven was a highly important composer, not only during his lifetime but his legacy endures to the present day. For him, music was the revelation

[...] of a higher truth, and the musician should be the prophet of a new era. He would not bow to time, but time would bow to him. Thus, Beethoven's rebellion was not an accident or a mere temperament issue - it was a conscious gesture of affirmation and dissatisfaction. No one had yet evaluated how much art owes to restlessness, nonconformity, and suffering. By imposing his music as a superior value within society beyond its immediate, decorative, and utilitarian functions, Beethoven left an art that will remain as an eloquent witness to the creative capabilities of our civilization. (Lopez, 1995, p. 209).

Based on the presentation of some particularities of the lives and works of Bach and Beethoven, a comprehensive overview is provided for the workshop offered to teachers from the Municipal Education Network of Porto Alegre (RME-POA/RS).

### **III. The Workshop**

The Workshop, offered to teachers from RME-POA/RS, took place on a night of June 12, a few years ago, in the premises of SMED-POA/RS. It lasted for three hours and was organized into four moments. Approximately 30 teachers participated in the workshop, including men and women of different ages, with various academic backgrounds in different areas of knowledge, including music, but all with a university degree in education. Hence, there was no requirement for prior musical knowledge.

The initial moment of the workshop was dedicated to presenting the proposal, which was submitted for approval by the participants, aiming for a democratic and collective work. After establishing and agreeing on the foundations of the workshop, which was enriched with some interesting contributions on additional materials to be shared with the participants, the second moment began with a sensitization phase characterized by the appreciation of two musical pieces.

During this musical appreciation, two pieces were played: the first one was "Tocatta and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565," and the second one was "Für Elise, Bagatelle No. 25 in A minor (WoO 59 Bia 515)," composed by Bach and Beethoven, respectively. At first, the names of the pieces and the composers were not revealed to the participants. They were allowed to listen freely, and to make it more enjoyable, they were encouraged to find a comfortable position in the room to attentively experience the music.

Afterward, reflections and comments on the pieces were encouraged, with participants sharing their feelings and thoughts based on the auditions. This activity is crucial as it enables active engagement with the music. As stated by França and Swanwick (2002):

Listening permeates every active musical experience, being an essential means for musical development. It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish between listening as a means, implicit in other musical activities, and listening as an end in itself. In the first case, listening will be monitoring the musical outcome in various activities. In the second case, the intrinsic value of the activity of listening to music as musical appreciation is reaffirmed. (França & Swanwick, 2002, p. 12).

Therefore, while reflecting on the listening experiences, we also emphasized the value of this type of activity, which is indeed musical education. It is "a legitimate and essential form of engagement with music. Through it, we can expand our musical horizons and understanding" (França & Swanwick, 2002, p. 12).

Then, after revealing the names of the pieces and their composers, we proceeded with the contextualization of their lives and works. It is worth noting that when asking if anyone knew one or both compositions, many people revealed that they knew them. All participants were familiar with Beethoven's "Für Elise, Bagatelle No. 25 in A minor (WoO 59 Bia 515)." The majority knew Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565." The fact that they were familiar with the compositions was not surprising, as it was one of the reasons for choosing them. The goal was to work with aspects of the musicians' lives and works based on well-known music for most people, focusing on classical music and experiential culture, providing an educational platform and clarifying the sense and mechanisms through which it influences new generations (Pérez Gómez, 2001).

In the process of contextualizing the composers and their works, an activity that is part of Swanwick's proposal (2003) as an experience of literary-musical complement, the participants engaged actively and enthusiastically in the appreciation. As we delved into the lives of both composers and the events of their lives,

visible reactions of identification with the reality the participants experienced in their daily lives emerged, both in the classroom with their students and in their personal lives. Many cases were reported during this moment of the workshop, involving students with vision or hearing problems, family issues, sometimes being subjected to violence by family members, problems with alcohol, drugs, and so on. There was a strong identification and access to autotransformative potential (Bach Júnior, 2019).

However, it must be remembered that the purpose of the workshop was to work from the perspective of musical education, not to engage in therapeutic catharsis or anything similar, as there was no professional training for that, nor was that the purpose. The objective was to establish a connection between the music, the composers, and thus, to enchant the participants with classical music and the peculiarities of music history.

It seemed that the result met expectations. It was satisfying to conclude this moment with the listening of two musical examples from each of the works, now in Rock (Metal version) and Funk styles. These musical examples can currently be easily found on the Internet through YouTube or other virtual platforms. This is one of the advantages of the present time. The comments from the participants and their demonstrated sense of identification were very interesting at this stage. There was a connection between the academic world and the participants' daily lives. Thus, we moved on to the next moment of the workshop, where we would put the learnings into practice.

The third moment of the workshop was dedicated to theoretical and reflective practice, aiming to develop a proposal (a sketch, given the limited time of the workshop for extensive elaboration) that would incorporate elements of classical music and music history into a curriculum plan. This activity was carried out in groups, as we understand the importance of collective work in schools, which results in good and lasting outcomes for teaching and learning, especially for the students. And so it happened. The proposals from the participants, in groups, brought up several other composers, equally well-known or at least with many pieces familiar to people, such as Mozart, Vivaldi, Handel, Chopin, Villa-Lobos, Carlos Gomes, among others. Many participants knew specific details about the lives and works of many of these composers, which was very interesting and, to some extent, challenged the widespread belief that classical music is distant from people and reserved for an elite. We disagree with this premise, as many classical pieces are present in social media, the media, various games, and more.

The fourth and final moment was dedicated to sharing the proposals created by the groups and their respective comments, which brought forth the possibilities and limitations of the proposals, suggestions for improvement, and various discussions. These comments were not only from the workshop facilitator but, more importantly, from the participants, demonstrating that shared knowledge is enhanced and solidified through dialogue.

It was also an opportunity to carry out a crucial part of any educational practice, which is the evaluation. Participants were asked to assess the workshop and, more importantly, provide feedback on areas for improvement and suggest further developments. Sordi and Ludke (2009) advocate the importance of evaluation, as it

"[...] needs to be elevated to a strategic condition in teacher training processes, whether they are initial or ongoing, and this includes the practice of self-assessment and peer evaluation. A teacher familiar with these practices gains the ability to teach well and to conduct a fair assessment of their students. They will also understand, with some pleasure, that they have the right and duty to participate in the school's evaluation processes where they work, co-responsibility for the development of their pedagogical project." (Sordi & Ludke, 2009, p. 317).

Several interesting improvements were suggested, such as the inclusion of a musical performance moment, either through singing or creating with alternative musical instruments. Another suggestion that arose was related to the request for the creation of a permanent group or forum dedicated to holding systematic meetings to discuss music in schools and the possibilities of including diverse content, such as classical, popular, and folk music, across various genres.

It is understood that, due to the participants' engagement and the outcomes of the workshop, the proposed objective was successfully achieved.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Finally, after what was presented and discussed about the lives and works of the two composers, Bach and Beethoven, in the workshop, the richness of using musical material present in everyday life, whether in the media or other sources, and integrated into various historical moments, is emphasized. Incorporating music history into school curricula through the works and life events of various composers can transcend the daily routine and, above all, enhance learning in the classroom.

Perhaps, in this way, a concept can be de-naturalized (Medeiros, 2006), that classical music is distant from people, seen as useless and unnecessary knowledge for educational work. On the contrary, knowledge derived from working with music, in its various historical periods, can help construct knowledge as a whole and even shape our students into active citizens of society!



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