

# ETHOS OF MUSIC ART AND HUMAN WELL-BEING\*

CARMEN COZMA\*\*

**Abstract:** What does make the ground of the authentic works of music art crossing the centuries and what does move the human soul any time and anywhere? Which is the support of music art – generally speaking – beyond its aesthetic dimension? How could we explain and understand, in a better and in a more efficient way, the powerful influence of musical artistic creation upon the human well-being? These are merely part of the interrogations challenging our interest in finding and revealing the profound link between ethical values, music art and human health (in its integrality). The purpose of this essay is to emphasize the foundation of human equilibrium considering the offer of the harmony carried by music art, exploring the significance of a nucleus-concept of the Greek philosophers that has been acknowledged as *kalokagatheia* – the self-fulfilled cultivation of body and soul, as a micro-cosmos living within the macro-cosmos. In terms of a philosophical hermeneutics of art, we reach to disclose part of the salutogenic function of music art concerning the human *well-being* in nowadays.

**Keywords:** ethos, music art, well-being, humanness, moral health, *kalokagatheia*.

In Shakespeare's drama *The Merchant of Venice*, through the speech of Lorenzo to Jessica, we find some references about the "sweet power of music" in changing the nature of man, by stressing the contrasting situation of "The man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, / Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils"<sup>1</sup>. For anyone who is inured to the *music art*, such a statement comes out a fundamental truth as regards the major significance of the *art of harmonious sounds and ordering rhythms* in

---

\* Part of this paper has been presented on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at the First International Conference "Exploring the Multi-dimensions of Well-being", Birmingham City University, UK

\*\* Carmen Cozma is Ph.D. Professor, Department of Philosophy, "Al.I.Cuza" University of Jassy, Romania. E-mail: [carmen.cozma@uaic.ro](mailto:carmen.cozma@uaic.ro)

<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare. *The Merchant of Venice*, 5.1.83-85.

human life. Actually, the great power that *music* can exercise upon the human beingness in the opening of the ideal of *well-being* is at stake.

We get the syntagm *music art* as the classical music – without setting up any claim of an elitist sense. We refer to the art of music, the fine and performing art, coming from different cultures of the world, thanks to the creativity of exceptional composers, like: Bach, Händel, Mozart, Beethoven, Dvořák, Enescu, Schoenberg, Walton, for example.

Man's encounter with *music art* – that we consider herein, by priority, as the *absolute music*; respectively, the instrumental elaborations free of any association with words, dance, visual images, etc. – represents the nucleus of the present essay, in the endeavour to follow and to catch part of the function of challenging and cultivating an aesthetical-ethical experience of life. We take the concept in a phenomenological view, as “concentration”, “intensification” and “lastingness” of the significance of life “in its full expansion and force”, as “continuity within the meaningfulness of life totality”. According to Hans-Georg Gadamer, we can better understand the work of art, generally, like an “achievement of life's symbolic representation”, in its becoming as “the aesthetic living” that is, finally, “the essential type of living”<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, we are interested about the complex and unique aesthetic living of human being in the status of listener to music; and so, as participant to a peculiar pathway of re-creation of its own beingness within the process of an authentic affirmation of human life by grasping and deciphering a fundamental message of *humanness*. The last concept designates the human being(ness) in its own and elevated characteristics; especially, as the core of the highest qualities, in a moral order. We could say: the *humanity* to which human(s) can and must aspire and work up in the complex process of self-development, of self-creation, finally.

Undoubtedly, our interest is focusing on the *positive ethical values*, in an Apollonian view, that make the *humanness* of man. We try to stress the great significance of values like: *love* and *communion*, *joy of living*, *dignity*, *devotion*, *wisdom*, *freedom* and *happiness*, *aspiration towards Good and Beauty*, towards *harmony and order*, towards *human well-being*, circumscribing the entire spread of life – as much as we get access -, in which man and nature / micro-cosmos and

---

<sup>2</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960). *Wahrheit und Methode*, Band 1 und Band 2. Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr. Romanian translation (2001): *Adevăr și metodă*. Bucharest: Teora, pp.61, 63.

macro-cosmos are in a dialectical identity – that supposes, at the same time, difference and sameness.

Our attempt is to outlining the identity and the dynamism in unity of *human well-being* and the *ethos of music art*, putting in act the hermeneutical polarity of “proximity and detachment”<sup>3</sup>.

The most frequent situations highlight our relationship with music as that of listening to the musical creations.

By listening to music, man experiences the most known universal communication, deep-seated in the *major ethical truth of life* – a hypostasis of the “logos of life”, the center-concept of phenomenology of life, which is exactly the “principle of principles”, the “sense of senses”<sup>4</sup>.

“Two plans” – in terms of Nicolai Hartmann -, the “first / front” and the “second / behind” (plans) are working together, for the accomplishment of *musical art*, within the intuition and comprehension processes to creating a unitary view of this complex phenomenon. For the subject-listener, the contact with an audio-sensitive matter means the opportunity of deciphering a rich spiritual content molded by artistic form. This content, its sense and the force through which a *musical work* preserves and increases its identity over the time are revealed by examining the “relation between the two plans”, throughout an analysis of the whole *musical experience* concerning their “pure inner, autonomous connection”<sup>5</sup>. Thus, we can refer to the relation between the material elements of the “real” structure of musical language and the ideality of it, respectively the “unreal” to be found behind the spiritual elements of music.

Hence, some questions come into profile: What is the powerful support of *music*? Where is to be found its genesis, its development, its lastingness over centuries? What does make the very impressive value that *music* means for the human condition, for the personal and public wellness, for the general well-being, finally?

Our thesis is that the *ethos* constitutes a very important part of the life of *music art*. We maintain that the *ethos* “rather than the

---

<sup>3</sup> Paul Ricoeur (1986). *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique, II*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

<sup>4</sup> See Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (1988-2000). *Logos and Life*. Books 1-4. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Nicolai Hartmann (1966). *Ästhetik*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co. Romanian translation (1974): *Estetica*. Bucharest: Univers Publishing House, pp.104-105.

eidos”<sup>6</sup> is that which assures an *ontic-ontological* differentiation in approaching and understanding, at least, part of the beingness of music in the world. Being conceived as *moral expression and power of music*<sup>7</sup>, the *ethos of music art* encompasses the intimate unity of sensible manifestation and outer phenomenon on the one hand, and intelligibility and inner foundation, essence, on the other hand.

It is necessary to consider the difficulties to theorizing the musical receptiveness. We face an art of unique characteristics put together: maxim abstracting, temporality, fluidity, ambiguity, etc. No less, we must recognize that, precisely through the particularities of the most universal language that *music* is among all the arts, we get the largest possibilities toward self-knowledge and self-understanding, toward better comprehension of the others, toward revelation of the in-depth creative capacities of man, toward a real development of human freedom in the sense of interpreting life in its plenary meaningfulness.

The connection between *human moral beingness* and the expressive content of *music art* covers a question that matters for our very own style of living in the world; especially, in the present days when we find ourselves in the context of a bewildered humanity.

The acuity of the spiritual crisis we traverse represents a danger as regards the confusion and insecurity, the superficiality and violence, the loss of valuable points of reference, the enslaving to technology and alienation from the nature; even, alienation from the human essence. Therefore, we must find viable paths of re-discovering our authenticity in its best articulations. We must work to defend, to maintain and increase the *human well-being* within the entire flux of life – as an urgency of living.

Knowing, disclosing and appropriating the offer of *music art* in its deep *ethos* could be one of the fruitful trajectories worth to be followed, in this sense; seeing that the *ethos of music art* manifests itself as one of the salutogenic factors functioning for the *well-being* of the whole living existence.

---

<sup>6</sup> Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (2000). *Logos and Life*. Book 4: *Impetus and Equipose in the Life-Strategies of Reason*. Dordrecht / Boston / London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp.545-548.

<sup>7</sup> See for example: Jules Combarieu (1930). *Histoire de la musique*, Tome I. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin; Th.Reinach (1926). *La musique grecque*. Paris: Payot; Curt Sachs (1969). *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World*. New York: W.W.Norton & Comp.

The multileveled situation of the multiple crises with which we are coping claims a surplus of reflection and correction, especially in the ethical plan, for the restoration of our moral cultural identity and of *well-being*, at last. A remedy for the dominant overtones of the “consumerist and entertainment” society, of the “information and marketing” society in which a new danger can be foreseen, namely that of our transformation from consumers into consumed (entities), is the acceptance that the present “society of knowledge” has to be based on ethical values and principles. We have to work for the wellness of the entire existence, through a wise activating of all supposes to be the *moral health of beingness* – as a possibility of rescue and of the progress of life in our world; at the same time, as a possibility of assuring a future for humanness.

Cultivating *well-being* in a *moral order* can be an authentic tool for man to be able to cope with the pressures of an existence that is generally affected by “disorientation”, by “human uncertainty”, with the reality of “uprootedness” from meaning in “the game of life” (Tymieniecka 2000, 617-619). It can be a force in overcoming difficulties, in correcting errors and in healing suffering, while at the same time allowing one to pursue the ideal of ennobling human beingness, by continuous self-creation into a worthy life in its plenitude. Actually, *well-being* mostly covers the achievement of moral finality in itself; respectively, the *good*, defined by Aristotle as “the one towards which all aspires” and “the goal of our deeds we pursue for itself”<sup>8</sup>.

In the assumed context, the extraordinary power of *music art* comes in its *salutogenesis* function. We aim the *ethos of music art* – that proves to be an important offer in shaping our human *well-being*, opening towards the chance of living under the classical ideal of *beauty and good*, respectively of the Greeks’ *telos* that has been called *kalokagatheia* / *καλοκαγαθία*.

Certainly, it is not easy to speak about music art. Merely the experience of listening to music accompanying the speech can really help in understanding its marvelous significance for *human well-being*.

Approaching the *music art* by word, this carries on the conscience of the limits of our endeavour in submitting to the investigation and in trying to make explained the unexplainable. We are completely aware of the sufficiency of the verbal language to

---

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a, -20.

translate a scrutiny upon the ineffable and intimate in endlessness and in an ever metamorphosis, which the music means by its nature. Enrooted in the pure intuition, getting the Idea - in Plato's view, as the essential and the eternal of world-wide phenomena – as its proper object, we can say according to Arthur Schopenhauer that “music is the objectifying of the entire will that constitutes the world”<sup>9</sup>. Owing to the features of the temporal appearance, *music* supposes a kind of peculiar substance and permanence, surviving beyond the phenomenal world, in the most profound structure of the whole existence. *Music art* implies *working within beingness*, in the area of the “intelligibility” - that *noetós tópos / νοητος τοπος* coming from the ancient Greeks' philosophy.

As art of expression through harmonious sounds, *music* means embedment into and encompassing of the essence, integration within the plenitude and the dynamism of the becomingness, proving a singular potential to embodying the most various aspects of reality, the complex and contradictory character of life. Simultaneously, it enlightens the ideals of existence, giving a way to grasping part of the truth of life.

What does do the music's power, in this direction? In our opinion, the answer must be found even in its ethical content. As intertwining of moral values and principles on the one hand, and signs of traditions, thoughts, emotions, passions, wishes, etc., the *ethos* of music art is eventually that which does make sense as regards the articulations of the artistic sonorous creation. It is that leads to the revelation of the beauty conveyed by the musical artistic works. It is the ground on which the musical elaborations assure their lastingness over the time.

At a large scale, the *ethos of musical creation* is the fact that – using melody, harmony, rhythms, tempo, nuances, timbres, etc. – concretizes the spread of life. In contact with *music art*, man experiences a creative communication and understanding; he attains the roots of the *major ethical truth of life* - some of the truth as the “ontopoietic vortex of life”; precisely, some of the “logos of life” in its constructive manifestations as vital, “Dionysian”, “Promethean”, and

---

<sup>9</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer (1972). *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. Wiesbaden: Brockhaus. Romanian translation (1995): *Lumea ca voință și reprezentare*, volume 1. Jassy: Moldova Publishing House, p.283.

sacral logocic strategies in the “great plan of life”, so speaking in Tymienieckan words<sup>10</sup>.

By listening to *music*, a spiritual tumult invades our entire being; and we are discovering ourselves in a new, unknown way. Face to the harmonious sounds organized in logic structures that make the status of *music* as an *artistic text*, we unveil opportunities - maybe the best possible – in unfolding our unique capacity to participate in, to understand and to interpret *life* in its profoundness and expanse. Listening to *music*, we reach to put ourselves in the situation of a better self-knowledge, comprehension and communication generally. We get the chance of living the “absolute moment” - as Hans-Georg Gadamer names the unique “moment” of being marked by “self-denial and self-mediation” alike. In such a *moment*, “everything that tears away the subject from the totality of being, at the same time it is that does restore to him the whole of being; so, the subject installs himself in the continuity of being’s meaningfulness” (Gadamer 2001, 106, 109).

Music is a fundamental presence in everything there is alive. Somehow, everywhere, we can find the rhythm, the harmony and the measured movement, correlated with its basic element: the sound. Over the centuries, the sonorous art has developed in connection with the cultural and moral evolution of man. It accompanied human being, mostly expressing the *humanness* with the dynamic antagonism orientated toward the necessary equilibrium of living, by balancing the tension between what man *is*, he *should be* and he *would like to be*. Real and ideal are interfering. Music means a complex experience, perpetual working and adventure of the spirit. It is an eloquent sign for man as looking for the “mystery” and standing in the horizon of the “mystery revelation” – that is the “ontological mode of being” in the world, according to the core of the “metaphysics of mystery” of Lucian Blaga<sup>11</sup>.

Being conceived as manifestation of the “logos of life”: “the carrier of beingness” that “gives us access to the very becoming of beingness” (Tymieniecka 2009), music represents a way of bringing off the Value, of projecting and recognizing the *humanness*. Through

---

<sup>10</sup> See Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (1988-2000). *Logos and Life*. Books 1-4, op.cit; Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (2009). *The Fullness of the Logos in the Key of Life*. Book I: *The Case of God in the New Enlightenment*. Dordrecht: Springer.

<sup>11</sup> Lucian Blaga (1983). *Trilogia cunoașterii / Trilogy of Knowledge. Opere*, volume 8. Bucharest: Minerva Publishing House, p.74.

music, human being with its conflicts but also with its faculties of harmonization is manifesting in its integrality.

Touching man in his essence and movement, music rouses a direct echo within him, persuading about the idea that the art generally demonstrates a high moral action for human beingness. Music gives us the upsurge to manifest ourselves in the absolute freedom, and to do something noble and admirable, lasting and grand; something that speaks in the most expressive way about man's situation in this world, about the meaning of human creative condition.

In relation with philosophy, the musical substance is revealing itself as being built – among others - on the moral ideas, which are concomitantly simple and great: *the man as dignity, as excellence / àreté; the values of the human life; the sense of life*. By music, man shows in his capacity of creation, of perfection, of the permanent self-fulfillment. Man recognizes himself in the capacity to give himself an existential sense in the horizon of the *true values of human life* - that dialectical identity of the Ancients: *Beauty-Truth-Good*, in the classical Greek paradigm of *καλλον και αγαθον, και αληθης / kállon kai agathón, kai aléthes*.

*Music art* is an essential re-presentation for the *humanness*, considered to be the most elevated and integrator quality of man as moral personality. To meet the experience of music, that implies a complex labor, passing from the sensory-emotional comprehension – that occurs, first of all, during the audition of a musical work - to the meditative understanding of that has been listened to and kept in memory, continued by judgment, explanation and interpretation. The route is one moving from the initial vague and spontaneous, to the clear and holistic grasping of the musical substance. Correspondently, the *ethos of music* is one of awareness, of amazement and interrogation, of launching problems. A phenomenological approach in three steps: “wonder(ment)-fabulation-idealization” can enlighten us upon the process. According to Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, we refer to these intentional acts: 1. *wonder(ment)* – as the “essential stance” of humankind facing the marvels of existence. This is a form of enchantment, the launching point of human spirit in its turn towards philosophical speculation; 2. *fabulation* – opening to “fabulae” of philosophy and of literature. Each of them helps to discover “the positive truth about life, human existence and destiny, and the universe”; respectively, to get the “prototypical human character, conduct, societal organization, visions of humanity” able to serve as



models of cultural styles; and 3. *idealization* – seating precisely in the horizon of the “moral ideals” as a necessary production to configuring novel ethical situations in existence<sup>12</sup>.

Contemplating the sensible musical reality, we assure the access to the authentic beingness-in-becoming. The trajectory is that of experiencing a whole aesthetical and ethical living from - and merely through - the sensible existence to the essential being(ness).

The emotion of the musical phenomenon works in connection with the noblest living under the auspices of the philosophical reflection. Thus, we enter the understanding of a fundamental truth, namely: *music means creation of a world and integration in it*. It is a novel world, *an independent one, logical and beautiful in an absolute way, a perfectly ordered world*. Music itself is a possibility, a promise of and an insertion to a world of something that didn't exist yet and that otherwise would remain non-existent; it is about something that man aims to, he desires to reach it as an ideal world.

Passing throughout the senses (and only by this way), from the first impressions while a musical audition occurs, the natural condition is overrun. Human being lives a peculiar kind of affirmation of the spiritual values, rising up to the level of the meditation and understanding. The human capacity of developing *dignity* – which the Greek philosophers used to call *αξία / axía* - is at work. Properly, man discloses and increases his *excellence* of being, the *àreté / ἀρετή* that provides the *progress* or *prokoré / προκοπή*.

Our endeavour to appropriate the *salutogenic* significance of *musical ethos* for human being claims to consider all-there-is-inscribed in relatedness with music art: its defining features; its genesis and purpose; the conveyed message and the possibilities of accomplishing it during audition; the implied subjects: composer, performer, listener – actually, hypostasies of man “having a beingness report with the Being”, in Heideggerian expression<sup>13</sup>.

The content of music is made up of the major experiences of human being, which are, by priority, the ethical ones, with the contradictory duality, but also with the reconciliation of different poles, leading to the equilibrium, to the *supreme harmony* in life. Here, the

---

<sup>12</sup> Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (1990). *Logos and Life*. Book 3: *The Passions of the Soul and the Elements in the Ontopoiesis of Culture. The Life Significance of Literature*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp.18-37.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Heidegger (1977). *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.

original term that the ancient Greeks have used to designate the music art: *αρμονια* / *armonía* is eloquently.

Beyond the musical phenomenon, we can find what is general and more profound as regards the meaning of life. Challenging to the revelation of the hidden sense and to the enlightenment of the primary principles, our relation with music supposes the living of a thorough moral experience, as the *humanness* covers with a plenitude of superior ethical values and norms. Stirring various states of conscience, music activates remarkable qualities in order to recover the essence of man in the just reason of beingness, in the most beautiful notes of it. This is a pathway of man's growing toward a "harmonious life": that *ομολογουμενος βιος* / *homologouménos bios* of the Stoic philosophy<sup>14</sup>. Man reaches to triumph in the "best part of him", manifesting himself as *aristos* / *αριστος*, as the "royal man", equipped by the cardinal virtues that have been emphasized since the Antiquity. Becoming a person wise and temperate / *σοφον και σωφρον* (*sóphon kaí sóphron*), rightful / *δικαιον* (*dikaion*), sovereign / *ηγεμονιχον* (*hegemonikón*), man gains some of the honor to enter the great order, the *cosmos* / *κοσμος* - according to Socrates of *The Republic* by Plato<sup>15</sup>.

Being well-guided, in the sense of the Ancients' theory of the *ethos of armonía*, music is an extraordinary factor of positive influence upon mankind. The musical works offer the projection of a referential world for instilling and cultivating the *humanness*; it is a world in which values like *truthfulness, goodness, fairness, justice, freedom, wisdom, love, happiness*, etc. become instruments of motivating and shaping the individual and social behaviour. Music can be a real "moral organon of human life" – as Tolstoi wanted to be art, generally<sup>16</sup>.

Bearing the *ethos* of life, *music art* subtly galvanizes it. It inspires the noble, lasting and deep feelings. It orders them and gives them horizon. And, in their turn, these operate upon the thinking and the will, determining attitudes and demeanors according to them.

---

<sup>14</sup> Diogenes Laertius. *Lives and Doctrines of Eminent Philosophers*, Book VII.

<sup>15</sup> Plato. *The Republic*. Romanian translation (1986): *Republica*. Opere, volume V. Bucharest: Editura Științifică și enciclopedică.

<sup>16</sup> Léon Tolstoi (1898). *Qu'est-ce que l'Art?* Paris: Perrin et C-ie Editeurs, p.266.

Music is a source of moral meditation and perpetual inspiration from the authentic *general-human values*. A dialectic identity of the artistic-musical Beauty and the moral Good is in act.

We face a teaching in life that music does convey. Through the complex work of its constitutive elements, music penetrates the human soul and crystallizes the conscience of supreme harmony, highlighting the route of balancing human being with it. By sensibility, man gets a clearer vision; he reflects upon the order and the communion with any manifestation of life. Music disciplines human spirit, it contributes in shaping the human character and in improving the human condition in accordance with the nobleness that man is able to attain.

Music means pleasure and happiness, proving a utilitarian function in the ethical direction. Thus, even the artistic beauty is augmented, increasing itself in its own validity. Music is a force for the moral restoration of man, in the horizon of an ideal of living: by the appropriation of the *humanness*, the old desired *philánthropon* / *το φιλανθρωπον*. Both the ethical and aesthetical ideals put in act by music art strengthen the capacity of man to overcome the inherent hardships of his existence. Composing or just performing music, as well as listening to music represent eloquent situations for man to register himself in the frame of the *humanness* he can and must get.

The art of organized harmonious sounds delivers a paradigm of the identity Beauty-Truth-Good, *a paradigm of the ideal: the aspiration towards Beauty, which represents the supreme Good and the absolute Truth* - as Plato has emphasized in his *Dialogues*. The whole history of music art testifies for the affirmation and the durability of the works that - beyond any haphazard conditions - prove to be in resonance with the wishes and imperatives of elevated psychic, societal and cultural signification.

By activating harmony, measure, fair proportion, perfection of form, order, etc., being itself a product of the most noble articulations of life, *music art* essentially contributes to the flourishing of *humanness*. Just remind that its initial Hellenic term: *αρμονια* / *armonía* meant beauty, pleasure and utility, joy and peace, happiness, stopping or decreasing of the evil.

Later, the concept of *μουσικη* / *mousiké* has been chosen to express, first of all, an art able to cultivate the human soul, aiming a refinement of spirit and conduct. *Mousiké* and *mousikón* have been selected as terms that signify even culture, in opposition with *amousón*.

Music was identified with its role to shape a perfect soul, which opens towards the truth, and which is not able to participate in evil's action; as well as the harmony can not at all take part in making disharmony, according to Plato's *Phaedo*<sup>17</sup>.

In contact with music, we can ascertain the aspects of a moral *utilitarianism*, as well as those of *hedonism* and of *eudaemonism*. Actually, music art has developed owing to its *utilitarian* character, which obviously has been defended since its beginnings. Gradually, it has imposed its *hedonist* and *eudaemonist* character. Touching the sensitivity and stirring the intellectual-philosophical exercise, music makes the moral meaning of *pleasure / hedoné* (ἡδονή), which metamorphoses itself into *happiness / eudaimonía* (ευδαιμονία). All of these comes in a hermeneutical-ethical perspective, turning to the significance of the Ancients as regards the unity: *logos - cósmos / λογος - κοσμος* and the Delphic precept of *medén agan / μηδεν αγαν* (nothing too much).

Since the appearance of music in the life of man, we remark a *salutogenic* utility of this art thanks the boons of the chant, generally. The curative effect of music means the assurance of the psychic and somatic equilibrium, the manifestation of a moral health, the achievement of *well-being*.

Getting the music even like entertainment, it represents an opportunity to forget - at least for the time being - the worries and the spleens of existence. The fundamental acts of music (composition, performing, audition) are veritable acts "susceptible to recover us into joy" - the joy of being - that can be "asserted by everyone, in each moment", according to the moral philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir<sup>18</sup>. The *ethos of music art* gives us the chance to experience a superior *pleasure*, a real, pure, natural and necessary one; a *pleasure* "that makes perfectly the activity" - as Aristotle pointed out (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VII), owing to the power of purification and ennobling that musical beauty proves.

Man lives a special delight by music - a peculiar manifestation of the aspiration towards the Good; respectively, of touching the Good through and as *happiness*. A joy of integrity and authenticity, of

---

<sup>17</sup> Plato. *Phaedo*. Romanian translation (1983): *Phaedon. Opere*, volume IV, Bucharest: Editura Științifică și enciclopedică.

<sup>18</sup> Simone de Beauvoir (1964). *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté*. Paris: Gallimard, p.196.

balance and harmony occurs in the intimacy of human being(ness), amplifying the manifestation of *well-being*.

We find sources of a moral *hedonism* and *eudaemonism* linked to music art in the Greeks vision about art centered on the theory of the triadic functions' distribution: *mimesis* / μιμησις, *poiesis* / ποιησις and *catharsis* / καθαρσις<sup>19</sup>. Dealing with the status of music in education, Aristotle – for example - has featured the role of “the songs that purify the soul” and “that give us a harmless joy”<sup>20</sup>; seeing that we could wonder together with the Stagyrite: “is not music a way to reach the virtue?” (Ibidem, 196-197).

Engaging a strong psychical resonance, which challenges the listener by provoking serious effects on his emotions, feelings, thoughts, reactions – producing a *total living experience*, by the movements of the soul -, *music* unveils itself in its *ethical substratum*, helping the human being to inscribe the mark of a vital progress in its becomingness and to achieve the purpose of a good life.

We believe that the *experience of musical art* represents the most efficient path by which man can introduce the ideal into the womb of reality; and, eventually, to assure a right *human measure* in all, leading to *well-being*. Solitude, but at the same time unity with everything there is alive in a common world; restlessness, but also peace; stumbles and failures, but enthusiasm and self-fulfillment alike; critical judgment, but respect of the living laws, too; all of these gets expression by musical works.

Magnificent composers like J.S. Bach and Händel, Mozart and Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Dvořák, Mahler and Richard Strauss, Debussy and Enescu, Gershwin and Walton imposed themselves as “musicians–authentic sages” – as the Greek philosophers used to valuate -, who were concerned by the ethical dimension of their creations. They offer us a veritable learning about an *ethical experience of life*. Their wonderful works, as long as they can be listened to, illustrate the value of the unity of *music* and *ethos* in serving the *well-being* of life in its totality, claiming a certain responsibility of human being as a creator and self-creator able to work for Beauty, Good and Truth, and finally showing the side of human capacity to accomplish a grain of the ideal of *kalokagatheia*.

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Aristotle. *Poetics*.

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*. Romanian translation (1924): *Politica*. Bucharest: Editura Cultura Națională, p.206.

## References:

- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a, -20.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*.
- Aristotle. *Politics*. Romanian translation (1924): *Politica*. Bucharest: Editura Cultura Națională.
- Blaga, Lucian (1983). *Trilogia cunoașterii / Trilogy of Knowledge. Opere*, volume 8. Bucharest: Minerva Publishing House.
- Combarieu, Jules (1920). *Histoire de la musique*, Tome I. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin; Reinach, Th. (1926). *La musique grecque*. Paris: Payot; Sachs, Curt (1969). *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World*. New York: W.W.Norton & Comp.
- De Beauvoir, Simone (1964). *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Diogenes Laertius. *Lives and Doctrines of Eminent Philosophers*.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1960). *Wahrheit und Methode*, Band 1 und Band 2. Tübingen: J.CB.Mohr. Romanian translation (2001): *Adevăr și metodă*. Bucharest: Teora.
- Hartmann, Nicolai (1966). *Ästhetik*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co. Romanian translation (1974): *Estetica*. Bucharest: Univers Publishing House.
- Heidegger, Martin (1977). *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Plato. *The Republic*. Romanian translation (1986): *Republica. Opere*, volume V. Bucharest: Editura Științifică și enciclopedică.
- Plato. *Phaedo*. Romanian translation (1983): *Phaedon. Opere*, volume IV, Bucharest: Editura Științifică și enciclopedică.
- Ricoeur, Paul (1986). *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique, II*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur (1972). *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. Wiesbaden: Brockhaus. Romanian translation (1995): *Lumea ca voință și reprezentare*, volume 1. Jassy: Moldova Publishing House.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*.
- Tolstói, Léon (1898). *Qu'est-ce que l'Art?* Paris: Perrin et C-ie Editeurs.
- Tymieniecka, Anna-Teresa (1990). *Logos and Life. Book 3: The Passions of the Soul and the Elements in the Ontopoiesis of Culture. The Life Significance of Literature*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Tymieniecka, Anna-Teresa (2000). *Logos and Life. Book 4: Impetus and Equipoise in the Life-Strategies of Reason*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Tymieniecka, Anna-Teresa (2009). *The Fullness of the Logos in the Key of Life. Book I: The Case of God in the New Enlightenment*. Dordrecht: Springer.