



## The positive impact of music on ideal society according to philosophers' perspective

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### ABSTRACT

It is possible to direct music and arts for the benefit of societies, and according to the interest and structure of the community as well as its conditions and nature. We have made a study about the positive impact of music on the ideal society, and what music can do on humans such as the effects reflected on people positively with respect to the opinions of philosophers, who considered music a beautiful outlet because human can be free from his existential restrictions, which leads human to feel the existence because music form a special world characterized with ultimate freedom, and when people listen to regular and beautiful voice of music that lead the listener to his/her own world with special feelings that raises human soul to higher ideals of existence and life, where music can speak itself with silence.

### 1. Introduction

The importance of ethics is not limited to certain type of expression but the action that express it. However, in some cases we found that artist plays the feelings of the audience as happening nowadays, and some singers exploit young girls in most of their songs in order to increase the sexual excitement of audience, which is a contrary to the perspective of Plato of ideal city, and this because Plato believed it would to reinforce the wisdom of mind, and he talked about “music should avoid extremism or recklessness, and if music radicalize and go for extremism then it would kill the wisdom of mind and rule of reasons, and damage human happiness<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Mustafa Badr El-Din, Ahmed, the philosophy of art and beauty, Dar Al-Masirah for publication and distribution, printing, first edition, Jordan, 2012, p169

For this reason, music has been used for the sake of personal benefits and business, and are not intended to be used for the benefit the public between community members and the dissemination of good and morality as Plato said, and also confirmed by the philosopher Aristotle about the need to harness music and art in the right way and could become a spoiler human soul, and without organizing to music it would be useless and would be a corruptive tool for society and the state. Currently audience are not sure about the artist works and in particular the singers, because they do not comply to wise system, and they neglect major problems facing the modern society and damage its ethics and morals, and the reason of that because they pay attention to aspects that attract audience in order to be famous only. The modern era is the age of ultimate freedom for anybody to be an artist or singer, while the doctor should study medicine first and same apply on person aim to be an artist, and he/she should learn the fundamentals of beautiful art first, in order to spread beauty and ethics between audience to be an ideal society.

## **2. The term music**

The word music is not Arabic, but Greek origin, and is derived from Musa and it main meaning is inspiring then added two letter so that music calling for all arts, but the naming was limited later on weighted voices, or as a language of melodies and emotions, or it is a rhythms and melodies. The melody: is hidden speech or good voice<sup>2</sup>

## **3. The importance of music in ideal societies**

We mean ideal society is a group of individuals living in one place and related together by special bonds bear the meaning of peaceful living, and involve social and cultural relationships and each individual attempt to achieve common interests, which form the character of society and its identity, while we ideal means that the society is characterized by goodness and virtue. Whereas music had been found in religious ceremonies and special events for some of the kingdoms and peoples to commemorate or celebrate and worship, and then music had took a rhythmically role to encourage and motivate soldiers for fighting, attack, conflict and resistance. After that music transformed to other purposes such as searching for ethics and beautiful values in life as mentioned

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<sup>2</sup> A. D. Hossam, Al-Alusi, 2008, the third dimension of art to understand the rights, Al-Hikmah House, Iraq, Baghdad, p 350

by Aristotle and Plato, and in latest ages music has been used for education and healing as well as entertainment, because social life is a dimension of nature reality.

Also because the mind manages matters of life of the individual in the analysis and development of solutions for anything faced in life, but feelings and emotions are the main communicator to this thinking, because they are influenced by a particular situation making it reflected the mind and made it start thinking and research, so we find that music has a significant role in achieving sense of comfort and calm. However, this is happening mainly with studied and organized music according to Musical rules.

Plato explained that all kinds of arts depend on harmony, and influence people through regularity of the rhythm, and the natural waves to affect the confused senses, and increase the sense of comfort.<sup>3</sup>

Most of modern and ancient philosophers and scholars have agreed that to identify the status of an ideal society then search for its music. The western philosophers had stated that music and singing identify the nature of society and its civilization as well as community trends and culture through singing, and representing the society as a theatre that show the trends of nation and its culture clearly.<sup>4</sup>

The opinions of philosophers are the main criteria in this study, and will be the guidance to analyze the music of societies the use music since ancient ages, while philosophers had considered music as a mean and not a tendency by societies, while philosophy is an attempt to understand the nature of world directly through conception.

Since music was a common language that express details through harmonies about the hidden nature of the world. Therefore we should look to music without contradiction to a large extent as the real philosophy<sup>5</sup> because there are two types of music, the first type is noble music and the

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<sup>3</sup> Al-Reeh , Ne'mat, 2008, poetry and singing in Islam and their role in the Islamic call \ Republic of the Sudan as a model, Malaysia, the National University of Malaysia, p 12

<sup>4</sup> Al-Amir, Hussein Salem, 1999, Music and singing in Mesopotamia, Baghdad, House of Public Cultural Affairs

<sup>5</sup> Mohammed Saeed, Tawfiq, 2011, Metaphysics art of Schopenhauer, Al-Tanwir for printing, publishing and distribution, Lebanon, Beirut, pp. 248

second type is soul spoiling music. Spoiling means here that music do not express goodness and beauty in its performance, and this happen when music implement poor melodies or using music in wrong position, for example we can use music to express enthusiasm and activity of a an anger person, or reverse we can't use soft music for soldiers preparing for war, however the failure of what they hear in these situation may not due to music but because of incorrect selection of proper music that match the attitude. Music is like a remedy that could not be used only in the right time and tight situation or position. We have to select the appropriate music to influence in the correct situation of our life, and we should not stay away from music because it was played improperly. However, some people have an impression that Islam is against music and art regardless of their types and in particular music and singing.

#### **4. The role of music in ideal society**

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Music has multiple roles in societies, and it entered in many fields and aspects, which has took a significant role in human history and peoples' life, and not only in recent ages, but in ancient ages as well. Therefore we have divided music to various aspects according to its position and function, which match harmony in societies, and they are:

##### **4.1 The social aspects**

We found that music rise up human to ideals and human goodness both sensory high-level, and enforce the spirit of confidence and happiness, love and joy to psychological satisfaction of human when listening to a certain kind of music, where one of the specialist in psychotherapy has recommended couples to listen to music for the purpose of ensuring a quiet marriage life, and confirmed that couples must rest three days a week to watch TV programs of all kinds and advised to listen to soothing music, even an hour daily.<sup>6</sup>

We found that most people who love certain kind of music according to their normal psychological status, and if they are in a joy and happy situation then it would be impossible to listen to sad music because it might impact their happy mood, while the reverse is true in case of sadness, they would not be able to listen to any type of happy music, even it was the most beautiful music or their

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<sup>6</sup> D. Kaadan, Abdel Nasser, Kutafa Mais, Music therapy in medicine Arab, Syria, Aleppo University, 22 p.

favourite music. Philosopher Schopenhauer said “we can’t realize the replication to any example in this world, despite that it has a strong impact on the human nature, and human understand music perfectly and deeply as a universal language precisely designed and its clearness exceeding the clearness of physical world itself.<sup>7</sup>

Music speaks to human soul and not mind so that human will respond to anything, since the soul is the controller of human mood in any place and time, and whether human is a child or adult and regardless of gender, and even animals and plants respond to beautiful music.

Human soul is composed of many senses, which gifted by almighty Allah and enabled human to feel the surrounding environment, and we should not overlook that philosophers had made art as a beautiful study search for ethics and perfection as we found in the opinions of Plato and Aristotle. Moreover music involve in many social fields such as:

#### **4.1.1 Social Events**

We note that music and songs involved in social life and add joy and happiness to individuals in special private and public events such as marriage ceremonies, public occasions, and we found that most of these events are companioned by music in order to compliment joy and pleasure inside peoples, music also used as a way for convergence and engagement between people, and used to express feelings towards others as well.

#### **4.2 Music in sport**

The fact declared by a researcher team from Ohio University that runners spend less efforts during running if they practice sport and listening to music at the same time. The researchers have put headphones playing music in the ears of first group of participants in the test; while a second group did running test without listening to music. The result showed that pituitary glands of runners have secreted a larger amount of a substance called endorphins, a substance produced by certain spots in the brain when a person spend great effort or feeling pain, the matter that refer to their feelings

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<sup>7</sup> Mohammed Saeed, Tawfiq, 2011, Metaphysics art of Schopenhauer, Al-Tanwir for printing, publishing and distribution, Lebanon, Beirut, pp. 239

of tiredness and exhaustion, and it was less for the second group who did not listen to music during running.<sup>8</sup>

Music involved in most of sports not for the purpose of listening but to motivate and encourage athletes, it is like a clapping hand for the athlete. And there are many sports should be accompanied with music like aerobics which is a famous sport representing few movements with music and in particular rhythmic music, where men used this sport to fine-tune the body's muscles, and women used this kind of sport to work the redistribution of fat on the body properly.

While dancing on ice can't be done without music and need for special music that is harmonized and adjust the movements of athletes. Football the most famous sport in the world also comes with music and chants in many occasions as a way for cheer and encouragement to players in the field. Gymnastics also accompanied with special rhythmic for women, where the gymnast perform rhythmic movements beautifully and threw to the music she while she holds in her hand a tape or a collar or anything, and called rhythmic gymnastics because of necessary rhythmic music which involved in this music, and should not forget the Swedish exercises for slimming also use music. However, every sport has its own music style, so if a sport was carrying force then must put a music carries power and determination nature, and if the type of sport need a music quiet then should play special music such as the famous sport of Yoga , and this sport is known as a sport that aims to reach inner feelings in people's hearts with the help of soft music and dim light , according to that music do not lead us only to the state of clarity of mind , but also help us to get rid of stress and improve the style of living daily and also provide self activity which is vital in modern life.

### **4.3 The Economic Aspects**

Music has entered the economic field and helped to increase production in such as spiritual food for peoples, and help to reach maturity and emotional attitude in humans, music employ itself in a way to listen and control emotions and emotions that occur within human, and help people to grow

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<sup>8</sup> Almany, Dawood, 2007, Soft Music produce creative energy in our souls, Al-Qabas Newspaper, No. 14544, WWW.ALQABAS.COM 2013-11-26

important intellectual and physical functions, and contribute to improving the functions of social adjustment in life and act as a tool for purge and motivation in the community,

Many scholars have examined the functions of the human body and its various functions, including Docal Woondt who has drew and planning efficient muscle, he has showed a graphic layout of muscles that listening to appropriate music increases muscle activity and raise the efficiency<sup>9</sup>, and this is reflected, of course positively on production, whereas the community is composed of doctors, engineers, construction workers and housewives, students and others, and all of them need for self motivation in order to complete their jobs, as modern life is full with stress and not easy. However, all what people need is to focus on work and overcome obstacles with less efforts to achieve the objectives. Therefore obstacles need for strong motivation to overcome, and when people facing tough situations and difficulties in life they become weaker with less determination, hence music can help people to increase their willingness and determination to work more active and give better productivity in life and work.

Therefore human had known that music had a strong impact on reinforcement and motivation, and can take different forms such as public and traditional singing that motivate people to work and could make work effortless, according to that we see music and singing as an ancient art that gather people together under one voice and tone unite their rhythmic work that combine them together in work as a one unit working in the same time. The effect of music is not only on human but also include plants and animals, where researchers have discovered the effect of music on plants by increasing their growth speed, and they noticed the effect of music on animals, where cows produce more milk when listening to music.<sup>10</sup>

#### **4.5 The Political Aspects**

Music is associated with the areas of politics, police and army in the world, and in multiple types of events including official ceremonies and ordinances of each country according to the principles and priorities of society, and this is obvious when reception a foreign official person coming from

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<sup>9</sup> D. Kaadan, Abdel Nasser, Kutafa Mais, Music therapy in medicine Arab, Syria, Aleppo University, pp22.

<sup>10</sup> D. Shehata, Said, 2007, Awareness of the beauty of the music, the Academy of Arts, Egypt, pp 132

abroad to meet other country's official. The foreign official person will be welcomed by decrees presidential music special for his country, it will be part consists of the structure of the state itself, and also related to national music and patriotic occasions and events that belong to the state. Music take place a place in the crucial occasions such as war and used to raise the spirit of enthusiasm and carriage of fighters, and music shows in the ranks of the military exercises in organizing the steps and the progress of the military on a regular basis. This is what we find in the music of Richard Wagner used to lift fighting spirit and raise enthusiasm and courage among the soldiers, while Hitler had used music in Germany in the loudspeakers fixed aircraft during the time of war so that all German army could listen, because he found that music affects the human soul and increase soldiers' determination and enthusiasm. There are a lot of philosophers who stressed that music calls for stimulus and determination among the people, and those philosophers like Hegel, who declared an example of spiritual music that help spread enthusiasm among the soldiers during the time of war, he had stated that the movement of soldiers on the rhythm of music should match between the internal rhythm of music and soldiers' movement, so that the self of soldiers could be consistent with what you're doing.<sup>11</sup>

#### **4.6 Educational Aspects**

The task of teacher of educator is guidance, discipline and education and not using violence against children. However, using violence will not help children but will make them more aggressive. Therefore, teachers should not neglect to let children love schools and education, and neglecting this matter is a big mistake, and may let children hate school and learning, and in some case fear to go to school. The impact of music is not limited to rationalize the feelings and ethical education, but it exceeding that the develop memory and thinking as well as attention and all mental processes which are known in psychology. Therefore, musical education has become an anchor of education system in all developed countries regardless of their political and economical systems.<sup>12</sup>

Hence, each teacher should encourage children to have their own world inside school, or we will have a child that could not be developed by his community or environment, because of neglecting

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<sup>11</sup> D. Aqlanyh, Mecca, Singing and music between the permissible and the forbidden, Al-Kalimah House for publication and distribution, the first edition, Egypt 1999, pp 107

<sup>12</sup> D. Jafar, Nuri, 1979, the nature of the readiness of music, arts weekly magazine, Issue 62, the Ministry of Culture and Information, Baghdad, pp 46



what the child have such as trends ,talents, innovation, and leaving some aggressive behaviours that could be controlled through adopting musical skills, songs and drawing. We found that most people accuse talent people as non rational persons, and we believed that the main reason for this belief is due to their artistic production, which showed because of repression and their great love to this talent. The artistic emotion raises several desires conducive to do, and this is what Aristotle had meant about purge.<sup>13</sup>Children should release their energy they have because the child has a potential energy and should be released in a right way and to the right place, in addition to that the child must know the reality of the world in order to communicate and interact with life correctly in a balanced and natural way, and should make internal and external balanced, otherwise education process will fail and thoughts about complete knowledge It is obvious that the community who fails to educate morals and ethics will not be able to organize an important aspect of individual's life. We said that the meaningful world is wider that scientific language and mental logic. Therefore, the doors for this world is art, and the fact is that educating emotion and developing artistic vision and reading as well as listening to music can work to make a balance between subjective knowledge and emotional foresight<sup>14</sup>, and an art that based on sense and feelings, and related to the reality of the society and affected by its behaviours and traditions.

#### **4.8 The Healing Aspects**

Music is the noblest voices that human can listen and affect his emotion. It is a fresh sound and regularly with each produced vibrations. Although the phrase "music is a soul food" known to many, but not heeded to say whether it is true or not already. May be due to the loss of the acquisition of high knowledge bases of music, and many older studies shown that music has an influential and self incentive to resist disease, pain, and even cases of epilepsy and hysteria. Because its relations to be with the emotional effects which is sensations and not cognitive effects, so the music has been used to treat patients, and people have brought some of the musical instruments in some hospitals. The Arabic scientist Al-Kindy had said "musical melodies has a good impact the health of the body, as it could be used as a blood supplements and sedatives for

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<sup>13</sup> D. Abu Melhem, Ali, 1990, in beauty towards a new vision to the philosophy of art, first edition, Beirut, University Corporation for Studies and Publishing and Distribution, pp 83

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Al-Alusi, Hossam, 2008, Art/ the third dimension to human understanding, Iraq, Al-Hikmah House, pp 341

pain, and as an assistant to get rid of indigestion, and also saying that the lute has an extraordinary ability to get rid of the pain". Therefore Al-Kindy had entered the musical instruments such as drums and sticks to treat patients.<sup>15</sup> While some modern studies showed that music has exceeded the role of encouragement and achieved the role of reinforcement. Many studies have been written on music and discussed its significant role on acquiring the strong desire for many patients suffering from chronic and serious diseases. Music helped patient to recover more than traditional drugs, and in many cases helped to strengthen the immune system of patients through lifting the moral status of patients, and in some case for children living with cancer which is the most deadly diseases among humans. An article published in Middle East newspaper written by Dr. Manal Mohammed, a lecturer in the department of Solfege and Rhythm in Halwan university, the researcher has made a study on some patients children living with cancer and measured the effect of music on their medical situation. The researcher finds that music has increased the immune system of patients and raised their morals to the extent where they were able to forget the sickness atmosphere, and the patients have started to respond to some good behaviours, which were reinforced by music.<sup>16</sup>

## **5. The summary**

This study aims to discuss the reality of ideal society and the impact of music on the ideal society. The study found that music is leading of all kinds of arts and there is no single civilization without a special culture of music. Music had emerged since ancient ages, and has been involving in many aspects of life such as politics, healing of patients, sport, education..etc. After analyzing the previous literatures, the study concluded that Music has a positive role on the ideal society because music can raise the culture of the society by goodness and ethics.

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