

Role of Music and Visual arts in the present world order

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The present world order has reached the nadir point of destruction amid world-wide terrorism, global warming, and constant threats of nuclear bombs and imperialistic designs of stronger nations on weaker ones. Beside this, natural calamities like Tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, droughts and various types of diseases are threatening mankind continuously. Inflation, unemployment, social insecurity, corruption and law and order problems all have joined in increasing personal and social tensions.

In the present socio-economic-political scenario man with attainment of materialistic as well as immaterial things seeks happy mental state and prosperity. And there is no other medium than music and visual art to overcome all these troubles. Visual art and music create cultural and personal connections and hence helpful in many ways.

Music as Visual Art Component

Music is an art from a source that produces sound in time which delivers thoughts and affections in relevant styles via the components of harmony, melody, rhythm and with the support of its auxiliary elements.

Visual art is a creative art whose products are to be appreciated by sight, such as painting, sculpture, and film- making, ceramics, drawing, photography, video, design, crafts, and architecture (as contrasted with literature and music).

In the past 100 years, music has played a tremendously important role in the stylistic development of visual art. It has created impetus and inspiration for those artists wishing to produce a pure and transcendental art form. Music has also been used as an analogy or metaphor in artistic expression

By definition, we can clearly recognize the visible relationship between Music and Visual art. They both complements each other as they both need creativity in expressing the ideas. Both utilize the space, physical appearance and color.

Basically, Music is an art, but when we say that it is the basic part of our lives, it enlarges our perception of music. Because, due to this, music enrich itself in a varied art form. The kind of transition like this made a completely new height in the environment of visual arts. Hearing music while watching the work of art can influence the way we see it. By combining music and artwork, the interest of the spectator/ listener's emotion can be magnified.

It has been believed by scholars that who really love and care about music is the one who grew up listening to songs that touched them and spoke to them in a profound way.

When music and visual arts work together in a harmonized way these experiments bring amazing effects to the viewers and listeners. So, both has the power to culturally, morally, and emotionally influence our society.

Cultural Impact: The popular music today reflexes our culture. We can see the fingerprints of a certain generation in the lyrics and sound of that time. In this present age, our cultural is changing far more frequently than ever before, reflecting styles of music that are evolving just as rapidly. It is clear that the face of music is changing with the change of time due to the changes in the culture, thought and changes in the society's consensus world view

Thus, we need to be aware of our modern-day culture, but more importantly, we need to be intentional about the culture we want to create and cultivate with our music, for the betterment of coming generations.

Moral Impact: Music along with visual art can definitely play a significant role in determining what should be right or wrong, good or bad factors in order to build compass in people. It can play a positive role in moral development by creating sensual attraction to goodness. It can play destructive role too by setting people specially children on a temperamental path that leads away from virtue.

Soothing music helps one to think about the positive aspects of life, and this has been experimented, tested and has been universally accepted.

Emotional Impact: This is probably the most identifiable and direct impact music has on people in society. Music has the potential to change the mood, to shift the atmosphere, and to encourage a different behavior.

Music is a language of emotion. It can represent different feelings and can barge the soul with no boundaries. Music and visual arts have the ability to evoke powerful emotional response such as chills and thrills in listeners. In short, Music has the power to culturally, morally and emotionally influence our society. Thus, the more intentional we become with the scene, sounds, messages, and moods we create and release through our music and visual art, the more powerful we will become in making deep positive impacts. It has been proved by experimental evidence that disgusting and irritating sounds and sights expressing anger or happiness can have significant impact in moral judgment.

Music, Dance, Folk music, classical music and other such fine arts are very beneficial as they provide relaxation, as also contribute to the national integration breaking the barriers of caste, creed and regionalism. Music and visual arts also boost spiritual elevation. Today man has sacrificed happiness in quest for materialism. There are comforts of life, but those comforts of life are without peace. The hunger for material wealth and fame has led man to an abyss of despair and tension causing in him health related problems and reduced work capabilities. This vacuum can be filled by music. Today man needs to remain in close association with the nature to hear music in silence- the twittering of the birds, call of the peacock and cries of the cuckoo.

Music essentially contains fervor of spiritual values. Vedic mantra contains charming music. Enchanting bhakti sangeet was developed by the devoted musicians. Indian Classical dances are endowed with powerful expression of spiritual values. Regional styles confluent in Classical and Folk styles of dance which contain various aspects of emotions.

Now dance forms like Bharat Natyam, Kathak, Kathakali & Kuchipudi do not remain confined to regional areas only but attained national recognition and even travelled to foreign countries carrying the prestige of India. Today India is a treasure house of music and dance for effective means of expression in association with visual art.

Hence, in the present world order the role of music and visual arts is highly challenging. It is not denying the fact that there are limitations of music and visual arts yet there is increasing recognition of its evocative, educational, and healing powers in therapeutic and other settings (Bunt 1994, Boyce – Tillman 2000, Bunt & Hoskyns)

Music certainly offers a powerful tool of expression. “When words fail, music speaks”, said Hans Christian Anderson. Music is the best medium of communication. Every sane person of the world understands the language of music. It is not essential to learn the grammar of music to understand it, because it touches the heart and hence it is an effective medium of communication.

“I don’t know anything about music, but I understand it. In my view you don’t have to learn music to understand it”, said Elvis Presley (1935-1977).

The whole world order can be reset from negative state to positive state with the impact of music. “Music can tame a tiger and soothe a burning soul”, said George Netterville.

According to Henry Wadsworth, “Music is the universal language of mankind”.

According to Victor Hugo, “Music expresses that which cannot be said”

The topic of this research paper is rooted in personal and social tension and the present world order - which is essentially tense.

Thus, Musicians and visual artists have been collaborating for a long time. For years now, visual artists and musicians have been bending boundaries. Western artists Jackson Pollocks and Romare Bearden have repeatedly cited jazz music as an influence in their work, and musicians like David Bowie and Freddie Mercury are known to have moonlighted as visual artists.

The question arises, what should be the role of music in the tense situation? Tension is the whole problem and tension resides in mind.

In this context I would like to quote from the book Supreme Understanding by Osho which are as under:

Music can provide one a little rest inside. Not going anywhere is rest. Just being there where you are is rest. There is no other 'where'- just occupying only that space where you are is rest. "Here and now" is the whole existence. Music transcends time and space and keeps the listener in present and spell bound. The divine has given all that can be given to you. You are unnecessarily running here and there, tired and tense. You are missing because you are running, tired and tense. If you are absorbed in music you are in love with whole universe – there is no two, no distinctions. Man is tense, strained, always ready to fight, always afraid, because sweet music has been disappeared from his life.

Sweet music and spirituality are two aspects of the same coin. They are interwoven. They go together. They cannot be separated. Music expresses that which cannot be put into words. "You are the music while the music lasts", said T.S. Eliot.

Indian Drama, dance and music are rooted in spiritual pursuits. Village folk in India witness dramas, dance and music based on the theme of Ramayan, Mahabharat, Devi Durga – the Mahisasur Mardini, Krishna- Leelas etc with great devotion and interest. Now such serials which are based on our epics are most popular in Television. The music and visual arts are greatly promoted by television, radio and films and help a great deal in removing individual and social tensions and teaches people to live in unity and integrity.

The prime theme of Hindustani music and Carnatic music are romantic love. They express devotion towards Rama, Krishna and Allah.

Carnatic music's primary themes include Devi worship, Rama worship, description of temples and patriotic songs. In present world order music and visual arts are regularly travelling from one country to another through SPIC MACAY (Society for the promotion of Indian classical music and culture among youth) and other National and International organizations. Role of music and visual arts in the present world order has increased by leaps and bounds. A number of cultural delegations are going from one country to another to spread music and visual arts of one country to another. This fosters a love of learning of foreign music and visual arts in the participants and spectators National and International film festivals through movie shows also spread far and wide the culture of one country to another.

Interest in Indian music which was largely unknown in the west was triggered by Sarod player Ali

Akbar Khan's 1955 concert in New York. Eventually western curiosity for Indian music wed the hippy ethos and raga – rock became a sonic emblem of sixties. In 1967 Khan founded the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Francisco in bay area.

Another disciple of Ali Akbar Khan's father Allaudin Khan Sitar player Ravi Shankar toured the west in 1956 when he was already veteran and made friend with George Harrison of Beatles who became his student in 1966 Collaboration with flutists Paul, Horn and Bud Shank was the first meeting of jazz and raga. Ravi Shankar Pioneered the 'east-west' fusion with West Meets East (1967). Later on, in 1968 the famous Tabla player Allah Rakha recorded a duo with jazz drummer Buddy Rich. Later on there was representation of Nikhil Banerjee the Eminent sitarist of instrumental style of music and Vilayat Khan the renowned sitarist of vocal style of music at the end of the 20th century.

Allah Rakha's son Zakir Hussain also came to the USA in 1960s. In 1987 Hariprasad Chourasia flute recital was a milestone in jazz- Indian fusion. Pure Pakistani born vocalist Pandit Pran Nath a master of Kirana Style also moved to the USA in 1970.

Source Indian classical music by Piero Scaruffig This way the interchange of culture, fine arts, music and visual arts between nations ensued. More cultural delegations from India went to many foreign countries and vice versa. This is the gift of the present world order. The need of the hour is that we must not be complacent because we have miles to go.

The ordinary artist of today should be made celebrities tomorrow. Music and visual arts must not be contracted to traditional and family business only. It should be open to everyone. Arrangement of proper training to the needy must be made so that even poor children/ people get benefit of a good education of music and visual arts. Few channels in Television must telecast 24x7 proper education/training of music and visual arts with central/ state governments' patronage. Serials like sa re ga ma pa, Voice of India, Indian Idol, Nach Le by Saroj Khan etc. have become very popular not in India only but in the whole world. This is heartening. This will go a long way in further growth and development of music and visual arts. Now the question arises whether music is efficacious to calm down global warming, change the dreadful nature to friendly one, infuse love and goodwill amongst those who have become aberrant and terrorist and bring them in the mainstream?

While the writer is hopeful for the good result of music and visual arts, but only after getting heartening results from proper experiment and research work anything can be said for certainty.

I conclude by quoting a few lines of the world-renowned poet and novelist William Shakespeare's verse. I understand the concluding line of the verse "fall asleep or hearing die" by both sleep and awakened state which is the state of self-realization or Samadhi.

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountaintops that freeze,
Bow themselves, when he did sing:

To his music, plants and flowers
ever [sprung] 1; as sun and showers
there had made a lasting spring.
Everything that heard him play,
even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by.
In sweet music is such art:
Killing care and grief of heart
Fall asleep, or, hearing, die.
Quoted in Shakespeare's Henry VIII, Act III scene1

Thus, the part played by music and visual arts is dependent on the socio economic-political situation of the Nation and the world order. Gift of science also contributes a great deal in deciding the role of music and visual arts. Nowadays the scope of music and visual arts is wider and hence their role has also expanded proportionately. Formerly their scope was limited. But with the advent of electronic age one can see and listen to performance of music and various visual arts in television at home comfortably. The computer, I-Pod, DVD, Cassette player, etc. has contributed a great deal in spreading music and visual arts far and wide. This facility is further on increase. But music and visual arts have a far greater role to play.