

Value Proposition of Music Performance of Diversity in Nature

Introduction

For this assignment, the risk of not getting an A is taken by choosing a modern progressive metal band to be the candidate of music performance for children. The name of the band is “Dream Theater”, an American band founded in 1985. The band has received two Grammy Award nominations as of 2018, and I personally think that the musicality, ideologies, and values promoted and carried by this band are suitable for cultivating desirable traits among our future generations.

Unlike most of the rock/metal groups, Dream Theater and its members (who are all Christians) do not promote concepts and behaviors like self-destruction, substance abuse, the pursuit of freedom at the cost of familial and social responsibility. Among the published 14 albums, numerous themes are presented, such as the death of a family member, the hardship and struggle experienced by people with dreams and aspirations, and the attitude and stance that people can adopt to promote justice. Besides, Dream Theater’s concert is like no other modern rock or metal concert where chaos and intoxication are the prerequisites for entering the auditorium. Although it is not comparable to the classical music concert in which very little noise is made by the audience, Dream Theater’s concert is fun and sublime in that they do a lot of experiments or improvisation utilizing different musical elements, and oftentimes the vocalist would stir up the vibe by talking about certain things that cater to the psychological and physical needs of people of all ages. The dexterity and musical chemistry combined results in music of all kinds, in which the fast drumbeats, simple

yet profound bass line, complicated keyboard sound, and juicy guitar tone and emotional solo hold the audience as hostages. In fact, you can find people of all age groups in Dream Theater's concert, children and young teenagers make up a decent portion of audience. All in all, the musical performance by Dream Theater is appropriate for children.

1. Music performance, brain, and cognitive ability/ Appropriateness of performance/event/resource for young children.

By being the audience of certain music and engaging in the process of learning musical instruments and producing original musical creations, children are expected to gain the neurological benefits. Miendlarzewska and her colleagues (2014) suggest that music training can bring children benefits such as heightened auditory sensitivity, higher level of verbal abilities, and reasoning skills used in certain types of speech (presentation, argument, oratory, etc.) and STEM subjects. Not only that, by learning to play an instrument and appreciate certain music genres, children also develop their executive function, processing speed, memory, and attention. If a child really loves a band, he will try to gather the relevant information and engage in the act of being a follower, in which singing along with the song, analyzing and relating to the lyrics, and learning to play the instruments to be able to jam with the band's song at home or in-person. Through this process, many children utilize their cognitive ability for the accomplishment. More specifically, children engage in the process of memorization as they learn to play songs according to notations; some children with mental fortitude

will also try to practice the instrument or appreciate the music for a substantial amount of time when they are free or even at school in which their ability to focus, shift, and divide attention is improved. Following along certain rhythmic pattern also enables children to develop mathematics ability as they count the beat, interval, and time signature within a song. Not to mention that oftentimes human tend to clap, tap toes or fingers, and count the number of bars of song. Such practice also yields heightened ability of hand-ear coordination and sensory-motor skills, both gross and fine.

According to Baycrest (2002), “The brain is malleable from childhood to adulthood. If musical training is found to have a beneficial effect on brain function beyond that involved in musical performance, this may have implications for the education of children, for life-long strategies to preserve the fitness of the aging brain...” Thus, it is important to incorporate music as a pedagogy or developmental strategy into the practice of parenting and formal education.

By listening to music performance or training in music performance, different brain regions are activated, different neurons are firing in a series of sequence. Ultimately, brain and neuronal connectivity are being established, strengthened, and adjusted continuously according to the task at hand.

Going to Dream Theater’s concert, practicing their music through instrument playing, and learning to appreciate their lyrics give a person all the benefits mentioned above.

2. Music performance, social functioning, and value instillment among children/

How children were given the opportunity to develop and/or appreciate skills and knowledge in the artforms.

Listening to certain music performance and engaging in music performance have long been proven to increase children's ability to maintain a relatively high level of social functioning, cultural competency, academic success, and the development of personality. As Dumont (2017) and his colleagues suggested, children who attended the school emphasizing music education or utilizing music as a pedagogy have higher levels of sympathy and prosocial behavior. Besides, children who have more experience of seeing or engaging in music performance are more emotionally complete than children who do not. In other words, children experiencing more music performance are able to comprehend others' emotion and cope with their own emotional disturbance or distress. Although many studies focus on the relationship between music (performance, appreciation, training, etc.) and academic success, it has yet to be concluded that there is indeed a causal or correlational relationship between these two. Miscellaneous results are found. Ritblatt et al. (2013) indicated that music program can result in a more positive approach to learning among children. On the other hand, studies like the one conducted by Pelham et al. (2011) are nullifying the positive effect of music performance and training on minors.

One of the most important and overlooked thing in the articles exploring the relationship between musical matters and child development is the type of the music that can be used for educational purposes. A lot of times, instrumental music (classical and new age) is being used because they do not necessarily provide a specific context

or project certain values within the song, which can influence children in terms of their behavior, ideology, friend circle, and lifestyle. According to Richardson et al, (2002), gangster rap often promotes the idea of violence, drug abuse, and sexual activities. The vulgar use of language in the gangster rap has propelled numerous youths to follow that criminal path.

In terms of value instillment and positive influence, certain genres of music are capable of both. "Music can express complex human concepts beyond merely happy and sad" (Mattheson & Lenneberg, 1958). Evidence found by educators, caregivers, and policymakers all shows that the type of music that a person listens to often play roles in that person's personality development, mental and physical health, subconscious thinking, as well as social functioning. Mesz et al. (2015) conducted such research that again verified the moral and logic influence that different music can cast upon listeners.

On the account of listening to Dream Theater's music, children consciously and subconsciously learn to count the progressive beat within the song and appreciate the metaphysical or practical meaning within the song. In other words, the cognitive ability, ability of appreciation, and sensorimotor skills are developed in the process.

3. How children might respond to the event/performance/workshop/resource and why?

It is impossible to analyse all the genetic, social, and familial factors of different children to get an accurate answer regarding their response to the music by

Dream Theater. One thing for sure is that some of them will get irritated or agitated when listening to the unconventional and progressive heavy metal songs by Dream Theater, because they do not have the experience or talent to appreciate those songs at an early age, which is totally understandable and reasonable. On the other hand, some children may get moved, teared up, and enter a transient phase of sublimation when listening to Dream Theater's songs that are down-to-earth but emotional. For example, a child who lost his father may find the "The Best of Times" to be inspiring and healing. Due to the diversity and complexity of Dream Theater's creation, only some of the lyrics are included for answering the question.

"A heart that feels no pain, addicted to the game" (Paralyzed) This song instills the value of fortitude and never-quitting.

"Has man been a victim

Of his woman, of his father?

If he elects not to bother

Will he suffocate their faith?" (The Silent Man)

The lyrics promotes the idea of self-sacrifice and familial responsibility

"Helpless child

They invite your hands to fill their needs

Will you be the same

Shameless smile

To steal from you the innocence that bleeds

Will they feel your pain”

(Anna Lee)

Such lyrics can have therapeutic effect on children of relatively lower socioeconomic status.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the participation and engagement in music performance or training can be beneficial for children on many levels, but it is adults' responsibility to be selective, cautious, and conscientious when presenting children with music performance or producing musical creations carrying a large scale of influence. Knowing what is appropriate is essential.

Finally, I want include some of the lyrics from Dream Theater's songs to illustrate that this band is suitable for people of all ages. Plus, the progressive and novel usage of musical elements by Dream Theater is out of sight. Listen for yourself!

“A heart that feels no pain, addicted to the game” (Paralyzed)

*“The way your heart sounds
Makes all the difference
It's what decides if you'll endure the pain that we all feel
The way your heart beats
Makes all the difference
In learning to live”
(Learning to live)*

*“Has man been a victim
Of his woman, of his father?
If he elects not to bother
Will he suffocate their faith?” (The Silent Man)*

*“Helpless child
They invite your hands to fill their needs
Will you be the same
Shameless smile
To steal from you the innocence that bleeds
Will they feel your pain” (Anna Lee)*

*“Don't let the day go by
Don't let it end
Don't let a day go by, in doubt
The Answer Lies Within
Life is short
So learn from your mistakes
And stand behind
The choices that you make
Face each day
With both eyes open wide
And try to give
Don't keep it all inside” (The Answer Lies Within)*

Handwritten signature in red ink: H. H. Ross

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