

The Subtle Relationship between Community Music and Social Mobility

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Abstract: More and more countries around the world advocate for equal access to music, equal learning of music, and other forms of music education. This article introduces a popular discipline with a long history in European and American countries: community music. This art form provides important methodological guidance for the popularization and inheritance of ideas and concepts in music and art. This article explores how community artists can turn an idea into a bridge and timely means of music dissemination under such guidance. At the same time, this article also explores the impact of modern technology and media on music dissemination, as well as its limitations for specific regions and populations. New media is an inevitable material and trend that conforms to the development of the times. Unlike traditional media, this form of media allows for easy communication and exchange between characters in art worldwide. Community music, on its own way, has promoted the increase of social mobility, allowing more people to have the willingness and opportunity to learn music, and reflect the new situation of emerging new media. The combination of community music and new media is an inevitable trend and necessary choice in the context of the times. However, in this state of dissemination, community music still has a long way to go.

Keywords: New Media and Music Dissemination; Community Music; Social Mobility

1. Introduction

Over time, music has developed into a societal pillar, deeply interwoven into the intricacies of humanity. However, as with all social mobility traits, there are divisions between the socioeconomic status of different levels of society. This paper explores whether Music

acts as a facilitator of social mobility by examining the research data and participation of different groups in society in music activities, especially community music.

Since the prevalence of new media, opportunities have increased for Musical activity and engagement. With more forms of presentation and interaction readily available, has community music managed to leverage the convenience of digital technology to facilitate social mobility? Is there a direct correlation between Community Music and Social Mobility, and if so, is that correlation positive or negative?

With the progress of society, "participation" in Music can potentially be viewed as a means of establishing democracy and measuring democracy. Participation is a fundamental right of citizens[1], and during the evolution of history, Music has been developed in different forms over time, and the number of music consumers has also expanded.

In society, people's thinking will inevitably move with the times, and especially in the Internet age, all social groups have many more opportunities and platforms to connect with different forms of Music. However, in such an era, does Music affect social mobility? Or has the development of community music already increased social mobility?

2. The Efforts of Community Musicians for Social Mobility

As Matarasso comments, "Participatory art is everywhere. It has spread from the marginal urban and rural spaces it occupied in the 1970s to the centres of cultural power. It can be found in arts and cultural institutions; social, urban and economic policy; health and education services; criminal justice; housing; the voluntary sector; the media; across the Internet, and in communities everywhere." People of different professions and identities may have the opportunity to create, learn and enjoy Music. Some of the cases below reflect a

positive correlation between community music and social mobility. Many disadvantaged groups in the world reap the benefits brought by Music.

In community music activities, the concept of "community" brings Music closer to one another; vulnerable groups in society, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, those serving in prisons etc. They are often treated unequally in society, but everyone is united and friendly in the community. Moreover, the community music program is doing its best to help them. For them, Music is like a beacon of hope and possibly serves as part of a rehabilitative process. However, due to the structure of prisons, prisoners in jails rarely can embrace music or have everyday social interactions.

The promoting effect of community music on social mobility is first reflected in social values. For example, there is a dedicated music room in Norway's Bjergvin Prison, a 90-capacity prison, to support community music activities[2]. There, music therapy is available to all inmates. Music is then performed to other prison audiences and taught others how to play the guitar through their creations and gradually learning to get along with others. The service will also offer music classes to inmates such as instrument/ vocal teaching, composition, music production and live performances. Stress is inevitable for those serving prison terms, but music can bring a sense of achievement, hope, and joy throughout the prison. Community music activities provide prisoners in prisons with a way to improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. The emotional aspect of prisoners' feelings is a powerful driving force for their sense of responsibility to not re-offend once released. In Kjetil and Waage, prisoners perform a song with their memories and confessions of their past under specific rules and moral constraints. People in prison are a very vulnerable group in our society. In the community, people give them the right to learn, the right to enjoy and the right to perform. This reflects a change in social values, which undoubtedly represents the progress of society and the neutralization of class status here. Second: social awareness. The emotional aspect of prisoners' feelings is a powerful driving force for their sense of responsibility to not re-offend once released. In 2009, it took place in a medium-security state prison in the

Midwest[3]. One who has 15 years of experience as a choir conductor, and three years of experience assisting the prison's programme, spent six months in rehearsing the prison community choir.

The prisoners in the rehearsal and performance realised that the enthusiasm of the volunteers singing and enjoying with them changed their self-awareness. They realised that they were "accepted" by people outside of prison. Furthermore, choir inmates formed internal social networks with other inmates interested in singing and making new friends with volunteer singers.

Some prisoners reported that they lost their social skills, but they realized that people who shared musical interests could easily socialize. One noted that he was surprised that he could interact with the outside world without scruples during the choral program, especially since he had spent 40 years in prison.

For these people, they not only regain confidence, more importantly, with the progress of society, their social awareness has also been improved. They no longer put themselves in the ranks of "vulnerable groups. Although in prison, they have the will and ideas of social contact like ordinary people. This demonstrates the upbeat contribution community music can make to advancing social mobility.

There are many examples of Music like this all over the world. We can see that countless community musicians do not hesitate to use Music to help groups in society. The value that community music brings to prisoners is not only the basic sense of participation, entertainment, and fun, but more importantly, it gives prisoners hope.

Hope plays an indispensable role in any change. In the vision of community music, every group in the community, whether people with disabilities, the elderly, prisoners, has the potential to enjoy Music to realize self-worth. In a way, community music is driving social mobility. "Inclusiveness" has always been an effort of musicians in the community. For this group, at least, social mobility is the vision, whether or not it has been achieved.

3. The Contribution of Digital Technology to the Community

In today's Internet age, more and more people can access online art and music appreciation

through the Internet. In the UK, there are more than 48 million Internet users, and the Ofcom report[4] stated that the average Briton is online 24 hours a week, of which 62% of the time is on a smartphone. Digital activity is increasingly becoming the new normal, playing a massive role in how we connect to the world around us. The application of digital technologies in the cultural sphere has led to the increasing integration of creative activities and has opened up new forms of artistic expression, communication methods and audiences.

TikTok is a social app on smartphones, was founded and operated by the Chinese company ByteDance. Users record videos from 15 seconds to 1 minute, 3 minutes or longer, and upload videos, photos, etc. As of October 2018, the app has been downloaded by more than 800 million global users in over 150 countries. Everyone has the chance to be a content creator on the Douyin (China version of TikTok) platform. Many pianists and vocal singers have commenced live video lessons on Douyin, and students from thousands of miles away can learn near professional-level skills and knowledge. People far away in the countryside can play their hometown musical instruments in nature as long as they want, users from all walks of life. Posting content and starting live broadcasts are strongly encouraged. One can socialize by producing videos, commenting, and sharing. Douyin has become a virtual community in publishing musical content; Community musicians benefit from the more convenient conditions, and the Douyin platform breaks through distance, wealth, and class restrictions. A mobile phone is all that is needed to watch free short videos and live broadcasts of operas, operas, and piano concerts. Social mobility has been achieved to a certain extent, promoting the concept of "community".

The different ways that TikTok and other social media platforms have contributed to social mobility – everyone is a creator, inclusiveness of every community, whether they have a physical disability or not. Introverted people can also interact more confidently.

During the COVID19 pandemic, the UK has implemented a large-scale lockdown, and some traditional offline large-scale performance agencies have opened channels and produced their online performance. There are currently

new ways to get more people involved. Opera North provides a new format for music enthusiasts who cannot afford airfare and travel. They created an "OperaNorth@Home" chain to share regular content repurposed from archives and collected into themes or create new films and written works. Opera North has also created an on-demand platform in partnership with Substrakt with partners that host regular live streams of learning best practices for online engagement. This large learning curve helps content creators understand how viewers behave differently with live digital content, right down to the technical details of live streaming.

Community musicians have been trying to provide emotional happiness to the masses, and making everyone happy rather than being excluded is the concept of community music. However, whether it is online social media or an offline performance platform, some people still find a lack of confidence, happiness and sense of social participation here.

4. Exclusivity

Perhaps some people can temporarily ignore the psychological gap brought about by their real identity and status in virtual online platforms, which is a positive trait. However, Technology issues can act as an excluding factor. In the case of online music, dementia groups embrace new technologies, and they face real problems. According to the survey [5](20% of UK home workers report lack of stable internet connection for residents), in some remote areas, with no internet communication.

Similarly, purchasing needs and financial ability have also become constraints on community development. For example, a user who wants to experience online music content requires a stable internet connection, such as a smartphone or a personal computer.

According to Ofcom, the United Kingdom's communications regulator found that in 2019[6], 33 per cent of people aged 65 to 74 and 48 per cent of people over 74 in the UK did not use the Internet. Furthermore, according to the website's 2021 survey report on the use of social media among seniors over 65 in the UK, 43% of seniors still do not use or even know about social media[7].

Music might be an enabler, but only if the technology can support it.

Even as Community music has also developed to a certain extent in many countries, it still faces certain limitations in developing countries, like Turkey. We cannot say for sure that music has successfully promoted social mobility due to existing physical infrastructures. In the field survey conducted by Ebru Tuncer[8], most children with disabilities in Turkey are from low-income families. They do not have easy access to transportation and are even excluded from most concert halls, streets, and theatres. Henceforth, there is little to no fairness in allocating resources for this particular sector in Turkey.

Although many music organizations help the physically and mentally disabled, we cannot guarantee fair music access rights for everyone in every corner of the world. People with disabilities in different parts of the world still have many limitations in exercising their music creation and education rights.

The issue of financial status also exacerbates the difficulty of social mobility. For example, the survey shows that poor students participate in extracurricular music training and physical training significantly lesser than children from wealthy families.[9]

This shows that resources are still only in the hands of the privileged. There are also economic barriers for children from low-income families, who are often excluded from participation. When considering whether to learn a musical instrument, some students say their first consideration is, "Does my mother have the money to pay for this part of my expenses?" "Will they be able to afford further tuition after one class?" Interest and after-school music classes are only affordable for children from wealthy families. Although many community musicians strive to promote inclusiveness, there are still many difficulties and practical problems in promoting community inclusivity.

5. Conclusion

Community music pays attention to everyone in the community. The function of music in society is mainly social rather than hedonic[10]. The development of individuals and society should be equal to the development of music, and everyone has the right to create, learn, and enjoy music. Community music starts from the community and takes the community as a unit to support various groups in society to achieve

inclusiveness, unity, and cohesiveness. Community music facilitators emphasize the inclusion of disenfranchised and disadvantaged individuals or groups.

For now, community music efforts should have contributed to social mobility. Moreover, community musicians try to break the so-called class rigidity. However, can the development of community music fully promote social mobility? Challenges ranging from technology, physical infrastructures and real-world physical interaction challenges are factual. While it is impossible to answer whether music has genuinely become a social mobility factor, community music is always trying to change the status quo of the day.

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