

MUSIC-RELATED EXPERIENCES OF GIRLS IN THE THIRD REICH

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Background

The research project “Music-related Experiences of Girls in the Third Reich” (“Musikbezogene Erfahrungen von Mädchen im Nationalsozialismus vor dem Hintergrund musikerzieherischer Intentionen”) focused on (non-persecuted) girls in Nazi Germany whose situation was quite unlike that of boys because of different roles and educational goals. This topic had hardly been investigated.

Aims

The overall question of the research project was: Which music-related experiences were made by girls in Nazi Germany in the tension between music education and their individual (musical) biography? The empirical results should contribute to a theory of music-related experience, to the history of music education and of its gender aspects.

Method

Contemporary sources were interpreted by classical hermeneutic methods. 13 Women who were girls in the thirties were investigated by using methods of Biographical Research; the analysis of the guided narrative interviews (about 30 hours duration) based upon the “Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse” (Philipp Mayring) and the “Sozialwissenschaftliche Paraphrasierung” (Thomas Heinze).

Results

Music education for girls in the Third Reich was taken in for political aims. Its effect and great influence upon the girls is mirrored in the interviews. Music in this context was not an independent power, but because of its emotional strength it supported certain trends and images and thus contributed to the girls’ education.

Conclusions

The term “music-related experience” (“musikbezogene Erfahrung”; Hermann J. Kaiser) which was used in this context seems to be very reasonable to record individual experiences with music in empirical qualitative research. Furthermore, this kind of research allows description of the term in more detail so that a close link between a theoretical term and a qualitative research project was achieved.