

MUSIC AS A MEDICINE FOR THE ADYGHES

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Background

Since antiquity, different people have made use of music as a medicine against illness. We consider the medical function of music in typological and specific meanings. These problems are discussed based on the material of the Adyghe (Circassian) traditional culture for the first time.

Aims

The purpose of this study is to define notions and situations which provide music with the medical power in the Adyghe traditional culture, which of these notions are common to all mankind, which are typical of the whole Caucasian region, which situations are unique, and whether the Adyghe music has such an influence on people of other ethnic groups.

Method

The methods of this work include a systematic ethno-phonetic investigation of the Adyghe traditional culture. Observations are carried out by an investigator who is impressed in the culture.

Results

Geographical landscape (mountains, mountain rivers), specific flora and fauna of the Caucasus and climatic features have formed certain beliefs about beauty of sounds and melodies and their capacity for medical treatment. Songs with heroic texts help a sick man to carry the pain, identify himself with the images of heroes. Merry dancing tunes allow a man to be distracted from pain, stake out enjoying youth. Medical characteristics are comprised not so much in melodies themselves, intonations, their rhythms, as in people who regard them as curative.

Conclusions

Data on curative magic of music in the Caucasus are included in cognitive ethno-musicology.