

GESTURE AND LANGUAGE: ASPECTS OF RHYTHMICAL AND METRICAL EDUCATION IN MUSICAL TEACHING

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Background

Dealing with the problem of rhythmic and metric stability in musical practice has its origin in observations made during lessons of instrumental teaching: there are children or even adults, who, while playing, show noticeable difficulties keeping the correct rhythm.

Aims

Musical lessons require a method suitable to learn the skills of rhythm and meter. As a starting point, this not only has to happen on a cognitive basis, but also with special regard to the physical dimension of rhythm. Approaches from “Elementare Musikerziehung”, which include physical exercise (especially body percussion) and language (e.g. language of rhythm according to Kodály) prove themselves very promising.

Main contribution

To find out about the aspect of rhythm in physical behaviour, a description of motor development is necessary. In this connection, language can be defined as movement of the articulators. In the process of language learning, it is necessary to verify the importance of rhythm as a prosodic characteristic and to honour its function already starting with the earliest sounds. These approaches refer to psychology of development, ethology as well as phonology. Research in psychoanalysis finally brought knowledge about rhythmical synchrony of language and gesture and its function in cognitive processes.

Implications

Abilities of movement and of making sounds already exist for a long time, before cognitive skills start to develop. Language of rhythm and body percussion fall back on ontogenetic patterns of behaviour laid down early and thus function as a perfect approach for a concept in music pedagogic.