



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Functional Music

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### Aims of Functional Music

If, by some means, we could draw up musicians and other people from past centuries and cultures, they would think it strange that the functional values of music are not well understood by all because for them, these values were the main purposes of much of their music. A similar attitude would be held by representatives from many contemporary cultures. They would be quite sure that certain music made them brave, other music would gain the attention of their gods and yet other music would cause them to be successful in making love.

In spite of the present very proper concern for the aesthetic or beautiful in music, there are many occasions in which the primary consideration is not beauty alone. For example, congregational by purposes other than the purely aesthetic; march music on the field is primarily for marching ; dance music on the floor, for dancing. So, also, does industrial music have aims more primary than the entertainment values of the music. It is carefully planned to elicit certain responses which would have no consideration or at best very little in the concert hall.

## Definition of Functional Music :

Functional music is that music which , when properly administered, accomplishes specific predetermined ends other than entertainment or pleasure. One phase of functional music is music therapy, the utilization of music in the rehabilitation of the sick. There are other definitions which some may prefer, but it should be clear that music may be used to achieve some end other than entertainment, pleasure, or beauty.

There is no cause for anxiety on the part of those devoted rather exclusively to the aesthetic, because the aesthetic is not excluded in functional music, except in a few rare instances which need be of no concern here. It would not, perhaps, be necessary to emphasize the nature of functional music to such an extent were it not so important that nonmusical aims, to be secured by the use of music as a modality, be kept firmly in mind when music is used for functional purposes.

## Functional Music and Music Education :

It is a commonplace that the responsibility of our schools has broadened greatly in recent years. More and more the people have delegated to the schools that which they felt would be good for their children. They have asked the schools to be concerned with much of the social , emotional, physical and aesthetic development of pupils.

In this broadened concept of educational responsibility, music education has been concerned with its place and function. Choatec has emphasized this point in the following statement.

Some current trends evident in the organization and content of undergraduate curriculums are : 1) broadening of all music curriculums to include more of the general culture and background course with a compensatory lessening of specialized skill and technique subjects 2) an understanding of the developmental approach in music teaching with an emphasis upon the attitudes and feeling tone of the class ; 3) increased emphasis on functional aspects of music including the use of indigenous , folk and popular music and the use of music in therapy and in special education; and 4) recognition of technological advances, particularly in the utilization of audio-visual resources.

Thus the music educator would naturally be interested in the “functional aspects” of music.

References will frequently be made in this chapter to the handicapped child. This should in no way be construed as an exclusion of the use of functional music with the normal child. It is often easier to understand the normal when the abnormal has been studied. Consideration of the handicapped has, in many instances, seemed a better means of making clear the use and function of music, because the handicapped child has not always the ready and socially acceptable façade which the normal child has.

Furthermore, there is frequently no distinct boundary between the normal and the handicapped child. There is no way, many times, for the music educator to distinguish one from the other. There are numbers of children who should be receiving special attention because of their need of both types of children are the same. The application of music to the two types will often be the same or very similar.

A knowledge of the nature and use of functional music with handicapped children will make more possible the use of music as preventive therapy. It will help us understand with more clarity the psychodynamics, not only of the normal child but also of those numerous borderline cases whose handicaps or deficiencies are too small to demand special attention but who suffer, nevertheless, because of them. In any event, to understand more fully the functional aspects of music is to understand better our students and the influence of music on them.

Need for Aesthetic Expression :

All human organisms have need for aesthetic expression. This statement seems commonplace and even trite, particularly when addressed to musicians, but this necessary for aesthetic expression as a life need is too often forgotten when dealing with handicapped children. The mentally ill, the mentally deficient, the blind the crippled and cerebral-palsied, as well as the normal child all must have the privilege. Every child, not just the select few, must have the opportunity to clothe reality with delightful illusion. In our culture, at least man is in need of the development of that which transcends the material

processes and immediate facts. He must, from time to time, pass beyond himself, so to speak, and experience aesthetic pleasure.

Emotional expression is as essential to the child as is play. In fact, music and play have much in common. The development from simple, random, loosely structured, non drill activity to complex, rule-governed, highly technical activity is similar in both. Many of the values in the transition from individual activity to highly integrated groups of complex function are found in music as well as in play. One of the chief distinguishing characteristics of a good clinical and educational setting for the rehabilitation of handicapped children is the emphasis on opportunities for a aesthetic expression, whether it be music or some other of the adjunctive therapies.

There is no such phenomenon as a universal music. Musical taste is a folkway. A culture determines its aesthetics end and goals or adopts those previously maintained. To suppose that there is something magical and absolute that will somehow accomplish the miraculous is to miss the main emphasis in functional music. Consideration of the cultural matrix is an essential procedure in music education, but it is doubly important in dealing with the handicapped child because he has not as many resource and most often is far less flexible in adjustment to new situations.

The “Ur-Defenses” of Man

In spite of the fact that each culture has its own musical values and means of expression, men do tend to use their music in somewhat similar ways. Many cultures use music as a foundation for magical religious rituals . Massermanz not only has described rather fully the “Ur-Defenses” of man but also has explained the importance of music to these defenses.

In most cultures men use music when they wish to transcend, to achieve contact with that which is immortal. They use it to help them in ritual or worship which will gain for them strength, vision, or other quality or ability which is ordinarily beyond that of their do for them what they cannot do for themselves, And, finally, individuals of a group are more closely integrated by use of group music with ritual.

These general uses of music are characteristics of most cultures and, to a certain extent, of our own. Such practices have much to do with the alleviation of anxiety in man. Music nearly always plays a prominent part in these phenomena.

### Music for Handicapped Children :

No attempt can be made in this chapter to describe in systematic fashion various types of handicapped children except where applications of music in therapy are made. Two basic considerations concerning the use of music with handicapped children need to be understood : 1) The exceptional child must first be considered as a child and in the light of normative growth and development “ This is the shared belief of the several authors who have written Psychology of Exceptional Children and Youth.

The second basic consideration stems from the first or may stand by itself 2) All children, handicapped and well have similar emotional needs, although in the handicapped the expression of these needs may be distorted. The intelligent use of music with the handicapped will be enhanced because of these similar needs . Music as a modality, will help to accomplish the necessary gratification of them.

All people have cherished music because of its unique necessity to man's emotional and social well-being. It has offered appropriate emotional commentary on those chief circumstances of his life which most distinguish him as human being. Man is an animal, but he has certain characteristics and functions which clearly distinguish him from other animals. It is to these characteristics and functions that music is most closely related. It is about love, religion, patriotism, for example that man has chiefly developed his music.

There have been many attempts to explain the seemingly strange potency of music. They range all the way from rank mysticism to the “ neurologizing” of emotions. Meyer has spoken of some of these in connection with music therapy and again in a work devoted entirely to emotion and meaning in music.

Our task will be made somewhat easier by restricting the balance of this paper to some of the meanings and functions of music in our culture of the present time and to its use with handicapped children. We will be concerned with what music may mean to children and youth and how it may serve as a modality in the rehabilitation of the handicapped and in the continued development of the normal child.

## **Nature and Functions of Music**

### Nonverbal Communication

From a functional viewpoint, music is basically, a means of communication. It is far more subtle than mere words. It communicates about feelings in a way that words cannot, because of their inadequacy. There would be no music and no need for it if we could communicate verbally that which we easily can communicate with music, and there would be no reason for anyone to endure the laborious task of becoming a musician. Nonverbal communication often allows the expression of feelings and emotions which need to be expressed for the sake of health. From the lullaby to the dirge, music has spoken for man and to man when words could not.

Furthermore, we have less hesitation in using music to express that which we would never express in words, even if we were able to do so. Thus, people feel free to express in music whatever thoughts need expression. The communication of music is often more true than words. Witness the response at funerals when the music begins.

Dreikurs and Crokers have explained music as nonverbal communication and have demonstrated it well. Many children who are in serious need of attention have partially disrupted and distorted their communication with the outside world. They are at one and the same time, in a state of rebellion and fear. But the disruption and rebellion are sometimes only on the logical and verbal level. The child's defenses are against the content of verbal communication with its accompanying implications of demand for submission. Such children may often be reached and influenced by music because it is nonverbal and their defenses are not raised against it.

All youngsters at times and the handicapped quite often, have difficulty in appropriate emotional response . Because of personality characteristics, they many find acceptable expression nearly impossible. It is in such cases that music allows an appropriate substitution, and this may help the child through a difficult period until he learns acceptable expression and appropriate responses.

Dreikurs and Crocker have developed the use of music as a most persuasive and non-threatening means of encouraging the child again to communicate verbally. This has been developed into a very useful therapeutic tool in dealing with psychotic and neurotic children. This technique could also be used with shy, rebellious or partially handicapped children.

#### Adaptability :

Music is probably the most adaptable of the arts. It may be used equally well individually or in large groups, indoors or outdoors by boys or girls. The variety of its uses are surprising . It lends itself to a multitude of therapeutic uses. It is appropriate to many situation and settings. It may be the center of attention or the background for other activities.

From a sensorial viewpoint, it is the most pervasive of the arts. There is no way for the body to exclude it totally. Only with nearly insurmountable difficulty can a person exclude the vibratory sensations. It may reach those whose seclusion is so great the symbolism of words can no longer reach them. The great adaptability of music will be further brought to light as other functions and characteristics are discussed.

#### Freedom from feeling of Loneliness :

Music dissipates “ aloneness” at least for the time of the activity, and in many cases longer. This is a very advantage for sick patients because it requires no adverse or overly strenuous activity on their part. It frees them from their environmental and material confines . By diversion it may even help free them from pain.

It is very important that the handicapped child form a positive attitude towards the clinical and therapeutic situation, the hospital, the special school or room. Normal children may often be helped when they are strangers in a new school. To bring about this change of

attitude means, frequently, achieving freedom from aloneness. Music is particularly potent in this aspect which is so important in the progress of patients.

Derivation from the Tender Emotions :

Music helps to free from aloneness for even stronger reasons than those set down in the preceding paragraphs. For the most part, moods elicited by music are derived from the tender emotions. The tender emotions are those having to do, primarily, with race preservation. They include love, love-making, family, love of parents religion (the extension of love of parents), patriotism, loyalty and similar relationships held in great esteem by our culture.

It is evident, then that not only does music dissipate aloneness by providing freedom but it dissolves aloneness in a much stronger way by speaking of one's good feeling for another. There is nothing mysterious about this; it is a common experience of everyone. If you are told to report to the office of the school superintendent you may go with some fear and trembling, but you will probably be greatly relieved if you hear him whistling or singing. We have learned in our culture to interpret music, except, perhaps, in the most formal settings, as an expression of goodwill and friendship.

Music may, therefore, effectively arouse that which is often at low ebb in patients, i.e., some one or other of the various manifestations of love. The word "love" is used here in a very broad sense. This arousal of "love" is vitally important and essential because it helps provide feelings of security. Security is important because anxiety is the basis for most emotional disturbances in the normal as well as the handicapped.

That most music in our culture is interpreted as being derived from an expression of some aspect of the tender emotions may be verified by a tabulation of the titles of music or by placing the various pieces in categories according to content. Consider the content of popular songs, folk songs, religious music and even most classical music.

The positive feelings engendered by music will be of great value in the establishment of the most important function of the music therapist, that of building a strong and adequate relationship with the patient. The most important achievement of the music therapist will be

the establishment of the proper relationship with the handicapped child. This chief responsibility will be considered in greater detail in later sections. It is quite often just as important for the music teacher to establish good relationship with his students.

Closeness :

One of the difficulties in dealing with certain handicapped children is their aloofness. Sometimes they refuse to allow anyone to come close to them. Very often these children are afraid of “closeness” Closeness may mean to be hurt again, or to lose self identity. It is in such cases that music may be the most effective medium of communication, of coming closer to the child. It is sound without inherent threat and speaks truly. It is an expression of love in the broad sense. It is a form of closeness, and yet it arouses no apprehension. Thus music may be trusted.

This is a situation which may be shared and believed in by patient and therapist alike and many times, by pupil and music teacher. Through the modality of music, rapport may be established with child. Music is a means of reaching him without threatening him and this positive feeling for music may transfer to the therapist or the teacher. In such manner may be established a positive relationship, without which nothing much

This is situation which may be shared and believed in by patient and therapist alike and many times, by pupil and music teacher. Through the modality or music rapport may be established with the child. Music is a means of reaching him without threatening him and this positive feeling for music may transfer to the therapist or the teacher. In such manner may be established a positive relationship without which nothing much will become a reality to be enjoyed and trusted without fear. Such as segment of reality can be easily accepted and music may become a common platform whereon both child and therapist (teacher) may stand without fear and in confidence because sharing always evokes tender feelings. Sharing is a sign of maturity.

This bit of reality in which two or more and thus establish a relationship, has much more to offer because it is a complexly structured bit of reality. It has definite pattern, tempo, rhythm, harmony, and form. To attend to these, once again, is to respond in a normal

fashion, at least for the time of participation. And the main purpose of music is not only the response of the child to it but the means whereby a relationship may be strengthened so that the child may draw close and experience again the tender feelings that make life worth while. Music affects us and moves us in terms of our own feelings. Each child may take it to himself for his own particular needs. It may mean something different for each listener or performer and yet hold these differences within bounds. It moves us most purely in terms of our own psychic structure and experience.

#### Gratification in Performance of Music :

The learning and performance of music induces in the performer a beneficial sense of accomplishment and gratification. If one subscribes to the thesis that our civilization emphasizes the belief that status is secured by success through personal competence, then music fits and is acceptable. It may supply the highly essential self gratification so necessary to security and the consequent lowering of anxiety and yet provides it, for the most part, in a noncompetitive fashion. Music participation allows a compromise of psychic drives in an activity which has order and predictability. These benefits are important for all children.

Handicapped children, in most cases, are direly in need of self gratification, much more so than the ordinary child. The frustrations of their disability have deprived them of security, and their physical condition or mental deficiency will have deprived them of opportunities for gratification available to other children. The simple accomplishment of some sort of musical activity is highly worth while for these reasons, but many times more so when the benefits of music are recalled.

The need for aesthetic and individual expression, freedom from aloneness, socially accepted and appropriate expression, the sharing of emotional experience of a positive and “tender” nature the opportunity to come close to others in a non-threatening situation, all of these add to the satisfactions of children, both the normal and the handicapped.

In consideration of the deprivation of healthful gratification and status among handicapped children, the music therapist must often put far in the background his usual standards of

performance and aesthetic excellence. In most cases the child must experience pleasure regardless of the musical quality of his production. To witness the delight of a child who, because of his physical disability, can do no more than tap out a hesitant melody on the piano with a bamboo mallet is to be convinced of the necessity of such self-gratification.

Music offers an excellent milieu for the operation of group dynamics. Thus, besides its other uses and benefits, music operates as an integrating and socializing agency by providing a situation for the adaptation of suitable behavior to group function. It is a non-threatening, intimate, enjoyable, and expressive activity blessed with social acceptance. Here are students working together with precision down to a fraction of a second.

Group performance of music provides a Gestalt or integrated pattern of sensory, motor, emotional and social components. The performers must pay attention to their environment in a very discerning way; they must then move in accordance with what the group is doing; they experience emotional response which is enjoyable; they are acting successfully their part in a social situation. This is quite obviously the kind of activity that is most therapeutic and beneficial to a majority of handicapped children. It is quite as assuredly beneficial in the development of the normal child.

The emotionally disturbed child is in need of treatment, most of all, because he has broken or distorted relationship between himself and the outside world to a pathological extent. In particular has he broken relationship with other people. If he is to recover, he must learn again to have good relationships. As he relearns these relationships in the clinical setting, he should be introduced first to situations producing minimal anxieties. It must be apparent that for many children, when they are well enough to tolerate more than a one-to-one relationship, group music offers one of the very best modalities for inducement to good relationship. The same is true to a lesser extent with all handicapped children. Group integration is a common phenomenon in school music.

Aesthetic Control of Behavior :

Because of its power to move children deeply, music may afford an excellent control of behavior. It should be emphasized that this is one of the most powerful and practice uses of music. The effect of music as a motivation of the behavior of people is almost continuously in evidence, yet it often goes unnoticed.

Because of custom and our learned responses to certain situations, the fine arts are often used to induce behavior of a prescribed pattern. In such situation, it is not necessary to give verbal instructions. Moreover , many handicapped children , and other children as well, resent compulsion or logical approaches to the control of their behavior. It is in such cases that music is so important. We have seen that music has many qualities of persuasion. Therefore, judicious application of music may afford a persuasive, non threatening and nonpunitive control of behavior.

In an earlier part of this chapter it was shown that men of nearly all cultures have used music in many situations where they attempted to transcend themselves, or at least to act their very best. Man uses the fine arts on many occasions to enhance the situation, to indicate, according to cultural goals and aims, that he is endeavoring to function at his highest level. Let us see by an example how he aesthetic helps to control behavior, consciously or otherwise.

Suppose a hostess is giving a dinner party for several distinguished guests to which will be invited a few friends and also other people not so well known. She will send formal written invitations, perhaps engraved (certainly so if it is wedding, a ball a concert) but rarely will she be satisfied to telephone or to send the message verbally. Upon receipt of the invitation the guests will have some knowledge of and persuasion towards a type of behavior and appearance (should one dress for this occasion?) . Surely no one would think of coming in sports clothes, blue jeans or without spending time in preparation of personal appearance. Without one word of direction, the guests already have an idea of the high level, rather formal, intellectual, witty behavior expected of them.

Just as surely may aesthetic controls be used to persuade handicapped children towards acceptable behavior. This is the chief reason why we build beautiful schools and beautiful churches, so that they will exert an influence on behavior in the direction of socially acceptable actions. One has only to observe the behavior of psychotic patients at a hospital church service when the organist begins to play to be convinced of this persuasion. A vast majority of them become quite just as do other people at a church service. During a recent visit at an institution for mentally deficient children, the clinical director remarked on the extraordinary behavior of the girls in the glee club their pride in appearance, their eagerness to behave acceptably. They behaved better than they had at any time since coming to the institution.

Dollins has shown that, with certain types of mental patients there are significantly more conversational items when background music is used than when it is not. Sommer has also shown a statistically significant increase in frequency of interaction in group psychotherapy when the proper kind of background music is supplied.

The music therapist will on all occasions avail himself of this potent influence of music and the aesthetic setting, and many times, so might the music teacher. His chief responsibility is to help the children or patients perform in the best manner possible for them. When the children do so, their recompense is great in gratification status, security and acceptance.

#### Physically Stimulative Music :

Some years ago a great deal of curiosity was felt as to whether or not indigenous music of a highly rhythmic, percussive nature, in which there was little or no melody, was a greater stimulant toward physical activity than music of an opposite kind. A study of various ethnic "musics" seemed to indicate that this was true. Whether there are neurological reasons for this has not been determined.

At any rate, in our culture, this seems to be so. Rhythm is the primitive, dynamic, driving factor in music, and becomes particularly so when it consists of detached notes. Its responses are more uninhibited, and bodily energy seems to be built up. It does not urge the contemplative, the dreamlike or fantasy status in quietude. Its responses are physical rather

than intellectual. All dances, except those in which the feet are stationary, contain in abundance the detached rhythmic factors. The more percussive and non-melodic the dance music the more unrestrained and uninhibited will be the dance.

The march music of bands consists, for the most part, of staccato sounds. The drum, entirely percussive, is the best instrument for marching. “Dance piano” is a series of detached chords. The loudest applause follows music of the simulative type unless previous familiarity interferes. Compare the use of the piano and the pipe organ in churches.

#### Physically Sedative Music:

On the other hand, melodic music of a sustained nature in which the rhythmical element is at a minimum will produce different responses which are not so markedly characterized by tension of the striated (voluntary) musculature, but which are more intellectual and more contemplative and in which the result is much more that of physical sedation than of stimulation.

Vocal and choral types of music are generally less stimulating. The music of religious services in which the appeal from the pulpit is sometimes more intellectual than emotional is generally less metronomical in character. The more the church depends upon the emotional, the more highly metrical and rhythmic will be its music. The bugle call “Taps” is far different in nature than those calls which demand action.

#### Research of Musical Phenomena :

A number of studies have been made in search of objective data on these musical phenomena. Postural response, galvanic skin response, vascular response, papillary dilation of the eye beyond the stimulus of light, a number of studies on the effect of music on painting and drawing by children and adults, change in gastric motility, change in achievement by cerebral-palsied children, pilomotor response, and other physiological and psychological reactions have been studied.

Sears has shown that the posture of listeners may be significantly changed when music to which they are listening is changed from physically stimulative to physically sedative, and vice versa. Shrift has demonstrated that there is a significant difference in galvanic skin

response when physically stimulative music is played and when physically sedative music is played.

Cater, Zack and Orton have shown that the difference between pictures drawn to sedative music and the pictures drawn to stimulative music can be due to chance in not more than one out of a hundred cases, showing that difference in the drawing are due to the music.

In a complete and detailed study of the reactions of cerebralpalsied children to carefully planned musical experiences, Schneider has shown significant differences in the amount and quality of coloring and peg-box activities

These studies, selected from many, indicate physiological as well as psychological changes. They present evidence of the deep penetration of music. These effects of music may be observed in everyday life in our culture and other cultures. From all of this it would seem that the music educator, by judicious choice and application on music, could exert considerable influence on the behavior of his students. At least he may be more aware of what to expect.

Teacher-Therapist and Pupil-Patient Relationships :

After all that has been written thus far about the extreme necessity of good relationship between teacher-therapist and pupil patient, it might seem unnecessary to elaborate further, but some years of observation have led to the conclusion that the are of greatest misunderstanding of the music therapist's function is in what he does beyond his use of music. What he does beyond music is the true test of his efficiency . Temporarily, for the sake of emphasis, let us say that in the noun. Now the chief concern becomes not the music, per se, but what the therapist does in the mattes of his understanding of and his interpersonal relationships with the child. This is the crux of the matter. Regardless of the excellence and fitness of the music, if the child's patterns of behavior do not change, then he will not progress towards recovery or the best adjustment possible for him.

Certainly a music therapist must be a good musician of many abilities, but after his musical abilities have been used he is not done, nor has he fulfilled his obligation as a therapist. He must understand, in so far as possible, the psychological significance of the behavior of the

child. If the music therapist is working under medical or psychiatric direction, then he must report from time to time his observation of the child and its behavior.

The music teacher or therapist must remember not only that the child is responding to him but that he, in turn, consciously or unconsciously, is responding to the child. If the teacher-therapist does not understand his own personality he will be puzzled by the child's responses. He will not be able to account for them because he will not know the aspect of his behavior which is influencing the child.

### **Music Therapy :**

Because it is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the various types of handicapped children, it has seemed more practical to make applications from time to time to illustrate the use of music as a modality. In these few concluding paragraphs, selected aspects of the use of music with the handicapped will be emphasized. From consideration of the use of music with the handicapped will come added knowledge for the use of music in the regular classroom.

As has been indicated, the emotionally disturbed child must be helped to re-establish his relationships with people and the world. Music will often prove to be the medium where by access to the real child, not his pathological façade, may be gained. Once some rapport has been established, the teacher may find the opportunity to build a relationship of trust and positive feelings so that the child's anxieties may be sufficiently diminished to change his pathological behavior.