AJLLSE GLOBAL RESEARCH NETWORK

AMERICAN Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education
Volume 3, Issue 10, 2025 ISSN (E): 2993-2769

The Necessity of Elevating Aesthetic Culture and the Role of National Music in This Process

Adkhamjonova Mubina Nasirjon kizi

Abstract: *This study explores the role of musical aesthetics in shaping moral, intellectual, and spiritual development, with a particular focus on Uzbek cultural traditions. Music is presented as more than an artistic form; it is a medium for cultivating empathy, emotional intelligence, and ethical values. Drawing on philosophical perspectives from Aristotle, Kant, and Eastern thinkers, the paper emphasizes music's capacity to harmonize feelings, stimulate intellectual growth, and foster collective identity. The Uzbek maqom tradition is highlighted as a cultural model where aesthetic beauty, philosophical depth, and moral guidance converge. Contemporary educational philosophy supports the integration of music into curricula as a tool for holistic personality development, combining cognitive, emotional, and cultural dimensions. Ultimately, the aesthetics of music emerge as a universal yet culturally grounded phenomenon, linking beauty, morality, and human creativity.*

Key words: *Musical aesthetics; moral education; spiritual development; Uzbek maqom; cultural identity; emotional intelligence; empathy; cognitive growth; philosophy of music; aesthetic experience; holistic education; universality and relativity of values.*

In Uzbekistan, making use of the potential of music in the upbringing of the younger generation holds great importance. In 2019, during the opening ceremony of the Sharq Taronalari International Music Festival, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, stated: *"Music, as a cultural phenomenon, possesses limitless opportunities in educating and nurturing the new generation. Young people who are acquainted with art develop a higher respect for life, for national traditions, and for universal human values."* One of the driving questions for dissertation research in the field of pedagogy theory and methodology is as follows: Why is musical aesthetics so essential for the development of the individual and society? In other words, beyond abstract theory, what is the significance of engaging with music aesthetically in shaping human moral, spiritual, and intellectual growth? Uzbek philosophical thought, in harmony with global humanistic educational principles, provides a number of answers to this question. The aesthetic experience of music refines emotions and sensations. Since the time of Aristotle, it has been noted that music can moderate or purify emotions (catharsis) and train human beings to take pleasure in noble things. For a child or an adolescent, listening to or performing music develops sensitivity, empathy, and emotional intelligence. For example, singing a beautiful lullaby or a patriotic song during a school assembly is not merely a musical activity, but rather an act of evoking feelings of love, affection, or pride. Over time, such emotions influence the emotional palette of the student, teaching them to respond to joy or sorrow with balance and humanity. Aesthetic thinking formed through music—such as imagination, intuition, and an understanding of harmony and order—complements logical and intellectual development as well. Contemporary neurological research confirms that music education strengthens cognitive abilities such as memory and spatial reasoning. For this reason, educational philosophers often emphasize that music should be regarded as an integral part of a balanced curriculum aimed at developing the "whole person." In Uzbek pedagogy, this idea manifests itself

through the integration of music and visual arts classes, fostering artistic taste and creativity in youth. Musical aesthetics plays a direct role in moral education. Good music often conveys positive messages either explicitly (through lyrics) or implicitly (through the moods it evokes). There is a saying: *"Musical education is moral education."* But how does this work? One way is through the cultivation of empathy: for instance, listening to a tragic melody and understanding grief helps a person become more compassionate toward the suffering of others. Collective musical activities, such as choral singing or ensemble performance, nurture moral qualities like cooperation, discipline, and respect. Likewise, the role of music in family and community ceremonies reinforces moral lessons. For example, many Uzbek wedding songs (*yor-yor*) combine advice about loyalty and kindness with beautiful melodies, thus embedding ethical guidance in a memorable aesthetic form. At the core of this approach lies a profound philosophical idea: beauty can lead to goodness. Or, in Kant's terms, cultivating taste indirectly contributes to the development of moral feelings—because appreciating beauty requires a certain breadth of heart and sensitivity that aligns with altruism.

In Sufi philosophy, and in Eastern culture more broadly, music has long been regarded as a means of spiritual elevation. Thus, engaging with music aesthetically can be seen as a form of meditation or worship. For instance, when one deeply listens to a maqom or the resonant tones of a tanbur, a contemplative state may arise in which one reflects on the profound meanings of life. The repetition and development within classical music can calm the mind and evoke a trance-like condition (a quality also preserved in Western classical traditions—many listeners describe experiencing a spiritual encounter when hearing the works of Bach or Mozart, regardless of religious context). In Uzbek tradition, the idea of grandeur in music is often linked to sensing divinity or the boundless vastness of creation. Within the maqom repertoire, the *Navruz* melody, for example, symbolizes the renewal of spring and, through its expansive and ascending tones, glorifies the greatness of the Creator. When a person undergoes such aesthetic emotion, it may awaken a spiritual consciousness that complements rational reflections on faith or philosophy. Hence, the aesthetics of music contribute to *irfoniy tarbiya*—the enlightenment of the inner soul. Thinkers such as Najmuddin Kubra and Ahmad Yassawi pointed out that elevated spiritual states could be attained through music and poetry.

In secular terms, musical beauty often evokes sublime emotions that transport an individual beyond the boundaries of everyday life. Such emotions may, in turn, inspire the pursuit of higher ideals and meanings in life, which is itself a spiritual quest. Musical aesthetics also foster intellectual development. Learning music involves abstract thinking (for example, understanding structures, patterns, and symbolic notations), while also connecting with history, literature, and other disciplines, thereby fostering interdisciplinary knowledge. Philosophically, as Susanne Langer suggested, music may be viewed as a form of "abstract thinking" about emotions—it does not use concepts, but models the dynamic forms of feelings, offering a different mode of understanding. Thus, those who practice music exercise the mind in a distinctive way.In the Uzbek educational context, for example, students who learn to play the dutar or piano alongside general studies often demonstrate improved concentration and analytical skills. This aligns with ancient views (as seen in Plato's curriculum or al-Farabi's treatises) that music is an integral part of comprehensive intellectual formation, rather than opposed to it. Music trains the brain to recognize patterns, strengthen memory, and solve creative problems (composition or improvisation requires spontaneous creation within structured rules—a true union of creativity and logic).

Consider an ensemble of students performing maqom. They must intellectually grasp the theory of rhythmic cycles (*usul*) and maqom scales (complex and subtle), memorize long sections (reinforcing memory), harmonize with one another (developing social-intellectual skills), and convey the appropriate emotional character of each part (emotional perception). Such activity encompasses all domains: cognitive, emotional, social, moral (patience and teamwork), and even spiritual (they often report experiencing upliftment or a sense of connection to something transcendent during performance). Thus, in practice, the aesthetics of music serve as a microcosm of holistic education. After laying out theoretical foundations and cultural contexts, it is important to show how these philosophical ideas manifest in concrete musical experience. Philosophy may appear abstract, but here concepts are directly connected to the concrete realm of listening, performing, and creating music. When perceiving music—for instance, at a concert or during a maqom performance—the

listener's mind almost involuntarily engages in philosophical processes. The mind searches for meaning—perhaps trying to identify the mood or image evoked by the music (a hermeneutic act of interpretation). A listener might think, "This sounds joyful," or "This melody reminds me of rain"—in other words, they attribute meaning or metaphor to a non-verbal structure. Simultaneously, the listener judges the beauty or expressiveness of what they hear—making an aesthetic judgment in Kant's sense: "I like this, it is beautiful," without needing a practical reason. If tension builds and then resolves, the listener may undergo catharsis—feeling cleansed or relieved. If the music is majestic and expansive, they may experience awe (as Kant describes, their imagination overwhelmed by the sublimity of the sonic experience). If the music portrays conflict or fate (such as in a tragic opera or sorrowful maqom), the listener empathizes with the tragic element and may even be morally affected (for example, experiencing compassion through aesthetic means). In more lively or humorous works—say, a piece by Mozart or a joyful folk dance melody—the listener may laugh or at least sense playfulness. Such reactions demonstrate how aesthetic categories are tied to lived experience. They also reflect values: listeners raised within a given culture learn to appreciate certain qualities (an Uzbek listener trained in maqom may find exquisite pleasure in subtle microtonal inflections that a Western classical listener might overlook—hence aesthetic valuation is partly cultural). Yet there are also universal aspects—an expressive melody tends to be positively received in any culture. Philosophically, this raises the question of universality versus cultural relativity in aesthetics. Musical practice shows both to be true: music speaks in a universal emotional language (thus an Uzbek maqom may move a foreigner, or a Beethoven symphony may move an Uzbek), but it has the deepest impact on those who understand its "dialect." From the perspective of the creator—composer or songwriter—philosophical ideas also guide the artistic process. A composer may ask: Am I aiming to create beauty? To evoke sublimity? Or to interpret a meaning? Many composers have written about their philosophical aims. For instance, the 20th-century Uzbek composer Mutavakkil Burhonov created symphonic poems based on Navoi's ideas, blending aesthetic purpose with philosophical substance. The concept of interpretation is central: the composer translates emotional or conceptual intentions into musical form, while performers add their own interpretations. Here, the interplay between freedom and rules becomes a philosophical question: to what extent does music obey objective laws (harmony, counterpoint—evoking cosmic order and logic), and to what extent does it express free will and emotion (subjectivity, even existential freedom)? Skilled musicians balance both—this mirrors Aristotle's "golden mean" or Confucius's notion of harmony: sufficient structure for coherence, enough freedom for vitality and authenticity. A concrete Uzbek example: imagine a dutar player improvising within the *muhammas* (five-beat rhythm). The musician has mastered the maqom system (knowledge structure) and internalized the aesthetics of what is considered beautiful within that tradition (cultural value). During performance, they might introduce an unexpected modulation or expressive microtonal shift, astonishing listeners. This creative act is both an interpretation of tradition and a projection of selfhood into music. If successful, the audience may feel awe—an aesthetic experience akin to sublimity—and perhaps a fleeting sense of transcendence. Philosophically, this reveals the dynamic between universality ("the blue note's" emotive power) and individuality (the unique variation), tradition (rules, forms) and innovation (freedom, interpretation), form (rhythmic cycle) and content (emotional expression). This scenario encapsulates many aesthetic debates: Apollonian vs. Dionysian, structure vs. spontaneity, immanence vs. transcendence. Yet for those present, it is simply a profound musical experience. As John Dewey emphasized, aesthetic experience is the ground from which abstract theories arise, and any theory must ultimately answer to that lived truth. Finally, music prompts reflection. After a concert, people often ask: "What did this mean to me? Why was I moved?" Such reflection can lead to personal growth (someone may discover unarticulated emotions or ethical insights within themselves) or to social critique (songs often carry commentary, inspiring critical engagement). Philosophers like Theodor Adorno even regarded attentive listening as a form of critical consciousness—training the ability to notice and question structures, akin to analyzing society. In our context, teaching youth to listen attentively and distinguish musical features is expected to cultivate sharper, more thoughtful minds (a desired educational outcome). In the Uzbek national context, musical reflection often connects to cultural identity. Hearing a maqom may prompt thoughts of the ancestors who created it, its history of transmission, and one's place within that continuity—thus turning aesthetic experience

into a meditation on time and existence. Indeed, as Lotman would argue, music functions as a semiotic text in culture: it mediates dialogue between past and present, individual and society. Music, therefore, manifests in three interrelated dimensions: perceiving it (experiencing beauty, sublimity, meaning), creating/performing it (making interpretive and expressive choices shaped by values), and reflecting upon it (deriving moral lessons, affirming identity, or reaching spiritual awareness). The true richness of music lies in its ability to engage the whole person—emotion, intellect, heart, and perhaps even soul. This makes it an ideal center for interdisciplinary philosophical research, especially for inquiries seeking to connect universal ideas with concrete cultural realities.

References

1. Aristotle. *Poetics*. Translated by Malcolm Heath. London: Penguin Classics, 1996.
2. Kant, I. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Translated by Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
3. Langer, S. K. *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957.
4. Dewey, J. *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books, 2005.
5. Adorno, T. W. *Essays on Music*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
6. Al-Farabi. *Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir (The Great Book of Music)*. Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1967.
7. Karimov, I. A. *High Spirituality is an Invincible Power*. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 2008.
8. Mirziyoyev, Sh. M. *Together We Will Build a Free, Democratic, and Prosperous State of Uzbekistan*. Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2017.
9. Rizaev, B. *Aesthetic Culture and the Formation of Youth Worldview in Uzbekistan*. Tashkent: Fan, 2015.
10. Matyoqubov, O. *The Phenomenon of Shashmaqom*. Tashkent: Gafur Ghulam Publishing House, 2004.
11. Sagdullayev, A. *Philosophy and Aesthetics in Uzbekistan*. Tashkent: University Press, 2012.
12. Burkhanov, M. *National Traditions in Modern Uzbek Music*. Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1998.
13. Yusupov, F. *Music Pedagogy in Uzbekistan: Traditions and Modern Approaches*. Tashkent: Fan va Texnologiya, 2016.