

REPORT OF A MUSIC ATELIER:

“İDYLL-SOUND & MUSIC PROBABILITIES IN THE NATURE”

MÜZİK ATÖLYESİ RAPORU:

“İDİL-DOĞADA SES VE MÜZİK OLASILIKLARI”

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ÖZ

Tarihsel bir kavram ve tasarım olan okul dıřı öğrenme, Türk pedagoji literatüründe gittikçe önem kazanmaktadır. Müzikte de çeřitli yařam alanlarında, öğrencilerin müziksel deneyimlerini derinleřtirmek ve müziksel öğrenmeyi duruma göre organize etmek için çeřitli imkanlar bulunmaktadır. Festivaller, konserler, çalgı dükkanları, konser salonları, gençlik merkezleri, müzeler, arřivler, sokak müziđi, doğadaki ses kaynakları gibi sayısız mekan ve durum; müziksel deneyimler, izlenimler ve öğrenme için imkanlar sunmaktadır. Bu raporda, Solaklar Vadisi’nde yapılmıř olan “İdil: Doğada Ses ve Müzik Olasılıkları” isimli bir açık hava müzik atölyesi tanıtılacaktır. Söz konusu atölye, Türkiye/Seben’de organize edilen “Interkulturelles Kunstprojekt Türkei/Deutschland” isimli kültürlerarası bir sanat projesi kapsamında gerçeleřtirilmiřtir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: müzik atölyesi; ders dıřı öğrenme ortamları; yaratıcı müzik deneyimi

ABSTRACT

Learning outside the school is a historical concept and gains significance day by day in Turkish pedagogy literature. Also for music there are various possibilities in different areas of life to deepen musical experience of the pupils and to organize the learning according to the situation. Numerous places and situations such as festivals, concerts, instrument shops, concert halls, youth centers, museums, archives, street music, sound sources in the

nature, etc. provide the possibilities for musical experiences, impressions, and learning. In this report, an open-air music atelier titled “Idyll: Sound & Music Probabilities in the Nature”, which was carried out with university students in Solaklar-Valley, is presented. The atelier was realized within “Intercultural Art Project Turkey/Germany” organized in Seben, Turkey

Keywords: music atelier; extracurricular learning environments; creative music experience

CONTEXT OF THE ATELIER

Since 2013 every years an international art project titled “Intercultural Art Project Turkey/Germany” has been organised, and Prof. Mehmet (Muhammet) ALAGÖZ from Turkey and Dr. Rainer GOSSLAR from Germany are the coordinators of this project. This organization is carried out by turns one year in Germany and one year in Seben. The project-ateliers in Seben, a historical district of Bolu province in Turkey, are realized in the country. Artists in different art branches from various countries participate in the project, and produce their own unique works in open-air-ateliers that last about a week.

The fourth part of the project was again held in Seben, and music was also included in the project for the first time. When Prof. Alagöz had invited me to the Solaklar-Village in Seben for the project, I commented on the possibility of a music atelier. After he explained to me that the theme of the fourth part is “Dream and Reality (Düş ve Gerçek)”, and that the artists’ studios are organized in the nature open air, many questions and ideas came to my mind: Could I work with materials from nature? What could I find in Solaklar-Valley as sound material, and how do I deal with these probable materials musically? Could my ideas cover the real situation? ... or how can I combine other art subjects?

I had never been in Seben, and only heard of rock-houses... As a result of my reflections, I decided to go to Seben with a group of my students to perform a music atelier there. For an atelier as learning place, it is the basic principle that the participants work productively and practice, make, learn, create or development with their own effort and experience in the guidance of the teacher. Therefore, the object of the atelier was not to play ready music pieces with instruments. The main objectives were to search and find sound possibilities in nature, and to create different sound processes or musical pieces in the framework of workshop. In this direction, I decided for the title “Idyll - Sound and Music Probabilities in the Nature”. I planned four main ways of dealing for our work: observation in nature and collecting sound materials; improvisation and composition with collected materials; transformation of products from other

art studios; and discussion after each activity with students. This plan was just a scaffolding and for the details we had to decide together according to the situation.

ACTIVITIES REALIZED IN THE ATELIER

The first step in our work began in the impressive Solaklar-Valley, which stretching between historical rock houses and rock tombs (see Photo 1 & 2). This valley offered us a great opportunity for ‘out-of-school learning’ (Bönsch, 2003; Karpa et al, 2015) throughout the day. We walked through the valley along the creek to observe the environment with regard to sound materials. At the same time, we collected very different sounding objects from the environment. These materials were not uprooted by us, but were already lying on the ground, for example dry tree branches, pieces of wood, dead snails, stones, pebbles from the brook, dry leaves, and the like. It was not surprising that we also found a lot of synthetic materials and waste. We gathered them and also cleared them away from naturel environment. Then, we used all



Photo 1. Views to rock houses from Solaklar-Valley in Seben (from 1200 BC)

gathered natural and synthetic materials in making sound & music (for examples see Photo 3, 4, 5, and 6). Some students have built their own instruments with found objects or combined

different materials. Additionally, our voice and body were also indispensable materials of the atelier.



Photo 2. Observation and collection of different sound materials

The improvisation was the focus of our work. We performed firstly rhythmical improvisations with collected and constructed materials, which was a colourful process. We played different rhythm games, and rhythmically as well as melodically improvised on the basis of rhythmic patterns individually and as a group. The variety of materials used (stones, wood, metal sticks, plastic cups, dry leaves, glass bottle, etc.) allowed very different and heterogeneous sounds, which we rarely hear in formal study in this way. The produced sound was “somewhat strange but charming”.



Photo 3. Drum set from waste and natural materials



Photo 4. Dead snail shell



Photo 5. Stone drum and their brushes



Photo 6. Large triangle made from collected metal waste

Our improvisational journey continued on the bank of the stream, whose gait and sound were very inspiring for the creative handling with the voice. On a fundamental tone, which we determined by the sound of the brook, we formed a calm melodic ostinato. We improvised on the basis of this ostinato melody, and each group member participated, i.e. improvisational song. Although this process was quite risky, as each individual had his own melodic ideas, it went well because the flow of water made a sounding frame or a sound ground for our music. In this way we felt almost as a part of nature, and our voices have merged in the sound of the brook, which was an indefinable experience (see Photo 7).

In the Solaklar-Valley, there were human sounds in addition to natural sound sources. One of them was the sound of other art ateliers, and in this sense sounds of the sculptor's studios were particularly audible. We visited the open-air studio of Michael MASKE, an artist from Germany, where he gave the Seben-Stone shape and meaning. During his work, Michael Maske already had a beat rhythm, which we assumed as a “basic pulse” for our improvisational music. After we had appropriated M. Maske's stable workflow, we improvised in an interactive relationship with him. M. Maske did not change the pulse and went to the end stabile. This process was very productive and led to a considerable synergy between the students and the sculptor.



Photo 7. After the improvisation on the brook

Our last musical experience took place in a cave, where there was good acoustics. Mehmet ALAGÖZ, whose atelier we visited, worked in a cave under the rock tombs. A picture of Alagöz, in which he painted the surrounding rock houses of Solaklar-Valley, was very interesting, because this abstract picture contained very different linear and layered forms and was therefore very favourable for sound transformation (see Photo 8). We have selected six different shapes from the picture and converted them into sound and music processes. During the improvisation, we combined the sound groups in rows, in layers, horizontally or vertically in the basis of a nuclear melody. After the preparation we tried to compose from improvised melodies and, formed a little piece.

GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE ATELIER

My idea of a music atelier within the intercultural art project was based on probabilities, and ended with diverse activities and experiences. Sound experiences in nature and productive works were very inspiring for me and for my students. We thus reminded us again that the

sound is not only available in music as a structured material, but also in nature for participating, and that sound sources in nature offer numerous possibilities for free musical improvisations as well as compositions. Discovery in the pictorial nature, appropriation of new materials and open-air music without a wall awakened our senses, giving the feeling of freedom and joy. Moreover, this atelier allowed us to think about prototypes of music making. Group improvisations were not only musically very significant and encouraging, but also gave the opportunity for interactions, which also promoted openness to the other. Some German painters have participated in the music atelier, which led to intercultural encounters and communication. The relation to other art areas and spontaneous, improvisational processing their influences not only aroused different senses at the same time, they also encouraged communication with one another and artistic expressiveness. As Bönsch has expressed, the natural pleasure (Bönsch, 2003) was our extra advantage and profit on this atelier day.



Photo 8. Preparation and analysis of the picture of Mehmet ALAGÖZ before improvisation in the cave

Finally, I consider the music atelier in Seben to be creative, soothing, energizing and at the same time encouraging for free learning, social openness and intercultural communication. Me and my students (Alper Demiray, Aycan Mutlu, Bahadır Ayyıldız, Cansu Mutlu, Cansu Uzuncan, Damla Diken, Eda Ekekon, Gonca Ece Geniş, Hasan Dikal, İbrahim Kıvrak, Merve Karakoç, Özge Uçar, Pınar Çelik Demiray, Umay Esenlik and Yağmur Doğan), we would like to thank Mr. Rainer GOSSLAR and Mehmet ALAGÖZ for the opportunity to participate, and wish that the intercultural art project will continue again with success.

Notes: The photos used in this report belong to the author's own archive. I would thank here to Aycan MUTLU for the photo making, and to Dr. Sedat AKAYOĞLU for the proofreading of my English text. For the use of the picture by painter Prof. Mehmet ALAGÖZ written permission was taken. Also for the use of the atelier's photo was written permission from participants taken. In addition, some of the musical results of this atelier were used as background music in a TV documentary titled “Sanat Hayatı¹” about the intercultural art project in Seben.

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¹ This documentation was sent by “TV-Ulusal Kanal”.