

The crisis of singing

Erika Tasnády

„May be the music every man's!" Kodaly's motto was unequivocally said a time when music was everybody's. What kind of music, that is another question. Not so far ago every social stratus had his own musical language; the song repertoire of the groups was a cohesive attraction between their members. The man of our day's society sings seldom, his repertoire is quite a bit poorer. Singing became the specialist's instrument. The most of singing persons have to take up his smattering on the scene.

French statistic's mind, the Airbus's or weapon's orders are growing up last times: the economical crisis isn't perceptible in those areas.

But since many years, on account of the crisis, on the cultural life there are lessening, retrenchments... It became a stereotype: the culture loses on always. The cultural politics give lesser money to musical education than to the informatics one for example.

Is it really because of the crisis if the music teacher's job is less and less?

Maybe it will be worth to analyse the question from another side. Maybe the situation turns into this way especially as this area is „touchable". The musical education's clam is not general in the whole society. A kind of Kodály's cultural politics maybe could change the situation. But every cultural politics is the social custom's or on-demand's measure.

The spontaneous individual or collective singing is very seldom now, the West-European society hasn't used it like a tool of primary communication. The majority of children hasn't sung-experiences. The Hungarian urban society follows the western one. Very likely we can find the reasons in the society's structure, the man's relationships or their lifestyle.

In the course of my researches in Transylvanian traditional villages I looked for answers to the questions of the singing- wearing: why gone it on, what else take over his role?

In traditional society singing has a definite custom-system. His place wasn't the same one for different genders, ranges or ages. Even a deviant person was recognizable by non-observance of singing customs or taboos.

When I am looking for a good singer in Transylvanian „Mezőség", usually people report about men but not women: the men were those who trolled the evenings on the street, going home. A good singer had permission to sing on dance, he was appreciated for by his society. The status wasn't the same for women. Their voice sounded mainly on churches. They hadn't the same „good singer" prestige.

Break off the traditional singing occasions, the sing loosed ground on. But for women is even more careful to troll behind closed doors.

The folk music and dance is often described as a sign-system, like a vernacular, learned aurally, by socialization and imitation. The singing techniques and aesthetics measure up to the society's norms.

There were some experiences to describe music like a sign-system, carrying concrete and clear connotations. Very likely just a small part can be figured out like denotative sign, but there are many connotative parts in the system who expresses the style and the appartenance. Music or sing, out of their original field, can't function like a connotative sign-system.

The „patrimonialisation" (becoming an „official heritage" or worse, trying or doing a „final ethnological inventory"), the cultural-political proceeding of our age, is presented like a culture-saving. The folk music or song became everybody's property through his interventions. But it is not possible to move off the original connotative signification to the new song-consumer society. They continued to live on like stiff forms. The actual urban society hasn't a commune musical sign-system, known and understood by all.

There are few traditional singing occasions on village, in the towns they have no time to born. Singing connect group's members, although the song's community creativeness power is evident.

Not a long time ago singing was a very important way of communication, it satisfied primary human needs. Could the school's education render a service to keep alive the social function of singing? Or the musical education is the victim of economic crisis?