

How much can arts education affect the decision-making process when choosing classical or pop music?

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Introduction

Cultural needs are shaped by several vital elements, among which the most important factor is the family (Nemanjic:1974). If we do not acquire our cultural habits at an early age, it is more likely that school, friends, mass media or creative artistic experience as an amateur (Colbert: 2005) will have more influence in creating our attitude toward culture and arts as we grow older.

Due to electronic and digital media, especially to the Internet, today it is easier than ever to have access to almost anything written, composed or filmed. The question is only what kind of content would the consumer like to see or hear?

As far as the thorough enjoyment in the products of elite culture is concerned (Johnson:2002:69, Avery&Prnjat:2008) , previous education is generally required, while the products of popular culture are made for much wider audience (Edensor:2002:14, Strinati:2004:10).This phenomenon is particularly obvious in music. Not only it is very unlikely that a person without music education would be able to compose classical music, but such a person would also rarely be seen in the audience at the classical music concert. On the other hand, it is hard to find a person that does not listen to popular music, at least on some occasions.

Methods

This study is based on two focus groups. The participants in the first group were professional artists, and the participants in the second focus group were chosen from the students of arts academies.

The research took place in February and March 2010 in Belgrade, Serbia. The first part of this research has already been completed, but some work needs yet to be finalized.

Main findings

The initial work verifies that the level of arts education affects the decision-making process when choosing classical or popular music, especially in the group consisting of professional artists. However, it seems that in the other group arts education does not play such a big role making this choice.

Also, previous results show that, beside the level of arts education, the particularly important element in making this decision is by whom is the person who is supposed to choose a music genre surrounded. This is especially important for younger participants as the students, who seem to be much more influenced by the opinions of their friends.

Taking into consideration that classical music is usually considered “higher” and “more valuable” than the popular one, further analysis of the topic is required to find out why the people with music education choose to listen to the popular music instead of the classical so often? The results of the research will be made available in the final paper.

Key words: audience, music, arts education, artists

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