Workshop

"Alhan" Community Concert Program: A Hybrid Approach to Live Musical Encounters in Arabic Speaking Education in Northern Israel

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During the years 2014-2017 Levinsky College of Education initiated an intercultural collaboration with the "Polyphony Foundation" in Nazareth, offering a live-concert based educational program for preschool and elementary school students. This program is targeted at Arabic speaking populations in the North and Center regions of the country, in addition to Jewish, Hebrew speaking populations – also aiming to act as a cultural meeting space for children in mixed (Arab and Jewish) cities. This initiative, known as the "Alhan" community concert program, aimed to provide young children of these populations with a meaningful encounter with the Western orchestra and its repertoire of classics, alongside Eastern Arabic art music. The current presentation aims to explore the pedagogical and musical strategies applied in the "Alhan" program towards the function of live musical encounters in creating a cultural meeting point for Arab and Jewish youth.

In a previous study on a similar program, Lichtensztajn (2006; 2009) described the musical, pedagogical, and cultural challenges of designing and implementing a live concert educational program for elementary Israeli Jews and Arab Palestinians. In a different cultural context, Rajan (2016) explored the challenge of cultivating audience etiquette alongside incorporating interactive strategies in the education of young student concert goers.

The proposed workshop will expose the ways in which the "Alhan" program dealt with musical, pedagogical and cultural challenges, alongside the questions of audience etiquette and audience participation. Musically and Pedagogically speaking, "Alhan" demonstrates a culturally hybrid approach, that we postulate as constituting three realms of hybridity.
Abril & Gault (2016) defined hybridity in music education as embracing "overlaps, combinations, and blurred lines among music and ways of being musical" (113). In this first sense, we consider combinations of Western and Eastern repertoires, culturally diverse audience populations, and a cultural mix of musicians on stage – all mediated through the incorporation of multimodal pedagogies. Through the theoretical lens of postcolonialism, the hybridity of "Alhan" program's approach can be further considered as an example of Bahbah's (1994, 1998) "third space", as evident in the program's aim to create a shared cultural sharing between culturally diverse populations. Finally, we consider organizational and practical implications of the collaboration between a music teacher's education institution and a community-based philanthropic foundation as the third and final aspect of hybridity.

In our presentation we will offer:

- live musical examples played by a professional chamber ensemble

- pedagogical examples of mediation of musical material to children.

- Experts panel with Dr. Dan Sagiv – Head of Undergraduate Music Education Program and Leader of Music in the Community Initiatives at Levinsky College of Education, and Nabeel Abboud-Ashkar – Co-founder and Executive Director, Polyphony Education

- We frame our presentation as analysis and reflection on the educational aims and strategies of this program, structure to expand inclusiveness in cultures of Western classical music within the intercultural context of Arab and Jewish populations in the Middle East.