

THE ROLE OF MUSIC THEORY IN THE FORMATION OF MUSICAL LITERACY

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20676205>

Abstract: This article highlights the role and pedagogical significance of music theory in the process of forming musical literacy. Music theory knowledge is analyzed as an important factor in developing students' skills in musical thinking, hearing, understanding rhythm and intonation, reading sheet music, and analyzing musical works. Additionally, the interconnection of theoretical knowledge and practical activity in music education and their effectiveness in forming musical literacy are substantiated from a scientific and pedagogical perspective.

Keywords: musical literacy, music theory, musical education, musical literacy, musical thinking, musical hearing, rhythm, intonation, educational process.

Introduction

Music is one of the most delicate, impressive, and educational forms of art in the spiritual world of man. It directly affects a person's heart, enriches their feelings, shapes their aesthetic taste, expands their thinking, and serves their spiritual development. Therefore, music education is of particular importance in the general education system. Music lessons not only teach students to sing or listen to music but also direct them toward the conscious perception of musical phenomena, the understanding of works of art, and the comprehension of their content and means of expression. In this process, the formation of musical literacy serves as an important pedagogical task.

Musical literacy is a broad concept that is not limited to knowledge of musical notation or the ability to read it. Conversely, musical literacy also implies the student's understanding of basic concepts such as musical sound, rhythm, mode, tempo, dynamics, melody, intonation, form, and genre, as well as the ability to apply them in practical activities. Conscious perception of music, melodic analysis, the use of theoretical knowledge in the performance process, and the perception of musical images and content are important components of literacy. Thus, musical literacy is a complex process that serves to develop a student's musical thinking, listening culture, and creative abilities.

The role of music theory in this process is incomparable. Music theory provides a scientific explanation of the patterns of musical phenomena, the

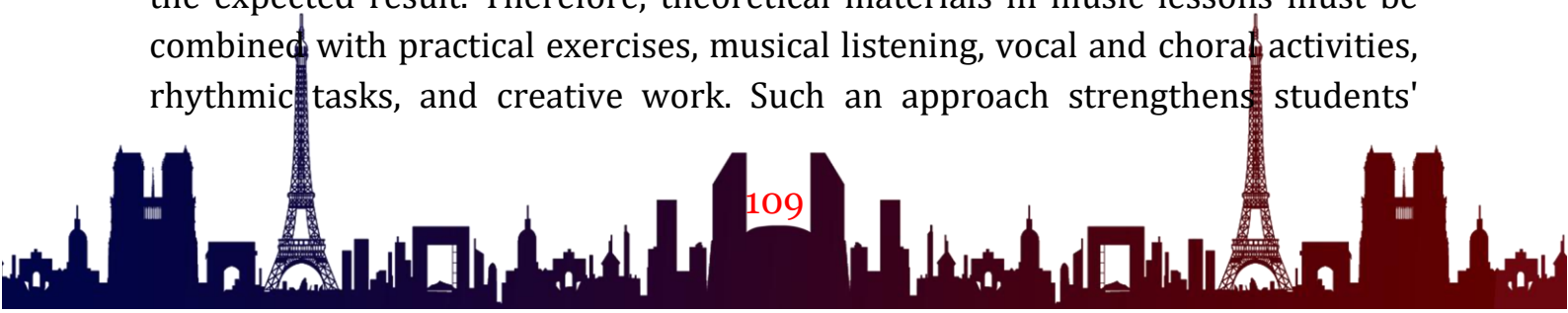
relationship between sounds, rhythmic structures, the foundations of modal tones, musical notation, and other means of expression. Through theoretical knowledge, the student begins to perceive music not as a collection of random sounds, but as an artistic system based on certain laws. This plays an important role in their deeper understanding of music and understanding the content of the work being performed or listened to.

Studying music theory develops students' skills in developing musical hearing, rhythm sensing, correct perception of intonation, and reading and analyzing musical notation. For example, a student who knows musical notation can understand a musical work not only by listening, but also based on written signs. A student who is aware of rhythm and meter achieves precision and harmony during the performance process. Concepts of mode and tonality help to understand the character of the melody and its emotional direction. Thus, theoretical knowledge ensures that practical musical activity is rich in content and conscious.

In today's educational process, it is an important task not only for students to acquire ready-made knowledge but also to teach them independent thinking, analysis, and a creative approach. Music education is no exception. A student who has mastered the fundamentals of music theory will have the opportunity to independently analyze a musical work, distinguish its means of expression, and make conscious decisions during the performance process. This indicates the necessity of teaching theoretical knowledge in close connection with practical activities in the formation of musical literacy.

Music theory also serves to increase the general cultural level of students. Because by understanding musical concepts, they gain a deeper understanding of national and world musical heritage, learn to distinguish between different genres and styles, and form a conscious attitude toward art. In particular, musical literacy serves as an important tool in educating the younger generation in the spirit of respect for national values, folk songs, maqom art, and examples of classical music. Theoretical knowledge provides a scientific basis for this process.

In the formation of musical literacy, theory and practice should be viewed as a holistic pedagogical process rather than separated from one another. If a student only memorizes theoretical concepts but cannot apply them in the process of listening, singing, playing, or analyzing, such knowledge will not yield the expected result. Therefore, theoretical materials in music lessons must be combined with practical exercises, musical listening, vocal and choral activities, rhythmic tasks, and creative work. Such an approach strengthens students'



interest in music, reinforces their knowledge, and gradually develops their musical literacy.

In the study, musical literacy was studied not only as a set of theoretical knowledge but also as a process related to the student's conscious perception of music, its understanding, analysis, and the ability to apply it in practical activities. Therefore, when analyzing the materials, the content of music lessons, the age characteristics of students, the stages of development of musical abilities, and the harmony of theory and practice were identified as important criteria. The main focus was on how each element of music theory manifests in the student's practical musical activity, and how it affects their performance, listening, and analytical skills.

Among the methods used in the article, scientific-theoretical analysis holds a special place. Through this method, existing pedagogical sources, scientific views, and methodological recommendations on musical literacy and music theory were studied. As a result of the theoretical analysis, it was determined that theoretical knowledge serves as a foundation in the process of forming musical literacy. Because through music theory, the student understands the pitch, duration, rhythmic structure, melodic properties, and means of expression of musical sounds. This makes it possible to understand and consciously evaluate music not only at the level of hearing, but also in terms of content.

The article also uses the comparison method. Using this method, a comparison was made between music education based on theoretical knowledge and the educational process focused solely on practical performance. Analysis shows that if theoretical knowledge is not provided at an adequate level in music lessons, the student may mechanically repeat a sound, rhythm, or intonation during the performance process without deeply understanding their content. On the contrary, when theoretical knowledge is combined with practical exercises, the student takes a conscious approach to musical activity, understands the text of the sheet music, achieves rhythmic precision, and tries to correctly express the musical image.

The observation method was also considered one of the important aspects of the study. Based on pedagogical observation, the level of students' mastery of theoretical concepts during music lessons, their application in practical activities, and their activity in singing, listening to music, and performing rhythmic exercises were analyzed. Observations show that when elements of music theory are taught in connection with simple, consistent, and practical tasks, students' interest in the lesson increases. In particular, rhythmic exercises, reading sheet music, analyzing



the structure of the melody, and conversations about the listened piece serve as effective tools in forming musical literacy.

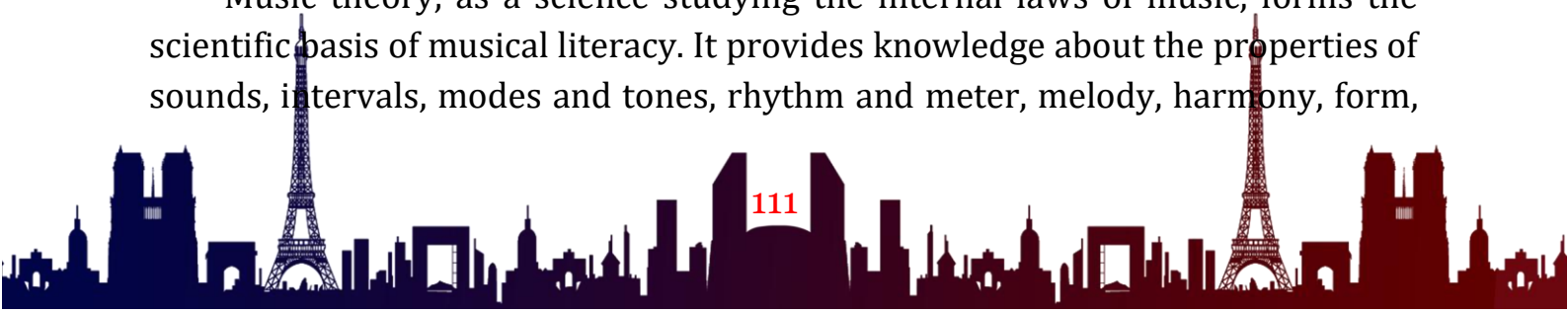
The article pedagogically substantiates the organic connection between music theory and musical literacy through the method of generalization. As a result of the generalization, it was found that music theory develops not only knowledge but also musical thinking, aesthetic perception, listening culture, and a creative approach. In this regard, music theory appears not as a separate branch of music education, but as the primary means of enriching the content of all types of musical activity.

A systematic approach was also used to cover the research materials. Because musical literacy is not formed through one-time education. It develops as a result of a gradual, consistent, and continuous pedagogical process. First, the student becomes acquainted with simple musical concepts: sound, rhythm, tempo, and dynamics. In subsequent stages, students acquire knowledge of musical notation, modes, tones, musical forms, genres, and styles. This knowledge is reinforced through listening, singing, instrumental performance, analysis, and creative tasks.

The issue of forming musical literacy is one of the main directions of music education. This is because the content of music lessons is not limited to singing, listening to music, or performing rhythmic movements; it is aimed at forming students' skills in conscious perception of music, understanding musical phenomena, and their application in practical activities. In this process, music theory serves as an important theoretical foundation that systematizes the student's musical knowledge, develops their thinking, and helps them consciously organize musical activity.

The concept of musical literacy has a broad content and includes components such as knowing musical notation, distinguishing pitch and duration, understanding rhythmic structure, understanding lad-tonal relationships, perceiving tempo and dynamic signs, and being able to analyze the form and content of a musical work. Thus, musical literacy is a set of students' musical knowledge, skills, and abilities that allow them not only to hear music but also to understand, analyze, and express it. In this regard, musical literacy is inextricably linked to musical thinking, musical hearing, aesthetic perception, and creative activity.

Music theory, as a science studying the internal laws of music, forms the scientific basis of musical literacy. It provides knowledge about the properties of sounds, intervals, modes and tones, rhythm and meter, melody, harmony, form,



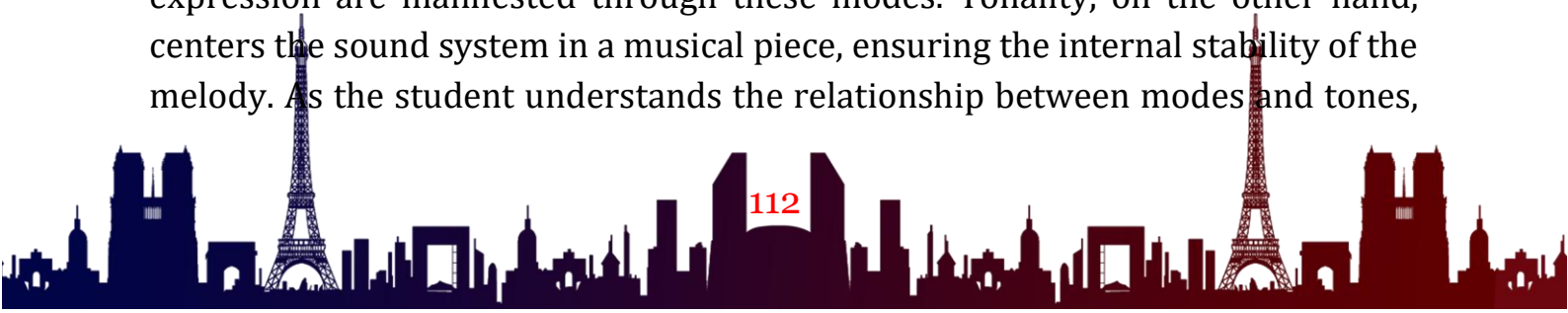
genre, and means of expression. Through this knowledge, the student perceives the musical work not as a collection of random sounds, but as an artistic system created on the basis of certain laws. As a result, the student's understanding of music deepens, and their ability to analyze and evaluate musical phenomena develops.

From a theoretical perspective, auditory perception plays a crucial role in the formation of musical literacy. Musical hearing is the student's ability to distinguish pitch, melody, rhythmic movement, intonation, and timbre. Knowledge of music theory directly influences the development of this ability. For example, a student who has an understanding of intervals or modes consciously observes the movement of a melody and understands the relationship between sounds. A reader who understands rhythm and meter feels the internal order of the musical movement. For this reason, music theory is regarded as an important tool for cultivating musical hearing.

Another important theoretical component of musical literacy is musical notation. A musical notation is a written form of musical language that allows for the identification, preservation, and performance of musical thought. Through musical notation, the student receives information about the pitch, duration, rhythmic structure, tempo, and dynamic features of sound. Therefore, mastering musical notation is one of the primary conditions for musical literacy. However, musical literacy is not just about recognizing symbols or naming them; it also requires understanding the musical text, associating it with auditory perception, and applying it in practical performance.

The rhythm and meter part of music theory is also of particular importance in the formation of musical literacy. Rhythm determines the movement of music, its internal pulse, and its organization over time. The meter, as an ordered form of rhythmic movement, gives music a certain stability through the exchange of strong and weak parts. The development of students' sense of rhythm is of great importance in the process of singing, playing musical instruments, performing motor exercises, and listening to music. A student who is consciously aware of rhythm achieves clarity, harmony, and musical expressiveness in performance.

Theoretical knowledge of modes and tones helps students understand the character and emotional content of a melody. Each melody is organized on the basis of a specific mode, and its melodic characteristics, mood, and artistic expression are manifested through these modes. Tonality, on the other hand, centers the sound system in a musical piece, ensuring the internal stability of the melody. As the student understands the relationship between modes and tones,



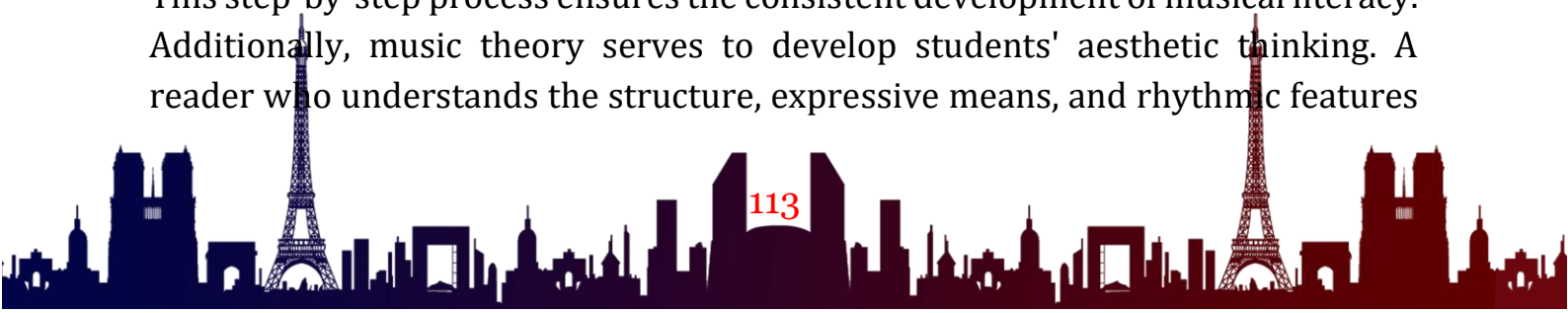
they gain a deeper understanding of the content of the musical work, perceive its emotional changes, and strive to express them correctly in performance.

The concept of intonation is also of great theoretical importance in the formation of musical literacy. Intonation is a living expression of musical thought, giving the melody meaning, expressiveness, and emotional coloring. If the reader does not understand the intonation correctly, they will not be able to sufficiently grasp the artistic content of the musical piece. Therefore, one of the important tasks in music education is the development of intonational hearing, the sensation of melodic phrases, and the meaningful interpretation of musical expressions. In this process, music theory helps the student understand the essence of musical means of expression.

From the perspective of the theoretical foundation, musical literacy develops step-by-step as a pedagogical process. Initially, students are introduced to simple musical concepts: sound, pitch, short-long sounds, rapid performance, high-low voice, strong-weak beat. Later, they master more complex concepts such as musical notation, rhythmic symbols, mode, tonality, musical form, genre, and style. This process is effective only when it is combined with consistency, visualization, practical exercises, and creative activity.

The unity of theory and practice in teaching music theory is considered one of the fundamental didactic principles. Because if music theory is taught only as a set of rules, it can seem dry and complex to students. Conversely, if theoretical concepts are presented during the process of singing, listening to music, performing rhythmic exercises, playing musical instruments, and analyzing musical works, they are reinforced in the student's mind. For example, the concept of rhythm is more effectively mastered when it is explained not only through definition, but also through the example of applause, movement, song, and melody.

It is also theoretically important to consider the age and psychological characteristics of students in the formation of musical literacy. Younger students perceive music more emotionally, think figuratively, and master it more quickly through practical action. Therefore, it is necessary to explain theoretical concepts to them through simple, figurative, and practical examples. In the upper grades, it is possible to deepen musical concepts based on an analytical approach and teach independent analysis of the structure, genre, and means of expression of works. This step-by-step process ensures the consistent development of musical literacy. Additionally, music theory serves to develop students' aesthetic thinking. A reader who understands the structure, expressive means, and rhythmic features



of a musical work feels it more deeply, understands its artistic content, and expresses a conscious attitude toward it. This is directly related to the educational tasks of music education. Because through music, students develop not only knowledge and skills but also aesthetic taste, artistic sensitivity, respect for national values, and spiritual culture.

The theoretical foundations of musical literacy are also closely linked to the study of national musical heritage. When studying Uzbek folk songs, maqom art, children's songs, and modern music samples, music theory helps students understand their melodic, rhythmic, genre, and expressive characteristics. In particular, understanding the rhythm, method, melody, and intonational features of national melodies and songs develops students' national musical thinking. In general, the theoretical foundations of musical literacy formation are based on the laws of music theory, didactics, psychology, and aesthetic education. In this process, music theory systematizes the student's musical knowledge, develops auditory abilities, helps in understanding the musical text, and allows for the conscious organization of practical performance. Therefore, combining theoretical knowledge with practical activity in music education, teaching them step-by-step, in accordance with age characteristics, and based on a creative approach is an important condition for the effective formation of musical literacy.

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