

## Active Listening Method

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Before introducing the active listening method in music, let us review the notion of listening in general. It is impossible to imagine our daily lives without music, only the music we hear at home, at work, on the street and elsewhere, certainly, the word "hear" is particularly noteworthy as music in this context is not in the foreground for us, it is the background texture for the scenes we live in. At the end of the day, if we want to remember the music we heard during the day, we can at best recall one or two of those songs and hum them. The reason for this is related to the phrase "to hear music" that was mentioned earlier. If we do not want to learn music in our daily lives, it is more correct to refer to this process "to hear music". This article will be dealing with the techniques of "active listening" not in relation to hear music in order to understand, properly analyze and comprehend it in general but with regard to listening to it correctly.

We can also more clearly explain the notions of hearing and listening in parallel by referring to Sherlock Holmes's statement "you see but you do not observe." Hearing sounds and seeing things are passive concepts, that is, they only require the ability to see and hear. Observing and listening are regarded active concepts since these processes, in addition to the ability to see and hear, require coordination, analysis and knowledge. Therefore, we can conclude that any identical image or sound is heard and seen by different people in the same way, but observed and heard differently. For example, if there is a person in a room, anyone who sees him will call the object he sees a person, but if they observe, everyone will say that the object looks like someone else, whether he is tall or short, fat or thin. So is the difference between hearing and listening. In the same example, when you passively hear the voice of a person in the next room, everyone will feature hearing the human voice, while in active listening, by virtue of coordination, analysis and knowledge, they will be able to detail as whose voice it is similar to and what the timbre is, etc. The method of listening to music is also called the method of active listening, as during listening all our senses and attention is actively focused on a given piece of

music. Active listening is an active process in which we consciously listen to and be aware of the music we hear.

Active listening has been widely used in music education methodology throughout history. Active listening was an integral part of the oral tradition method used in musical genres such as mugham and raga in the context of Oriental music before it was formed as an individual method. Unlike composer music, traditional oral music is not considered anyone's intellectual property. When playing this kind of music, each musician with a unique approach both expresses characteristically the raga or mugham he plays and reflects own emotions, therefore, these pieces of music are alive and given a new life every time through their performers. Despite the diverse representations of these types of music, the active listening method is a very useful tool for both music lovers and students in teaching. If we take an active listening approach to the performance of the same mugham or raga by various musicians, even if we are blindfolded, we can figure out which performance belongs to which performer.

I would like to highlight the basic features of active listening in teaching both for musicians and non-musicians. As many experts pointed out, the prerequisite here is not to be immersed in music. For music lovers, this idea may sound strange and incomprehensible but even immersion in active listening is one of the distractions. In the majority of cases, when we are immersed in music and being fascinated, we start dreaming in conformity with the nature and style of music, we remember some things, and as an active listener we cannot clarify and analyze what is happening in music at that moment and as a passive listener only immerse ourselves in the music. This process is similar to the deviation of an important object from focus, even if several objects are clearly reflected in the photograph. Thus, when immersed in music, active listening is replaced by passive listening. In this case, we should control ourselves and not allow it. We must be able to keep the music in front of our eyes figuratively, in other words, we must keep it in the center of our attention. Although these processes may seem difficult at first to control the situation so that you do not switch to passive listening, you will be convinced of how useful this

approach will be in the future. Another tip for active listening is to listen to music with closed eyes. Close your eyes and eliminate anything that seems distracting, it immediately serves to concentration of your attention. The important point here is that when you close your eyes, take it not like you're being immersed in music like you're used to, but rather more attentive to music, free of the influence of external factors. That way, you'll be better conscious of active listening, switching all your emotions into music with closed eyes.

Music learned through active listening develops the student's listening skills, ability to analyze accurately, improvisational fantasies, and concurrently his imagination, and musical sense in general in an exceptional way. When a student listens to a piece of music, he distinguishes its structure according to the sound of the phrases, how the scales ascend and descend, as well as identifies their character, tempo, size, rhythm, and mode. The process does not end there, the student inevitably portrays mentally a piece of music he is listening to and views the inherent colourful scene. As the ability to listen develops, the student can easily identify and list the instruments played in a large orchestra. In general, it should be borne in mind that active listening is a skill that can be acquired and developed through experience. Time and patience are essential for a good outcome.

The teacher's approach is also imperative in the development of students' listening skills. The process of listening is not complete only with a student, the teacher's role as an exemplary listener is also crucial. The way a teacher listens to music, the way he uses the body language as he listens, and how he explains to his student the details of the presented music in general are as valuable as providing a map to a treasure hunter. What are the main routes on this map? What directions should the teacher show to the student in a more prominent way? We can conclude that the most common views of musicians and educators on this matter consist of the following four points:

- 1) Instrumental: The essence here is to distinguish which instruments are involved in performing a given piece of music, the timbre of the instruments and how they play a role in the performance of the music. For example, it is necessary

to explain which instruments play solo or accompaniment, and clarify why they have particular roles, that is, both the specific features of the instruments and the orchestra's or arranger's approach to music. Applying this method from bands to large orchestras will play an important role in shaping students' perceptions of the sound, essence and joint performance of instruments, which will be significant for students to develop as future orchestra conductors or studio sound engineers.

2) Style. As for the style in the listening method, there are two points. *First*, the style and genre of a piece of music, as well as if there are several styles or various parts in the same piece of music, they should be identified and explained. For example, in classical music, such diverse music as rondo, mazurka, and fugue should be specifically mentioned as part of symphonic works, and in mugham it should be explained how to distinguish the parts as preface, tasnif (classification), rengh (colour), and in raga as alapana, tala. *Second*, the student should listen to a performance of a given piece of music in various genres by different performers. Both the performance of a piece of music by different performers in the same genre or by different performers in various genres will enrich the student's perception of the music he is listening to, which will be positively reflected in his own performance, particularly in his improvisations.

3) Structure. This point deals with the scales of music, their structures and parts. The interconnectedness of these scales and the bridges between their components, in a word, the beginning, the connection, the ending parts are revealed. Structurally, another key subject is reference sentences and phrases that if the teacher plays the music at the same key points, he should play it again or if he uses multimedia, he should replay the music and explain the essence of the reference sentence or phrase to enable distinguishing reference point and further variations. Repeating is important here to highlight the key points.

4) Rhythm. Active listening indeed requires a lot of attention, which manifests itself mostly in the rhythmic approach. It is impossible to comprehend the nature of music without feeling the rhythm. In this approach, it is necessary to accurately determine the tempo, size, and rhythmic characteristics of the music in

general. Arrhythmias in free improvisations should also be added to this list. Concurrently, one of the key factors is to note which instruments in music are more active in rhythmic accompaniment and which are more passive. Listening repeatedly is very important in this approach as well, it facilitates to analyze the subtleties of rhythm when you listen to it several times.

### **SUMMARY**

Active listening, as we have noted, is one of the oldest methods of music education as part of oral traditions since its inception and teaching. In modern times, this method has not only remained relevant, but also developed independently. By virtue of this development, the number of music genres in teaching of which it applied has increased. We can observe an effective application of this method in almost every genre. As active listening is being applied in different genres, diverse approaches emerge in each genre, which further enriches the method. This constantly evolving, enriching method will always be researched by musicologists and make a great contribution to the science of music.