

THE ROLE OF FOREIGN CLASSICAL WORKS IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' AURAL SKILLS

Rjabova Marjona Ravshanjon qizi

National University of Uzbekistan named after Nizami

Abstract: *This article defines the concept of aural (listening) skills, outlines the stages of their formation, and investigates the role that foreign classical music samples play in this process. Effective methodological approaches for deepening students' musical perception, enriching their emotional–aesthetic responses, and broadening their artistic worldview are examined.*

Keywords: *aural skills, classical repertoire, Bach, Mozart, musical perception, student taste, listening competence, expressivity*

Modern music education aims not only to provide theoretical knowledge but also to develop learners' abilities to listen, analyse, and feel music. These processes are directly tied to a student's overall musicianship, emotional receptivity, and artistic thinking. Listening to classical masterpieces, in particular, heightens aesthetic sensitivity, strengthens rhythmic awareness, and improves the ability to discern melodic lines. Consequently, using foreign classical works in the classroom is an essential pedagogical tool for cultivating aural skills.

Today, the function of a music lesson extends far beyond performance practice or the transmission of theory. It plays a crucial role in enriching a learner's inner world, refining aesthetic taste, and shaping artistic cognition. By studying foreign classical works, students encounter the culture, art, and moral values of other nations—an experience that broadens intercultural understanding and expands their global outlook.

Classical repertoire, representing the pinnacle of the world's musical heritage, provides a vast palette of imagery, profound philosophical content, and masterful structures. These qualities create optimal conditions for students to hear and comprehend music on a deeper level. For that reason, building aural skills through exposure to such works is one of today's most important pedagogical tasks.

The significance of foreign classical music in shaping students' musical thinking, methodological applications, and pedagogical potential

Foreign classical repertoire—by composers such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin—offers not only flawless musical structures but also emotions that move the human heart. These works demand concentrated attention, deep comprehension, and sensitivity from listeners, making them ideal for cultivating aural skills.

Integrating Classical Works in Middle-Grade Music Lessons (Grades 5-9)

One core objective of music classes in grades 5 through 9 is to select and analyse classical pieces. For instance, listening to Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in D minor" evokes awe and excitement through dynamic contrasts and strong rhythms, whereas Mozart's "Eine kleine Nachtmusik" instils feelings of lightness, elegance, and balance.

Recommended Five-Step Listening Sequence

1. Introduction – Present the central idea or background of the work.
2. Focused Listening – Isolate the primary theme or musical direction.
3. Analysis – Engage students with questions about rhythm, tempo, and character.
4. Emotional Evaluation – Discuss which sections elicited particular feelings.
5. Creative Response – Encourage drawings, narratives, or personal reflections that match the music.

These steps ensure that students do more than merely hear the music; they feel it, form opinions, and strive for creative expression.

Divergent Pedagogical Views

Within pedagogical circles, opinions differ on using foreign classics. Some teachers argue that such works may feel distant or overly complex; others see them as indispensable for refining taste. In reality, the two perspectives complement each other: classical pieces—rich in form, imagery, and aesthetic depth—expand students' aural, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Age-Appropriate Selection and Adaptation

Teachers must match repertoire to students' age and preparedness. Music that is too complex or conceptually remote can cause confusion or fatigue. Therefore, each piece should be introduced gradually, in an accessible, step-by-step manner.

Post-Listening Activities

Question-and-answer sessions, drawing impressions, writing short essays, or comparing national and foreign works all enhance comprehension. Creating such intercultural, didactic scenarios boosts lesson effectiveness.

A Unified Educational, Aesthetic, and Cognitive Approach

Combining spiritual, aesthetic, and cognitive goals should be a core methodological criterion. This approach simultaneously develops musical taste, creative thinking, and critical evaluation.

Because classical compositions may be unfamiliar or complex, teachers must adapt each piece to clear instructional goals, considering students' age, skill level, and aesthetic needs. Consistent exposure to foreign classics fosters aural skills, deepens musical perception, enriches emotional experience, and refines aesthetic taste—transforming music education into a tool for both professional and personal growth.

Future directions include integrating foreign classics with national works, analysing them through projects and practical sessions, and creating innovative methods to boost musical expression skills.

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