

UFSC-Ararangua creates a singing group and stimulates academic community's participation

A UFSC-Araranguá cria um grupo de canto e estimula a participação da comunidade acadêmica

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ABSTRACT

Music provides innumerable benefits to health, which happen through participation in vocal groups, among others. The goal of this work is to describe the creation of a singing group at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Campus Araranguá, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil, as well as the activities performed to stimulate the participants to express their emotions and feelings through music. In order to create the group, the following steps were taken: the group's name was chosen, invitations for people to integrate the group were sent, and weekly meetings and performances were scheduled. With this work, it was possible to describe how Staccato Group's creation happened, a group with about 50 members. Since its origins, the group has performed at seven events for the academic community, and, even during pandemic times, it has held six online performances. Therefore, Staccato Group has ignited the culture of art in each of its members.

Keywords: Music. Art. Singing group.

RESUMO

A música reflete em inúmeros benefícios à saúde, que se dão, entre muitas formas, através da participação em grupos de canto. O objetivo deste trabalho foi descrever como se deu a criação de um grupo de canto na Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), Campus Araranguá, e quais foram as atividades executadas para estimular os participantes a expressar suas emoções e sentimentos através da música. Para a criação do grupo, foram realizadas as seguintes etapas: escolha do nome do grupo, convite para compor o grupo, agendamento de encontros semanais e apresentações. Com este trabalho foi possível descrever como se deu a criação do Grupo Staccato, do qual participaram cerca de 50 pessoas. Desde sua gênese o grupo já se apresentou em sete eventos para a comunidade acadêmica e, mesmo em época de pandemia, o grupo realizou seis apresentações virtuais. Dessa maneira, o Grupo Staccato despertou, em cada participante, a cultura da arte.

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Palavras-chave: Música. Arte. Grupo de canto.

INTRODUCTION

Music is defined as the art of expressing oneself through sounds, following rules that vary depending on the era and civilization (FINGER *et al.*, 2017). This art integrates into human beings and their physiological functions, and, through it, humans can communicate, express themselves and manifest their emotions and feelings. As a result, musicality shapes human behavior which, in turn, shapes social behavior, as human relations are sensitized by music (NUNES *et al.*, 2020).

Throughout human history, music has manifested among different peoples and their diverse cultures, being considered a universal language that is able to promote innumerable benefits (FINGER *et al.*, 2017). Recently, science has demonstrated some of these benefits, and, among them, there is the relief of symptoms through therapies involving music. This kind of unmedicated artistic intervention is seen as an alternative for personal wellbeing in a social context (JENSEN; BONDE, 2018).

Other ways to enjoy the benefits provided by music is through the participation in singing groups, where vocal warm-up and cool-down are practiced in order to achieve basic singing abilities. Such practice induces the development of both the cardiovascular system and the respiratory system (KANG; SCHOLP; JIANG, 2018).

Studies have demonstrated that through participation in singing groups, one experiences lower levels of anxiety, sadness and stress, as well as greater sense of wellbeing, relaxation and happiness (DAYKIN *et al.*, 2018).

That said, this work's goal is to describe the creation of a singing group at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC – Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil), Campus Araranguá, and what activities have been performed to stimulate members to express their emotions and feelings through music.

METHODOLOGY

Choice of the name of the musical group

Prior to the group's creation at UFSC, a lot of terms related to music were searched within musical literature, so that, in the same context, they could be a name for the soon-to-be-created group. All terms and their respective meanings were organized in a spreadsheet for analysis.

Invitations to integrate the group

After that, UFSC's academic community (civil servants and students) was invited to form the group. The invitation was made through the instant messaging app for smartphones, WhatsApp; through publications on UFSC-Araranguá's Facebook page; and also through posters placed on the campus' murals. The invitation aimed to reach, in various ways, and in a non-excluding form, as many people as possible from the academic community who would be interested in joining the group.

Weekly meetings – basic singing activities

The group meetings were scheduled to be weekly, with reserved time and place at the UFSC, Campus Araranguá, where those interested went voluntarily. At each meeting, the attendance of the members was tracked on spreadsheets in order to check how many people participated in the group and to grant complementary hours (required to undergraduate courses) for those in attendance.

On the weekly meetings, some techniques were utilized, ranging from vocal warm-up and cool-down techniques, to body relaxation and music with simple arrangements, which all were chosen by the members themselves. The selected musical pieces were also recorded in spreadsheets for later analysis.

Performances

The repertoire prepared, was performed to the academic community and the general community in events promoted by the UFSC, campus Araranguá, itself. The events' names

were also captured on spreadsheets. Besides event performances, the participants were distributed in various small groups, some even individually, to perform at the beginning of each rehearsal session. The goal was to reduce shyness and work on self-expression. Such data was also recorded.

Data analysis

All data gathered were tabulated on Microsoft Excel 2019 spreadsheets and analyzed through descriptive analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The word “music”, from Greek “*μουσική*”, means “the art of the muses”, and is portrayed as one among many beauties of life (MONTEIRO, 2019) able to awaken various positive sensations in the body (FINGER *et al.*, 2017; LOBO *et al.*, 2015). One way to enjoy such sensations provided by music, is through the participation in singing groups, which can exist in various places, such as churches, schools, businesses and universities (JOHNSON *et al.*, 2015; REZENDE; IRINEU; DORNELAS, 2015). With that in mind, the objective of this work is to describe the creation of a singing group at the UFSC, Campus Araranguá, and what activities were performed to stimulate the participants to express their emotions and feelings through music.

Around 10 names from the music literature were selected to give a name to the singing group that was being created. The chosen one was “Staccato Group”. “Staccato”, in Italian, means “highlighted”, “prominent”. This name represents a kind of articulation in which each musical note, in its tonality and singularity, becomes prominent. Similarly, the name was chosen because each one of the members of the group can represent not only a musical note, but also feel like a valuable individual in each harmonic beat of the music. As such, each musical note (each individual) has his/her highlight and identity expressed.

From 2019 to 2021, around 50 people have been members of the Staccato Group. The individuals who demonstrated interest in the group were, generally, those who liked to sing or to play some musical instrument (be it the electric keyboard, the guitar, the ukulele or the accordion).

In the process of analyzing the group members, it was realized that, each semester, more technical staff, professors and students from UFSC’s different undergraduate courses

were affected, touched and/or attracted by Staccato. These results show an increase in the probability of the group to stimulate social interaction. According to Daykin *et al.* (2018), music in community singing provides contact and interpersonal relations in the life of young people. Other authors reported that, besides stimulating social interaction, a group of people linked to some artistic area also shows improvement in quality of life (WAZLAWICK; CAMARGO; MAHEIRIE, 2007) and wellbeing (FINGER *et al.*, 2017; DAYKIN *et al.*, 2018).

The Staccato Group meetings occurred every Friday, from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm at the Laboratory of Sensibilities and Humanities (Laboratório de Sensibilidades e Humanidades, LASU, UFSC, Campus Araranguá). At each meeting was performed techniques, such as stretching, breathing, body expression, articulation, hissing, relaxation, and warm-up and cool-down exercises. According to literature, such vocal techniques affect the cardiovascular and respiratory systems positively, leading to body relaxation (KANG; SCHOLP; JIANG, 2018) and agitation decrease (SANTANA; VASCONCELOS, 2018). This characteristic was observed in the group with the simple exercise of knowing how to respect the timing of each note in each musical beat.

After singing technique exercises, the group chose songs to be rehearsed and performed to @grupostaccato followers on Instagram and to the academic and general communities in events organized by the UFSC itself. Overall, ten songs were chosen, all of them being MPB-style (MPB is short for *Música Popular Brasileira* – Brazilian Popular Music), which were performed in seven events.

In order to decrease shyness and work on their self-expression, the participants performed in groups of four, three, two and some, individually, in the beginning of each session of the rehearsal. Overall, 14 performances were made in small groups.

From March 20, 2020 to March 31, 2021, in-person meetings were suspended due to the COVID-19 outbreak. However, even from a distance, collective online video song performances were made, with themes of hope, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Father's Day, Christmas and New Year's. The participants of the group voted to choose their preferred song, for each theme, and participated in the song remotely.

In order to reach a good number of participants, an Instagram page was created for the group (@staccatogrupo). On its profile page, photos taken during meetings and performing videos were posted, as well as relevant information regarding the group. The page has been accessed both by members of the group and other innumerable people who have been reached somehow by Staccato Group. As a result, as a social network posting page, the profile

@*staccatogrupo* was a very helpful way of reaching people through the work developed by the group.

From an artistic and cultural point of view, Staccato Group's participants were able to develop, transcend and express their musical abilities through singing and musical instruments.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This work shows how the Staccato Group was created at the UFSC. The group has brought together around 50 participants, including professors, university's technical staff and students. In an interactive way, Staccato Group has applied basic singing activities using vocal warm-up and cool-down techniques, as well as rehearsed ten songs with simple arrangements, mainly from the MPB style (Brazilian Popular Music). All songs were performed to the academic community, to the general community and to @*staccatogrupo* followers at seven different events. Other 14 performances were held in groups of four, three, two or individually in the beginning of each rehearsal session with the goal of lowering participants' shyness and developing their self-expression. Even in pandemic times, the group has remained active and has performed remotely six times.

It is intended, in future works, to collect reports from the Staccato Group's members to validate their perception regarding the music's benefits to mental health. The data aim to contribute to the research project of the "Music and Human Sensibilities" research group from UFSC, Campus Araranguá. In the future, the analyzed data can be used to support scientific advancement in this cultural and artistic festival.

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