



The Liberal Arts Tradition with Dr. Kevin Clark and Ravi Jain

Lesson 6: Music and Musical Education

Outline:

Music and Musical Education

- Prince Caspian heard the stories of old Narnia from his nurse. He longed to go back to this time. His new tutor, Professor Cornelius, is supposed to set him straight. Cornelius is part dwarf, he partakes of Old Narnia! The initial directedness of love that came through stories and fairy tales were the foundations of his ability to exercise wise and heroic kingship in Narnia.
 - This early education in story, song, and fairy tale was not just to make Caspian's education fun and enjoyable, it was utterly serious.
 - It was building in him the capacity, longings, and loves to receive the education he was going to have later.
- “My first and last philosophy, that which I believe with unbroken certainty, I learned in the nursery.” Chesterton
 - In early child education, instead of thinking of providing the foundation for serious study later, what if you thought of yourself as the solemn and star-appointed priestess at once of democracy and tradition?
- **What if all later learning in the arts utterly stood or fell on whether the heart was tuned toward the good the true and the beautiful through musical education?**
 - It is a failure of education if students come out of schools without a longing for the kind of goodness and truth and beauty we find in fairy tales.

Musical Education

- The term music comes from the word “muse”.
- There were nine muses, who were patrons of learning for the Greeks.
- Muse is the root word for museum.
- This is broader than instrumental music, and it includes instrumental music.
- Plato thought that music could be the beginning and the totality of education.
- The music of astronomy is naked eye astronomy. The mathematical discipline of astronomy is part of the Quadrivium.
- There is something defacing about beginning with the mathematical astronomy, but never having learned naked eye astronomy.
- Musical education is also thoroughly Christian.
 - Athanasius argues from liturgy to make theological points. Christian worship was driving his theological doctrine.



- Augustine says the order according to which we worship will be the order to which we believe.
- A theologically informed musical education leads to theology later.
- In Psalm 73, the psalmist is looking at the world and wants to understand human world. *My foot had almost slipped until...I went into the temple and I saw the worship there. The liturgy of the worship of God ordered his mind to properly understand how the world works. A rudiment of moral philosophy stood or fell on worship.*
- Orthodoxy proceeds from worship and proceeds to worship. We come worshipping God in order to understand God properly and then from proper understanding to give Him praise that is due to Him.

Moral philosophy does not start from a neutral startling place.

- Thomas Aquinas' education was almost exclusively musical until he was nine years old.
- The poetry in the ancient world would have been set to song.
- He sung the text of the Bible, to have it memorized by the time he was seventeen.

How do we enchant our education?

- We realize the power of music, but we have only harnessed it as a mnemonic device. Music should be a major part of our education.
- Music gives us theme in itself (for poem).
- Music is more than singing, but not less than singing. Our students should be singing.
 - Learn hymns from the Christian church.
 - They should be knowing the gospel stories before studying them inductively.
 - Later reflect upon the things we hold in our heart.
- **What we sing is what we love.**
 - **We will sing the things that are most important to us, but the things that are important to us have changed.**
 - The modern post-Romantic mindset is that what you love is what naturally appeals to you. We do not think that you can inculcate and cultivate loves for good things.

Piety, gymnastic, and music are the beginnings of education that puts us on the trajectory for wonder and it informs our worship driving us toward wisdom.

- The possibilities of musical education (if we recover it) is a fundamental resource for inculcating not only wonder, but what wonder leads to, which is wisdom.
- What if our schools looked more like museums than classrooms?
- What if the teachers thought of themselves as leading (themselves) from wonder to wonder?



- *When Aslan comes and he brings all of the different people as he comes back through Narnia, he calls out the nurse of Prince Caspian. The nurse, who had raised Prince Caspian, had saved the whole world.*
- Plato was so confident of the power of poetic and musical education that he had some very extreme things to say about how we have to regulate these poets *because the hope of the world depends on the songs that they are going to write of our children.*
- There is a privilege and a profound opportunity to be the beloved nurse that we find in Prince Caspian.