

MUSIC AND ITS POWER OF MAKING CAMARADERIE

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ABSTRACT--*In the present world cinema is considered as the most complex and powerful art form which influences our life and lives of those who around us. His Highness Abdullah is a 1990 Malayalam musical drama written by A K Lohithadas and directed by Sibi Malayil. It is a story of a Qawwali singer Abdullah from Bombay, who comes to a palace in Kerala to murder the head of the Royal family Udayavarma thampuran. The assassination of the king is planned by other family members to grab his wealth. Abdullah disguises as a Hindu Brahmin casteical singer to make his job easy. Ultimately he makes a close relationship with the king with his talent of music. This paper is an attempt to show how music plays an important role in bringing people together under one umbrella, irrespective of caste, creed, religion by eradicating all social inequalities and its healing power.*

Key Word—*Music, Social inequalities, Togetherness, His Highness Abdullah, Religion*

I. INTRODUCTION

Music is seen as an art till now through which we get entertainment and awakening of the mind. But now science is slowly coming up with this finding that it is the major important power of our life. According to our necessity, if this power can be researched and used, many wonderful secrets will come in front of us and that can be used for the welfare of mankind. In olden times music is considered as a part of religion and voice reminds a flawless form of spiritual practice. Today's musical situation started from classical music. It is a great practice with attainment of Brahman as its accomplishment. In Upanishad, the sound of brahma is considered to be the power of sound. While practising it, the seeker becomes united in such a melodious music by which the whole world can experience him as a symbol of life and God.

Music has a unique relationship with God suggesting that it has miraculous effect in creation process of the world. The mysteries of Hrishikesh's Panchajanya, Sankara's Damru, Lord Krishna's murali, Saraswathi's Veena are signs that each molecule of creation can be moved by musical power.

In the world, music is inspiration and life force and its use can lead death oriented life towards immortality, hopeless life to hope and satisfaction and distressed and anxious life to eternal peace and joy.

Music [...] allows for unique expressions of social ties and the strengthening of relational connectedness. [...] The promotion of human well-being is done through music by facilitating human contact, meaning and imagination of possibilities. In the same way, music intersects with cultural boundaries, facilitating our "social self" by linking our shared experiences and intentions. Song and music are conduits for forging links across barriers, for making contact with others, and for being indoctrinated with the social milieu (Schulkin and Raglan).

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Modern science and medicine are now rediscovering the healing powers of music. Music Therapy can be defined as "an interpersonal process in which the therapist uses music and all of its facets-physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic, and spiritual - to help clients to improve or maintain their health"(Wadhawa, 2014, p. 29). As music and its beat vibrations make an impact in the brain which leads to the production of endorphins, release of this in the brain reduces anxiety, fear and other negative emotions. The clinical applications of Vibro-acoustic therapy (VAT) were reviewed by Skille and Wigram(1995).

They draw attention to the suggestion that certain frequencies vibrate the brain cells and that this process might – in some way – ‘wash’ the cells, so that the cerebrospinal fluid may more effectively carry away the metabolites and waste products of neuronal activity. Maybe this is the way of which human body and brain resonate with music (Sutton, 2002, p. 51).

Music can be used to feel calm and meditate. It helps silence inner dialogue allowing for a more powerful experience. It makes the body relaxed as the music gets filled in the entire body. It is something positive that can instantly give a mood lift if a person is feeling low, whether it’s from an annoying communication, a tough day at work, or an argument with a friend. Hearing a fun song, and singing along can help clear the head of frustration and negative thoughts. It’s a fun distraction that can make the person smile and help bring his/her to a more balanced mood.

It can help one connect with the emotions. Depression, stress or illness can cause you to feel irritated. A piece of music can make you feel happy. It helps in production of suppressed emotions out through smiles, tears, anger etc. This makes the person feel better. Thus it can help in eliminating all the differences by developing a common emotion in everyone, that is, its ability to enhance one’s frame of mind. Every person forgets their differences which may be based on race, culture, tradition etc. To them, music is a common emotion which gives entertainment, relaxation that helps far away the inner conflicts of human mind. “Music comes from the heart of the human being. When emotions are born they are expressed by sounds and when sounds are born they give birth to music” (Sutton, 2002, p. 45). Deryck Cook, the author of the book *The Language of music*, defines music as a ‘supreme expression of universal emotions, in an entirely personal way, by the great composers’ (Storr, 1997, p. 74).

Human body is constructed in a rhythmic structure. All the organs have their own rhythm of functioning; for example, the brain and the heart. So human beings are naturally attracted to music because it is a combination of rhythm and harmony. Many researchers have studied the relationship between the rhythms of the body and rhythms of music. Researchers named Harrer and Harrer described that there were “changes in pulse rate, respiration, and muscle activity in response to a variety of musical and non-musical stimuli. They observed that there was an increase of pulse rate in accordance with the speed of the music as well as involvement of emotions” (Sutton ,2002, p. 42).

Another researcher, Bruce Saperston, in his research, showed that “the heartbeat can be slowed if the speed of music is one beat per minute than the existing pulse rate, which suggests a synchronisation of the beats of music with natural body function or processes” (Sutton, 2002, p. 43). According to Kimmo Lehtonen, “Rhythm is the fundamental element of music, the beginning of order at prenatal and infant level and ‘the most primitive, yet complex, structure of the human mind” (Sutton, 2002, p. 43).

II. OBJECTIVE

The paper attempts to analyse the movie *His Highness Abdullah* (1990) which represents music as a tool which has the power to eliminate all societal inequalities. The protagonist of the movie Abdullah (acted by Mohanlal) can be considered as a social reformer who is capable to change the society with his talent of music. In this study music/art plays an important role in the film by establishing good relationships as well as its healing capabilities.

III. MOVIE AT A GLANCE

The movie starts as the head of royal family Udayavarma Thampuran (acted by Nedumudi venu) undergoes a physical illness and is bedridden. Other members come from their work places as they get to know about the situation. They are eager to see the king. But he doesn't allow them to meet him. He knows that his close relatives are showing false love and their eyes are on his money and property. They really wish him to die as soon as possible so they can take hold of it. Udayavarma Thampuran is ready to give them their share but he doesn't like their excessive hunger for money. As he does not favour their demands, they plan to kill him. The head of the assassination mission is eldest person of the family Mathilakathu Cheriachan thampuran(acted by Thikkurishy Sukumaran Nair) who controls and makes others turn against the king. As part of the murder, they decide to bring a professional killer from Mumbai as instructed by Ravi varma. He goes to Mumbai in search of the slayer. Ravivarma brings the slayer Abdullah (acted by Mohanlal) to the palace who disguises as a Hindu Brahmin classical singer Ananthan Namboothiri to face the king. As the king is a great lover of music and art he admits him in his palace. At the same time, he is suspicious about Ananthan as he was brought by Ravivarma. Abdullah tries to stay in the palace to impress the king as Ananthan. But after few days he calls Ananthan and asks him to leave as soon as possible. He catches upon the king's weakness. He sings a song that attracts all the members of the family and makes them gather around him. He makes the king to fall in love with his voice. He impresses the king by his delivery of music and acquires all the love and respect from the king. This is how he assures his existence in the palace. He becomes the most trusted person of the king with his talent of music. As the movie moves forward, another character, the King's daughter Radha (acted by Gauthami) appears. She is a lower caste girl who is being adopted by Udayavarma Thampuran and is loved as his own daughter. She takes care of Thampuran's wife Bhagirithi Thampuratti who is under depression because of her lost son.

Abdullah slowly realises the king is just an innocent man and the real villains are the other relatives who have only materialistic love. Abdullah who comes to kill the king realises that he cannot do the job because he is just a singer and changes his intention. In the climax, the villains are wiped out from the palace by Abdullah who saves the king. He reveals his story to the king that he is the son of king's old friend Amir Khan Sahib who was a renowned musician. But he lost him at a young age. He carried on his father's legacy and talent but lived his life in poverty after father's death. Hearing this Thampuran gets shocked and requests him to stay with him in the palace.

IV. ABDULLAH AS A MUSICIAN

Abdullah and the king bond over their shared love and passion for the art and become very close to each other. Thampuran realises that what matters is not which religion you belong to but about how good you are as a human being. He appreciates Abdullah's humanitarian activity and his musical talents. Thus a Hindu-Muslim union is established in the movie as against religious intolerance. Music is what unites them. The musician is given the place near to god. Abdullah has a good knowledge in music and he gets respected because through his music, it is believed that god resides within him. Music here becomes the embodiment of love and pleasure throughout the movie. Thampuran regains his peace of mind and happiness through the music of Abdullah. As a musician he shows that he can never become a destroyer of society and good relationships.

V. RELIGION AND ART

In those days upper caste were only allowed access to classical music. Other caste were not allowed to practice or participate in musical competitions. But Abdullah's music, when he delivers 'Pramadavanam', inspires Radha who is a lower caste girl to dream of herself as an artist or a casteical dancer. Radha's desire to become a dancer shows that in art there is no discrimination of gender, caste etc. And Udayavarma Thampuran's mentality to adopt a lower caste girl and take caring of her as his own daughter represents breaking of the caste system in the society.

VI. GOOD MUSIC AS A THERAPEUTIC AGENT AND ITS HEALING EFFECT

Music has the strength to reduce psychological problems in people. Receptive music therapy includes listening of music when the musician plays. In the film, 'Bhagirathi thampuratti', who is in depression, shows stages of recovery as Ananthan Namboothiri performs the song 'Pramadavanam' in the palace. She experiences a state of well-being and forms a mother-son bond with Abdullah. She gets the hope that her real son has arrived. It has the power to attract all as many gather to listen to Abdullah's song.

Music reduces the excessive ego in human beings as good music produces a positive vibrance. In this musical drama, a famous musician challenges Abdullah to defeat him in musical completion. The song is 'Devasabhathalam' where the popular singer gets defeated before the knowledge of Abdullah. He blesses Abdullah instead of offering him a reprimand. The love for music makes two musicians shake hands with each other.

VII. CONCLUSION

In the movie *His Highness Abdullah*, the social issues like religious intolerance, caste system, gender discrimination, poverty, the ego factor all these can be eradicated with music like Abdullah makes all the villainous characters vanish from the palace in the film who had been a threat to the life of the king. In other words, they can be considered as social issues that the world faces.

Good Music is shown as a Godly element. Thus god and music go hand in hand. The lines in the song 'Devasabhathalam', 'Anantham Ananthanatham Jagathanantham Sangeetham' means that music is an epitome of boundless and universal joy and happiness which brings peace and harmony in the world. "Music is a great uniter. An incredible force. Something that people who differ on everything and anything else can have in common." (Desson, 2006, p. 22).

“Music is the harmony of the universe in microcosm; for this harmony is life itself; and in man, who is himself a microcosm of the universe, chords and discords are to be found in his pulse, in his heart beat, his vibration, his rhythm and tone. His health or sickness, his joy or displeasure show whether his life has music or not (from the Sufi Message of Nazrat Inayat Khan, quoted by Hamel 1976)” (Sutton, 2002, p .41).

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