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## **The practical and didactic aspects of St Augustine's philosophy of music<sup>1</sup>**

### ABSTRACT

In this paper we present selected assumptions general philosophy and theory of music of St Augustine. In the writings of the Father of the Church we find many important wording for the contemporary music. Selected aspects of Augustine's thought will be presented in the context of teaching.

### KEY WORDS

music, beauty, St Augustine, harmony

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*How did I weep, in Thy Hymns and Canticles,  
touched to the quick by the voices of Thy sweet-attuned Church!  
The voices flowed into mine ears, and the Truth distilled into my heart,  
whence the affections of my devotion overflowed,  
and tears ran down, and happy was I therein.<sup>2</sup>*

## INTRODUCTION

This article presents the fundamental practical and didactic aspects emerging from St Augustine's theoretical and philosophical reflections on music. The first section of the article contains a brief discussion of the assumptions of two ancient philosophical traditions which inspired Augustine's creation of his philosophy of music: Pythagorean and Platonic. This part lays out the methodological framework for Augustine's considerations. The second section points out the specific elements in Augustine's teachings where such inspirations are clearly visible; hence, this is the theoretical part. The third section of the paper, dedicated to the practical implementation of Augustine's views, elaborates on such issues (which will have been mentioned previously) as the implementation of the distinction between audible and inaudible music; the errors stemming from the incorrect understanding of the structure of a musical piece and of the notion of music itself; the role of the senses in the process of cognition of God; and, finally, music as a way to achieve salvation. The final section of the paper contains conclusions.

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND FOR ST AUGUSTINE'S APPROACH TO AESTHETICS

St Augustine's influence on the medieval and even on the modern understanding of music was determined not only by the undeniably substantial worth of his remarks on the subject, but also by the historical circumstances following Augustine's death, and not necessarily those well known to the general public. Since the philosopher was active immediately after the period sometimes called the *darkest chapter in music research*,<sup>3</sup> he had a great deal of freedom as regards expres-

<sup>2</sup> St Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans. E. Bouverie Pusey, Arc Manor, Rockville, Maryland 2008, p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> This is how Carl J. Perl and Alan Kriegsman label the first four centuries of Christian rule in: *Augustine and Music: On the Occasion of the 1600th Anniversary of the Saint*, "The Musical Quarterly", Oct. 1955, Vol. 41, No 4, p. 497.

sion of views concerning art and its relation to man and God. On one hand, he was not restricted by Church doctrines (which had not yet come into existence); the only authority was Holy Scripture. On the other hand, new forms of artistic expression which were supposed to represent Christianity demanded study and standardisation.<sup>4</sup>

In his writing on the structure and theory of a musical work, Augustine clearly manifests his inspiration by two ancient philosophical traditions. The first entailed Pythagoreanism and its reflections on the general theory of music; the second was Platonism, with its views pertaining to musical works expressed in the dialogue *The Republic*,<sup>5</sup> which were ultimately those passed on by the Neoplatonists. Augustine combined both types of philosophy of music. First, he adopted the Pythagorean ontology, with its conviction that music is an expression of a number – the principle of the world order. The Pythagoreans were not aware of the existence of wave phenomena; they did not know what music actually was in physical terms; but they were able to use objective and universal categories such as proportions which helped to accurately organise and describe music. Even though advanced music performed by talented musicians came into existence in the fourth and fifth centuries bc, when the Pythagorean philosophy was enjoying great proliferation, the Pythagoreans did not create any theories pertaining to any particular musical cultures. They did, however, create a universalist aesthetic theory on harmony, order and proportions, known in subsequent ages as the Great Theory of Beauty.<sup>6</sup>

The other concept which inspired Augustine was the aforementioned Platonic concept of music expressed in the pages of *The Republic*. In his considerations on the perfect political system, Plato spoke categorically about music, mentioning both sublime melodies (the Ionian mode) and melodies fostering wild frolics and Dionysian intoxication (the Phrygian mode). The philosopher noted the crucial influence of music on the emotions of the listener and did not, by any means, underestimate its value; however, the conclusions drawn from his remarks are enor-

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. K. Mayer-Bear, *Psychologic and Ontologic Ideas in Augustine's de Musica*, "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism", Mar. 1953, Vol. 11, No 3, p. 224.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Plato, *Państwo* [Polish translation of Plato's *The Republic*], trans. W. Witwicki, Kęty 2003, pp. 21–24, 41–42, 67, 109–110, 125–129, 152–157.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć*, Warsaw 1975 (in this work the notion of the Great Theory of Beauty is a recurring one, especially in the chapters entitled: 'Sztuka: dzieje pojęcia', 'Piękno: dzieje pojęcia', pp. 21–54 and 89–132); cf. English translation: W. Tatarkiewicz, *A History of Six Ideas: An Essay in Aesthetics*, especially in the chapters entitled: *Art: History of the concept* and *Beauty: History of the concept*, Springer; reprint of the original 1st (1980) edition (4 October 2013).

mously restrictive: music with an inappropriate influence on the senses cannot be created in his republic. Plato discussed new and deeper aspects of music, drawing in his considerations on cultural, anthropological and axiological conventions. According to Plato, music influences mental states and emotions, is a language in itself, and possesses an educational aspect.

Plato linked music with social and public life; hence he also evaluated it in terms of its usefulness for religious ceremonies. Appropriate music should accompany religious and national celebrations and foster individual development. The consequence of the intentional appropriation of musical works was a suitable division of tones and instruments and the development of specific musical forms. Plato, and later Augustine, believed that music could shape the human soul, both with its flaws (for those coming into contact with disharmonious music) and its virtues (for those listening to harmonious and properly tuned music). Plato maintained in this case a clear and consistent ethical rigorism, an effect of which was that the main determinants for the creation of music were not to be aesthetic categories or taste, but almost exclusively educational and pedagogical categories, which were, of course, perpetuated by the traditionally Pythagorean understanding of music.

When it comes to the Pythagoreans, the most crucial and fundamental statement, for Augustine and for the entire aesthetic tradition, is that the world is constructed in a mathematical way. The Pythagoreans emphasised the meaning of mathematics in acoustics, describing sounds as harmonious (corresponding to simple numerical ratios, e.g. 1:2 in an octave, 2:3 in a quint<sup>7</sup>), or disharmonious, arranged against the established mathematical relationships. Harmoniousness was understood as attuning the work to the universe; hence it was a positive value and meant union, agreement, coordination and beauty. It is worth noting that harmony was understood as the beauty of the coordination of movements, but not as the beauty of the entirety of the work; rather, it was considered a value and trait of a quantitative, not qualitative, character.<sup>8</sup> The Greeks left behind many insights connected with the mathematical construction of the Word, which

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. E. Stróżecka, *Między matematyką, muzyką i filozofią*, [in:] *Teksty Konferencji MathPAD 2012*, UMK, Toruń, 22–25 August 2012, pp. 2–9; cf. C. Sachs, *Muzyka w świecie starożytnym*, PWN, Warszawa 1981, and a popular science paper by J. Włodarczyk, *Czy wszechświat śpiewa?*, [online], <http://www.wiwi.pl/astronomia/eseje/historia/spiew/c1.asp> [30.05.2014].

<sup>8</sup> The first change in this domain was brought about by Plotinus, who did not, however, break the rule of the mathematical theory of beauty, but offered a valuable and competitive theory of beauty based on the category of unity. Plotinus's idea of beauty later became an inherent part of the Neoplatonist and Christian philosophical traditions.

stemmed from their natural need for order; the Pythagoreans reinforced that tendency even further, giving the universe the name 'cosmos', meaning order.

The Pythagoreans thought that the movement of the world's spheres gave rise to a musical sound, the so-called music of the spheres, whose existence we are not fully aware of, as it is constant to the degree that our senses no longer react to it. The perfection of the world was further accentuated by the conviction that its shape is a perfect sphere. This view was later developed further by the members of the Florentine Academy, especially Marsilio Ficino, along with a renewed study of Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy. As the human soul is characterised by a construction similar to that of the universe (being a microcosm of sorts), music becomes a powerful tool capable of influencing it. The soul can hence be refined through good music; however, bad music can easily corrupt it. These convictions are strongly rooted in Orphic beliefs, the influence of which can also be seen in Plato's work. Both the Pythagoreans and Plato believed that the human soul was confined inside the body and awaited release, a process which could be assisted by religious mysteries which largely relied on music. In a more secular aspect, the Pythagoreans stressed its superb psychagogic and purifying (cathartic) functions.

The insights of the ancient philosophers were assumed by the Fathers of the Church, who emphasised those features of music characteristic of Pythagoreanism and Platonism. They claimed that, firstly, music had strong ethical implications; secondly, it could be a tool for achieving a desired emotional state; thirdly, there should be a harmonic relation between the melody and content of a song; finally, they stated that any changes to established musical and harmonic canons should be treated with caution, as they would be going against traditional rightful principles.<sup>9</sup> The theory of music as the hidden language of the universe and of God was connected with the widely-accepted principles of being based on order and harmony. The ontological understanding referred back to a theory which stated that audible music was an indication of the hidden harmony of the universe (in a sense, inaudible music). The order in the world was explained in a strictly mathematical way, by means of measurement, proportion and number. Music, as a discipline which realised the Pythagorean ontology, held a special position. In the Middle Ages it was more widely understood than it is today. Most importantly, it was based on knowledge; its products – musical pieces – were merely among its secondary objectives. Music was included in the liberal arts (*artes liberales*), the seven most important and highly regarded arts (along with grammar,

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. J. Portnoy, *Similarities of Musical Concepts in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism", Mar. 1949, Vol. 7, No 3, p. 235.

rhetoric, dialectic, astronomy, arithmetic and geometry).<sup>10</sup> In Augustine's greatest works, the treatises *On Order*, *On Music (De musica)*,<sup>11</sup> *The Soliloquies*, and *On the Magnitude of the Soul*, he focusses on the theory of music, and in *Confessions*<sup>12</sup> on the practical reception of a musical work.

## ST AUGUSTINE'S THEORETICAL REMARKS CONCERNING THE PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC

Late antiquity's ways of understanding music, as adopted in the Middle Ages, greatly restricted the possibility of creating a philosophical approach towards its practical aspect; the theory of music was the same kind of discipline as other purely theoretical fields of study. Music was, however, accepted as one of the philosophical sciences, like dialectic, rhetoric or judgment ability, as a domain with a specific purpose: shaping citizens and influencing their behaviour. Perl and Kriegsmann elaborate on the subject:

The practice of music, in late Antiquity, is a very limited source of philosophical reflection; music-making is mere virtuosity. Mimes and virtuosos, *symphoniaci* (instrumentalists) and *joculatores* (jesters), constituted the lowest social caste in Rome, whereas music itself was a science, and was always studied, as in Aristotle's *Politics*, as an exercise in dialectic, judgment, and character. For these reasons it was admitted to the domain of philosophical studies, and, in its role as a powerful factor in character formation, served to guide a synoptic pedagogical and ethical system towards its goals.<sup>13</sup>

In the treatise *On Music* Augustine directs his teachings primarily to educated audiences (as opposed to the case of, for example, *Confessions*, where one can observe the use of rhetoric directed at an average reader and the use of emotions rather than factual and philosophical argumentation). On one hand, Augustine draws widely from the teachings of ancient theoreticians and philosophers; on the other, while convincing the audience of the pertinence of his views, he advises how to protect congregations from the influences of Platonism or Empiricism.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A. Adamska-Osada, *Teologiczna myśl o muzyce w traktacie „De Ordine” św. Augustyna*, “Perspectiva” 2006, Year V, No 1, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. L. Witkowski, *Wstęp [Introduction]*, [in:] St Augustine, *O muzyce* [Polish translation of the treatise *On Music*], Lublin 1999, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> St Augustine, *Confessions*, especially book IV and IX, where Augustine writes about listening to the music of God, and also in book IV, about teaching music as a liberal art.

<sup>13</sup> C. J. Perl, A. Kriegsmann, op. cit., p. 502.

In the Augustinian educational system, music played a primary role, since it possessed, according to Augustine, a peculiar power to convert the mind and direct it towards spiritual matters (*musica est scientia bene modulandi*). Its unique role was that of 'attuning' the soul to the harmony of the universe and bringing it closer to God: 'Music, through the way of love, goes from this harmony to the eternal number; it incites the soul of the listener to strive for the very same harmony which leads to the love of the Almighty'.<sup>14</sup>

In philosophical and musicological literature, the studies pertaining to Augustine's works are focused on the *De musica* treatise and overlook many other vital portions of his work where he refers to music.<sup>15</sup> It is, for example, worth noting here that Augustine presents the division of the six functions of the soul, an idea which constitutes part of a wider notion in the area of the psychology of music. Even more interesting, the names of the functions refer to music and its nomenclature. Each of the functions is some kind of rhythm; each rhythm in turn refers to relations, sounds, sounding (*sonantes*) or reacting (*occursores*), etc.<sup>16</sup> A description of the soul in this manner enables its analysis, through analogy, as if it were a musical work, and shows how the two worlds, spiritual and mathematical, become one. Furthermore, music is the reflection of divinity, because as a mathematical principle and harmony it had been created before time ('Music was thus created before time!')<sup>17</sup> Even though these words literally refer exclusively to inaudible, divine music, they still strongly influence the understanding of audible, instrumental music, which becomes a symbol for time. This happens because of the realisation of the eternal mathematical principles within the sensuality of sounds. The symbol extends to human life, which is stretched between

<sup>14</sup> Witkowski, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> Examples of analyses on this topic: C.J. Perl, *Musik und Geist. Die musikalischen Schriften des heiligen Augustinus*, "Musica sacra" 1935, No 66/65, pp. 97–100, A. Keller, *Aurelius Augustinus und die Musik. Untersuchungen zu De musica im Kontext seines Schrifttums*, Würzburg 1993 or I. Hadot, *Erziehung und Bildung bei Augustinus*, and D. Walhout, *Augustine on the Transcendent in Music*, "Philosophy & Theology" 1989, No 3, p. 293.

<sup>16</sup> He proceeds by devising a highly original system of six (which may be counted as seven) functions or powers of the soul, employing these concepts throughout the sixth book of *Musica*. In the course of this work he comes to the most startling conclusions, which have been labeled the first attempt at a psychology of music. Each category is provided with a name; they are all *numeri* (translated variously as 'numbers', 'rhythms', etc.), by which we are to understand musical time, measures, norms, relationships, sounds, motifs, rhythms – in short, fundamentals. These numeri are classed as the sounding (*sonantes*), reacting (*occursores*), memorial (*recordabiles*), advancing (*progressores*), judicial (*judiciales*) and sensual (*sensuales*), [in:] C.J. Perl, A. Kriegsman, op. cit., pp. 502–503.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Perl and Kriegsman, op. cit., p. 504.

the finite aspect of earthly life and the faith in the infinity of eternal life ('Music becomes a symbol of time, time a symbol of life').<sup>18</sup>

## THE PRACTICAL AND DIDACTIC ASPECTS OF ST AUGUSTINE'S TEACHINGS

St Augustine devotes a great deal of attention to the practical side of education, writing: 'this knowledge directs those who wish to fathom it to follow a dual order – that of life and that of science'.<sup>19</sup> According to Augustine's theory, the two orders of balance for which a human being should strive result from the duality of his life, which is ascribed to both the divine and the earthly worlds. Thus it is easy to conclude that the two orders correspond, respectively, to inaudible music (regulating spiritual life) and audible music (harmonising sensual and natural life). These two types of music are somehow supported by two pillars of knowledge: reason handed down by God and the authority of the Holy Scripture. Augustine says: 'chronologically, authority precedes reason; whereas logically, reason holds the primary position... [reason] is only the authority, permitting the gates to the sanctuaries of knowledge to open all those wishing to know their great and unfathomable treasures'.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, Augustine makes the following statement about music: 'order rules in music, in geometry, in the motion of celestial bodies, in mathematical laws, in such a way that, if someone wished to know – so to speak – its source and the inside of its sanctuaries, he will either find them there, or reach them through those teachings'.<sup>21</sup> Correctly understood, the reception and creation of music, following the above rule, is based primarily on the ability to decode the order it contains. The study of liberal arts does not consist of the creation of works of art, but ultimately in reaching the ability to recognise and duplicate the cosmic and divine order, of which art is only the effect or symptom, in its products. The medieval and Augustinian concept of *artes liberales* designates a relationship be-

<sup>18</sup> Cf. C. J. Perl, A. Kriegsman, op. cit., p. 510.

<sup>19</sup> St Augustine, *O porządku*, [in:] *Dialogi filozoficzne: O życiu szczęśliwym; Przeciw akademikom; O porządku*, trans. J. Domański, W. Seńko, Wydawnictwo PAX 1953 [Polish translation of St Augustine's *On Order in the compilation Philosophical Dialogues*], pp. 226–227, tr. from Polish.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, pp. 207–208 (in the chapter entitled: *Znajomość praw Bożych i stosowanie się do nich pouczy o istnieniu porządku rzeczy [The knowledge of God's laws and their implementation in life shall teach about the existence of the order of things]*).

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 197.

tween reason and the senses, establishing a foundation and theoretical guidelines for the practical process of cognition. Thanks to the most important (as Augustine understood them) senses – sight and hearing – the mind can fulfil its most important task: to recognise the order and harmony of the world. Augustine also emphasises the relationship of the nature of music and the nature of a human soul and its earthly life. Music shows and realises the divine truth about men, and the genius that manifests itself therein restores and actualises the eternal moral and ethical values. Perl and Kriegsman comment on Augustine's standpoint in the following words: 'Augustine left to us an effective, practical definition of music. He has shown the relationship between music and human existence; illuminated the process of musical creation in its most arcane recesses; divined the meaning of truth in music, and, with a stroke of genius, restored to music its moral and ethical powers, retrieving them from Antiquity and from the oblivion into which they sank and transmitting them, rejuvenated by Christian ideals, to future generations'.<sup>22</sup>

According to Augustine's teachings, music should be understood as a tool to raise the soul closer to actions and states which are nobler and closer to its true nature. Interestingly, music created by man makes him, through the divinity of the fruit of his work, a creator in a particular sense, one possessing grace. Through creating music, a human being draws closer to God, as if he had the ability to speak His language: 'In his interpretation, music is elevated to the highest level of the activities of the human soul. Music becomes the only "word" that can be created by man, who himself is but a divine creation, and through which he gains the possibility of direct discourse with God – God who is the source of this power, and of nature, the medium and substance in which man creates.'<sup>23</sup>

The inappropriate reading of music which often occurs is, in fact, says Augustine, caused not only by the superficiality of the reading, but also by a focus on music as a source of sensual pleasure.<sup>24</sup> Inaudible music, however, cannot be easily separated from sensual music. The strong ontological connection between audible and speculative (inaudible) music can be the cause of many errors, and in the experience of music one must constantly remain prudent, so that its sensual aspect (form) does not take a dominant role and become the (fictional) subject of our (fictional) cognition.<sup>25</sup> That is why it is only through in-depth studies that one can not only experience, but also understand a work (experience its content). Augustine states that 'on this fourth level [in music] the reason understood that,

<sup>22</sup> C. J. Perl, A. Kriegsman, op. cit., p. 501.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>24</sup> St Augustine, *Dialogi*, op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. ibidem, p. 220 et seq.

whether in rhyme or in tone modulation, numbers rule, and the entire perfection of the work is their doing. And so it thoroughly studied the nature of the numbers; it revealed that they were divine and eternal, especially as each of the abilities discussed earlier were shaped with their help'.<sup>26</sup>

Irrespective of the theory of music, however, the cognitive process itself should take place, realising itself through audible music, which should be its starting point. Research on the creative processes is yet another matter, as is the discussion of inspiration (e.g. Psalms, Bible texts). The essence here is rather the ability to follow a musical work step by step and trace it back to its ontological roots, which lie in the mathematical principle. The ability to recognise intellectual values<sup>27</sup> in works of art enables Augustine to introduce an objectivist category of beauty. While the philosopher admits that there is no experience of beauty without sensual engagement, he also warns that an inexperienced and uneducated experiencer might easily confuse the contemplation of beauty with pure sensual pleasure, while forgetting the primary purpose of beauty, which is cognition. It seems that Augustine is trying to teach here that only a shallow pleasure results from the mere opportunity to hear something, whereas contemplation arises from awareness not only of the fact that we hear, but also of what we hear. Only full subjection of our sensual data (sounds, images and words) to intellectual rule can give us a valuable experience of beauty. Pursuant to this rule, Augustine distinguishes two types of pleasure: one purely sensual and one experienced at a spiritual level (contemplation).<sup>28</sup> In the case of a musical work, the transition from the level of sensual pleasure to the contemplative level means that one intellectually hears the inaudible spiritual (speculative) music in the audible music.

Augustine states that the right compilation of melody evoking spiritual contents is possible thanks to the enhancement of its value through supplementing it with songs based on texts from Holy Scripture. Julius Portnoy articulates Augustine's standpoint while emphasising that 'St Augustine stressed the desirability of using only biblical texts for religious music. Although he did not formally sanction the use of biblical texts adapted to the popular folk-tunes used in his day, he was well aware of the infectious character that a catchy tune could have on the masses'.<sup>29</sup> Music, with its sublimating influence on minds, possesses a reinforced propaganda effect when enriched by Biblical texts. Augustine often mentioned that the conversion of infidels was an important Christian mission. Music could become a powerful tool to achieve this aim: 'Augustine's primary interest in mu-

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 218–219.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 216–217.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 217–218.

<sup>29</sup> J. Portnoy, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

sic lies in its effectiveness in bringing the pagan into the fold and in how music as a psychological device could be instrumental in heightening the religious enthusiasm of the average churchgoer'.<sup>30</sup> Properly composed, the content of religious music might be, according to Augustine, an effective weapon against the unbridled pagan material presented in Roman theatres. Here the philosopher presents a moral rigorism rivaling that of Plato.<sup>31</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The task of the highest cognition is elevation above sensual affairs. Acquiring the knowledge originating in music leads to the perfection of life, thus bringing us closer to God. Augustine states that 'if the soul concentrates and puts itself in order, becomes uniform and beautiful, then it will be able to raise its eyes and look at God, the spring of all truth and the Father of truth'.<sup>32</sup> The soteriological dimension of music appears in Augustine's thought; its ethos consists in turning the soul away from earthly concerns and turning towards God Himself. This should be the essence of the saving role of music. *Musica instrumentalis* is an aid to salvation.

Music was an issue for Augustine, one he studied in order to turn it into a methodologically precise programme of 'life in philosophy'. This programme was supposed to aim at learning the truths revealed by God. As one who converted to Christianity, Augustine never completely rejected the pagan philosophy; he saw the richness and potential of ancient thought and tried to adapt it to his faith. He chose a specific type of ontology of music, which illustrated the transition from the study of sciences closely connected to the senses (constituting the first step in achieving wisdom) to 'genuine philosophy' in which the mind is turned towards divine truths. Augustine's philosophy clearly corresponds with the thought of Neoplatonists, who in his times were constructing a counterpoint to the Christian faith and the truths revealed therein.

Augustine asked questions about both purely abstract and metaphysical issues connected with music, which he treated as a pure science: 'Music, creating order from chaos, the new from nothingness, continues the process, and especially if it is "well done", i.e. attuned to the course and direction of the divine Plan, which

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<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, p. 238.

<sup>31</sup> 'St Augustine was particularly Platonist in warning the early Christians to guard against the licentious tunes emanating from the Roman theatre that might draw them from a righteous or moral life', [in:] J. Portnoy, op. cit., p. 237.

<sup>32</sup> St Augustine, *Dialogi*, op. cit., p. 230.

reveals itself in an entirely unique, but nevertheless unmistakable way'.<sup>33</sup> But he was also unafraid to seek answers to questions such as 'who is a good musician?' and how to recognise such a person. He also expressed that it was not only the reason (*ratio*) that would help us understand the sense of music, but that we should also refer to our emotions.<sup>34</sup>

The theme of Augustine's thought is the optimistic assumption that a man can attain and learn the truth (this view emerges from a synthesis of many of the philosopher's ideas; however, not all of his specific theories, e.g. predestination, support this thesis). In this way Augustine challenges scepticism and also reveals himself as a rationalist, for whom all cognition is possible through reason. He does not impose any one method, e.g. classical education methods (*artes liberales*), for training the reason; instead, he reckons that good training enables one to learn correct reasoning and the use of numbers. He leaves advanced methods to the philosophers and thinkers who, in this case, function while drawing on the power of scientific and religious authority (the highest authority is still undeniably Jesus Christ). For Augustine it is faith that drives intellectual cognition.

While building an objectivist theory of music and beauty, Augustine drew from considerations of geometry, astronomy (the motion of celestial bodies) and mathematics. To Augustine the aforementioned sciences were axioms which facilitated the recognition of the authoritative and eternal laws ruling the world. These axioms, when assembled, create a cognitive model, typical of Augustine, by means of which the interdependency between the senses and human reason is identified.

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<sup>33</sup> C. J. Perl, A. Kriegsman, op. cit., p. 501.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Mayer-Bear, op. cit., pp. 224–225.

7. Mayer-Bear K., *Psychologic and Ontologic Ideas in Augustine's de Musica*, "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism", Mar. 1953, Vol. 11, No 3.
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