La música en los colegios, institutos y conservatorios españoles: estrategias de respuesta educativa frente a la pandemia por COVID-19

Music in Spanish schools, high schools and conservatories: educational response strategies against the COVID-19 pandemic

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RESUMEN.
La pandemia por COVID-19 ha supuesto que la práctica totalidad de los centros educativos españoles hayan tenido que adaptar la enseñanza que imparten. El caso del ámbito musical en general y el de la práctica instrumental en particular ha tenido que organizar una respuesta educativa eficaz con la que asegurar el bienestar y el aprendizaje del alumnado. Es por ello por lo que hemos llevado a cabo una revisión sistemática a partir de cuestiones de investigación y un objetivo principal relacionado con las estrategias que los conservatorios y los centros de educación general han adoptado en el ámbito musical. Inicialmente seleccionamos una serie de bases de datos de reconocido prestigio tanto internacionales como hispanas en las que realizar búsquedas con los términos clave definidos. Las diferentes fases de estudio de los documentos estuvieron acotadas por los criterios de inclusión y las fórmulas de búsqueda dando lugar a la selección final una vez eliminados aquellos documentos que aparecían duplicados en las bases de datos. Los resultados muestran como las principales estrategias en las etapas de primaria se relacionan con el trabajo colaborativo y cooperativo incluso en la fase de supresión de la presencialidad educativa. Además, en los conservatorios de música la práctica instrumental en grupo ha tenido ciertas peculiaridades durante las diferentes fases de pandemia siendo la principal estrategia llevada a cabo por el profesorado la coordinación docente.

PALABRAS CLAVE.
Educación musical, Conservatorio, COVID-19, Pandemia.
ABSTRACT.
The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that practically all Spanish educational centers have had to adapt the teaching they provide. The case of the musical field in general and that of instrumental practice in particular has had to organize an effective educational response with which to ensure the well-being and learning of students. That is why we have carried out a systematic review based on research questions and a main objective related to the strategies that conservatories and general education centers have adopted in the musical field. Initially we selected a series of databases of recognized international and Hispanic prestige in which to carry out searches with the defined key terms. The different phases of study of the documents were limited by the inclusion criteria and the search formulas, giving rise to the final selection once those documents that appeared duplicates in the databases had been eliminated. The results show how the main strategies in the primary stages are related to collaborative and cooperative work, even in the phase of suppression of educational attendance. In addition, in music conservatories, group instrumental practice has had certain peculiarities during the different phases of the pandemic, with the main strategy carried out by teachers being teacher coordination.

KEY WORDS.
Music education, Conservatory, COVID-19, Pandemic.

1. Introduction.
The sudden pandemic situation has transformed social relations and has given rise to numerous changes in all areas of daily life. Education, at all its levels and stages, has undergone numerous adaptations and actions to guarantee the safety of each educational community since the closure of all educational centers was decreed in Spain (Albalá Genol & Guido, 2020; Gómez Rojo, 2021; Medina Sanchez, 2021; Rodríguez-Ortiz & Moreno-Pérez, 2022; Serey & Zúñiga, 2020).

Inequalities in the field of education may be aggravated by the circumstances arising from the pandemic, since the urgent need to have certain technological means may involve an effort that not all families can face (Gómez Rojo, 2021). In addition, in the initial moments, most educational centers did not have sufficient preparation to face the change of the teaching and learning process to the virtual environment (Albalá Genol & Guido, 2020). One of the main figures that has had to face educational development through virtual resources is that of the teaching staff, since, although the vast majority were familiar with the use of technologies in their daily lives, they did not have the necessary skills to face such a radical change after the suspension of educational presence (Jacovkis & Tarabini, 2020; Rodríguez-Ortiz & Moreno-Pérez, 2022). However, teachers have developed digital skills to maintain educational quality by extensively using technological resources, including those social networks in which students usually develop according to different ages (Alves et al., 2020; González Sodis et al., 2022; Micaletto Belda et al., 2022).

Regarding the role of music, Gómez Rojo (2021) identifies its usefulness as a tool for the development of key skills and its relevance for the training of thoughtful people with their own criteria. Precisely, Medina Sánchez (2021) delves into the need to learn certain
elements of musical language such as rhythm in order to develop critical thinking and understanding of the social environment of school-age students (among other benefits) (Albalá Genol & Guido, 2020; Alves et al., 2020)

But the pandemic situation has made various activities of music learning impossible, giving rise to different difficulties depending on the stage or level of musical specialization. In the general stages of primary and secondary school, instrumental practice within the activities in which it was planned could be replaced or accommodated according to the pandemic phase (Cahapay & Bangoc 2022). However, with regard to elementary and professional music education, the relationship between theory and musical performance is carried out more expressly, which is why educational practices in a pandemic have had to be reviewed in depth (Burgos Videla et al. 2020; Gómez Rojo, 2021).

On the other hand, authors such as Rodríguez Quiles (2020), have a vision that can cause concern, since the area of music education could be in danger and be even more negatively affected by the pandemic situation. This vision is due to the significant curricular decrease of music in the general stages of the Spanish educational system in recent years. In addition, the pandemic situation may lead to a special interest in certain subjects considered essential by the administration in the education of students to the detriment of others considered less essential.

The research carried out by Bylica & Bauman (2022) on pedagogical creativity in the pandemic context and based on a qualitative case study, pays special attention to the educational praxis of six music education teachers. The results indicated that the teachers took advantage of the pandemic context to inquire about new methodologies and educational resources for music education, especially to achieve the development of learning in the students according to the place where each one of them was and the own resources with which they counted.

For his part, Hernández Martínez (2021), identifies the possibilities that the platforms available to carry out the virtual teaching and learning process offer from the circumstance common to all design platforms for verbal communication. Therefore, despite the fact that virtual learning has many advantages such as saving time on the move or the possibility of accessing the different platforms from almost anywhere, face-to-face sessions cannot currently be suppressed.

The study by Parkes et al. (2021), whose object of study was the health and well-being of music teachers during the virtual teaching stage, covered more than a thousand teachers who participated in a questionnaire related to the areas of demographic identification, well-being, qualification professional, usefulness of learning and effectiveness of the measures adopted in the face of the pandemic. The results indicated lower levels of well-being compared to previous research, with significant findings that determined the presence of depression in teachers at different levels. Likewise, the different experiences and strategies adopted as an educational response in the context of the pandemic were analyzed according to the methodologies and learning activities carried out.

Based on the theoretical review and the approach to current research on music education in the pandemic framework, the main research objective is: to know the educational situation of music in the context of the pandemic in Spain. Likewise, we seek to answer research questions related to how primary and secondary schools have managed learning during the
pandemic, what measures and strategies have been adopted in conservatories in the face of the pandemic, and what have been the difficulties for teachers.

2. Methodology.
We have specified the methodology in the systematic review of documents related to the object of study according to Moher et al. (2015) determine. Consequently, we selected the international databases Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar together with the Spanish database Dialnet to carry out the searches using the descriptors (in Spanish and English): Covid-19, musical education, strategies, intervention, training of musicians and conservatory. The searches were limited in the interval from 2020 to the present, journal articles and those that alluded to the Spanish context (although the search descriptors themselves limited the results).

As a result of the entire search process, those texts that met the inclusion criteria related to the research objective, open access texts (complete) and research that described educational interventions (eliminated conference proceedings) were selected. The main exclusion criterion was the reference to the Spanish case, as well as those texts that were in charge of other characteristics of music that were not related to teaching (health of the musicians, music therapy in adults or non-formal musical training within the education category of the English databases).

Since the descriptors themselves narrowed down the search results quite a bit, we did not initially obtain a large number of documents (n=39). Once the searches were limited to the Spanish state, documents with open access and full text availability, we eliminated the conference proceedings and refined them by scientific journal articles. The date on which these searches were carried out was during the first week of 2022. However, the final selection (n=14) was carried out after different phases in which the titles, abstracts and content of the documents were analyzed (see appendix A).

3. Results.
The analysis process included tasks of organization and coding of the information according to the relationship with the different educational stages. However, and since the emerging categorization itself distinguished the strategies in music education within primary and secondary and, on the other hand, elementary and professional music education, we then show the results according to this distinction between the general stages of music education and stages of specialized musical training.

Educational response strategies in the area of music of schools and high schools.
Spanish students during the confinement stage had, according to Arufe Giráldez et al. (2020), of a significant number of electronic devices and practically all families had internet access. Tablets and smartphones were the main devices that students used along with video consoles, these being the ones with which minors spent the most time. In this way, the performance of musical activities, reading books and, above all, physical exercise decreased significantly, giving rise to changes that affected the lifestyle of practically all the students.
During the stage of suspension of the face-to-face educational activity, the younger students did not have an attractive design of musical activities except those that involved songs, watching videos or crafts (Kalsoom et al., 2022). That is why families got involved when carrying out tasks and experimentations related to basic skills and stress management that keeping minors at home meant (Fernández Ruiz, 2021).

Throughout the pandemic, stress management by students has been a topic of interest for the development of personality and social relationships. That is why the joint work of musical education and techniques in the field of Mindfulness has shown significant improvements in behavior problems, emotional control and anxiety (Ruiz Varela & Rodríguez Legendre, 2021). However, for the significant improvement of students’ behavioral problems during the stage of suspension of educational face-to-face attendance and subsequent reintegration into educational centers through music education and Mindfulness activities, a design that encompasses sessions of intermediate duration is necessary (more than half an hour in each session) (Ruiz Varela & Rodríguez Legendre, 2021).

In relation to student anxiety during the pandemic and emotional and bodily awareness, the main strategies in the primary stage are specified in activities. These have incorporated active listening mechanisms (attention to melody and harmony, mainly), exercises to become aware of certain thoughts and emotions, postural and movement control during listening, fundamentally (Kalsoom et al., 2022). All this favors awareness of the present and of the activity in which the students are involved, giving rise to high levels of concentration during the different sessions. In addition, the choice of different musical pieces or works has to take into account the specified awareness goals. Consequently, certain control skills are worked on through the description of thoughts and descriptive reasoning of the factors that affect stress, anxiety and even behavioral problems in students (Kalsoom et al., 2022; Ruiz Varela & Rodríguez Legendre, 2021).

The adaptation of the collaborative work of music education in the primary stage during the pandemic is necessary, especially in phases of non-attendance or semi-attendance (isolation according to contagion or contact protocols). To this end, the opera project as a means of learning involves the entire educational community, since it is an interdisciplinary program in which teachers only direct the different phases. The students are in charge of the elaboration, selection and choice of scripts, costumes and scenic spaces (virtual or physical) through collaborative work among all the participants in the program (including families) together with the use of social networks and different electronic platforms that allow the coordination and exchange of opinions and instant information. The development of key skills by students is optimal and, although there may be some difficulties in handling ICT, the perception of families of this type of program is satisfactory (Gómez Núñez et al., 2021).

Likewise, abundant methodological strategies that develop musical creativity are developed mainly within composition and improvisation activities with the use of cooperative work in groups in the primary stage. Technological tools once again emerge as the optimal means for the development of students’ skills in experiences on activities related to programmatic music (coordination of different texts and images with certain musical fragments) (Riaño et al., 2022). However, mastery of digital skills by teachers is essential so that methodological strategies of musical creativity with electronic resources favor student learning (Domínguez Lloria & Pino Juste, 2021; Riaño et al., 2022).
Precisely, Domínguez Lloria & Pino Juste (2021) specify that, in the secondary stage, music education teachers do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to face the non-face-to-face modality during the pandemic. These lacks of skills create the need for permanent training programs for the development of skills and methodologies through ICT.

On the other hand, other of the usual methodological strategies in the field of music education that have had their adaptation to the virtual environment are the adaptations and reconversions of musical stories in musical theaters, since the dramatization of children's stories allows them to assume habits and skills in the field of environmental education. To do this, different topics about caring for the environment or natural resources are likely to be dramatized virtually through synchronous connections of students who interact simultaneously (Kalsoom et al., 2022). However, the distractions of the students themselves may be increased and the performance of dramatizations with the consequent measures of social distancing and even isolation during the pandemic make it difficult to develop certain social skills typical of collaborative work (Iglesias & Rivera Pino 2021; de Moya Martínez & Syroyid, 2021).

**Educational response of music conservatories.**

After the suspension of face-to-face classes, teaching in music conservatories continued mainly through digital resources for video conferences (Palau et al., 2020). The availability of devices that teachers had to continue with the educational activity was uneven, as well as the digital skills that each teacher had. This meant a necessary update of skills and an extra effort from teachers to accommodate the teaching and learning processes (Lorenzo de Reizabal, 2021; Pozo et al., 2022). The platforms and the type of activities during the confinement stage were also used with a certain diversity by the teaching staff, since, in many cases, each center, department and even each teacher chose to use the resources and methodologies that in each case deemed appropriate (Calderón Garrido et al., 2021; Palau et al., 2020).

In music conservatories, the response of educational centers to the pandemic caused by Covid-19 has not been without difficulties due to the very characteristics of musical education. The musical instruments themselves, particularly those of the wind family, mean that masks cannot be used when producing the sound. That is why the use of transparent protective partitions, the much-repeated and persecuted distance between students and classroom ventilation have been the main measures adopted by music conservatories (Palau et al., 2020).

But not only these measures have been necessary and effective, but also the redistribution of the ratios, the alternation between virtual and face-to-face, the circulation itineraries through the centers, the protocols of action against the detection and tracking of people infected by the virus, cleaning and disinfection and temperature measurements of students, have completed some of the measures carried out in music conservatories (Lorenzo de Reizabal, 2021).

For teachers there have been various difficulties when developing learning tasks. The mandatory use of masks has conditioned communication between teachers and students, since on many occasions it has been a considerable effort to recognize the names and surnames of the students through only the part of the face that the mask itself reveals.
(Lorenzo de Reizabal, 2021). Precisely, to address the difficulties of communication and also to coordinate and explain the learning processes, constant meetings have been necessary by the teaching staff (Pérez Borrajo & Pérez Borrajo, 2021).

In these meetings, processes such as evaluation, the acquisition of skills, auditions and concerts or the use of electronic resources (virtual classrooms and video conference environments, fundamentally), have been dealt with by the different teaching teams (Pérez Borrajo & Pérez Borage, 2021). In addition, technology and its educational application have been a constant during the different phases of the pandemic, which is why it has been necessary to evaluate the technological capabilities of families (Calderón Garrido et al., 2021; Palau et al., 2020).

Accordingly, based on a prior evaluation of technological availability, it is possible to determine the platforms to be used in the learning activities. In this way, when playing in a group, depending on the availability of electronic resources in the family environment, it has been possible to carry out joint practice activities synchronously (Pozo et al., 2022).

Obviously, in addition to availability, the selection of platforms that allow rhythm synchronization (generally through clicks) is essential in synchronous activities. For its part, asynchronous recordings have been the main methodological strategy during the confinement stage and the subsequent re-entry to face-to-face attendance in those cases that had to stop attending educational centers (mainly due to virus infections) (Lorenzo de Reizabal, 2021).

Well et al. (2022), identify a methodological resource based on case studies that is related to learning through problems and active methodologies, although, in this case, with a precise focus on autonomous work due to the completely individualized approach. However, the much-needed group activities for instrumental practice, such as concerts and auditions with the public, have been altered and the rhythm prior to the pandemic has not yet been recovered due to capacity restrictions (Lorenzo de Reizabal, 2021).

Even in those synchronous auditions through platforms with control of the musical rhythm there have been difficulties when playing from a place other than the classroom, since routines such as turning the page between fellow lecterns or specifying an adequate tuning from a sound initial (of the concertmaster or similar) has become impossible despite electronic resources (Calderón Garrido et al., 2021). Precisely, Palau et al. (2020) identified the significant problem in the confinement stage, distinguishing between the strategies of the subjects with a theoretical approach (history of music or other similar ones) that are more easily adapted to online learning and the significant problem of instrumental practice.

On the other hand, the profiles of teaching performance in music conservatories were identified under the activity or passivity of the use of ICT in combination with the reproduction or construction of learning according to the type of activities carried out. Consequently, the majority of teachers opted for a design of learning activities focused on reproducing certain tasks against those that seek to build learning through the use of electronic resources (Pozo et al., 2022). Precisely, in the confinement stage the activities, irremediably with ICT as a bastion, were almost entirely reinforcement (Calderón Garrido et al., 2021; Palau et al., 2020).

With regard to the continuity in the use of ICTs, although face-to-face attendance has been recovered after the confinement stage, Pozo et al. 2022 identify the need to use cooperative...
and proactive methodological models in group subjects (many of them have remained subdivided into smaller groups in blended regimens) that involve groups and subgroups. Obviously, the tasks and activities to be carried out must have the consequent flexibility and adaptation to each course, stage and instrumental group (Calderón Garrido et al., 2021). In addition, in terms of emotional stability and stress management in higher education students, programs related to the Alexander technique, yoga and mindfulness have developed different benefits depending on the combination with physical exercise and previous experience (Bartos et al., 2021).

However, teachers have carried out different strategies depending on the pandemic phase in relation to evaluation: in the initial phase, the vast majority of teachers suspended any evaluation mechanism that involved the development of new learning; Subsequently, once face-to-face attendance has been recovered, the teaching staff has taken attendance at face-to-face sessions or online follow-up (if applicable) as an essential element of the evaluation, to finally put the emphasis of the evaluation mechanisms on the procedures and not so much on the attitudes (to try to recover natural learning rhythms, fundamentally) (Palau et al., 2020; Pérez Borrajo & Pérez Borrajo, 2021; Pozo et al., 2022).

In relation to the diversity of the student body, the main teaching strategies in the music conservatories were distinguished mainly based on the sociocultural environment of each student or according to their own specific needs or abilities. Therefore, the necessary adaptations took into account each specific case and, especially, in group interpretation subjects, they gave rise to the joint design of the teaching teams of the measures to be adopted in each specific case (Pérez Borrajo & Pérez Borrajo, 2021).

4. Discussion.
The results obtained in relation to the strategies of the primary and secondary cycles converge with the research by Davy et al. (2021), since collaborative and cooperative work emerges as the ideal strategy for educational response to the pandemic. Creativity through musical composition and improvisation has also been diagnosed by Arroyo (2021) as an educational strategy in the initial ages of schooling, although he does not analyze the reaction of the students to the proposed program. In the same way, Iglesias & Rivera Pino (2021) do not detect the competence deficiencies of practicing teachers, although they do specify within the initial training of music teachers the decrease in student learning that, consequently, can form gaps at professional training levels (Cahapay & Bangoc 2022).

On the other hand, the characteristics of musical studies and the emission of aerosols by wind instruments and the human voice itself through singing entail certain specific educational response strategies, as we have pointed out. This fact is analyzed by Mürbe et al. (2021), which also address the level of contagion risk and the most effective behaviors to minimize said risks. Likewise, Biasutti et al. (2021), are aligned with the results we have obtained when determining the curricular review and methodological strategies through teacher coordination as suitable measures of educational response (Cahapay & Bangoc 2022).
5. Conclusions.
In the primary and secondary stages, despite the social distancing and even the isolation typical of the stage of suspension of face-to-face attendance in Spain, the main methodological strategies have been related to collaborative and cooperative work in the musical field. To deal with situations of anxiety, stress and inappropriate behavior on the part of students, projects have been developed that combine relaxation techniques and mental awareness with music. In addition, the staging and musical performance projects (mainly operas and musical theaters based on stories) have been subjected to the consequent adaptation according to the measures of distancing and isolation of the students.

In music conservatories, distancing strategies have been adapted based on the characteristics and peculiarities of instrumental practice, since they have been specific based on the subjects with a theoretical approach and the subjects that involve the practice of music in a group. The latter have given rise to segmentation of the groups and to different difficulties, especially in the phase of suspension of attendance, despite the ICT resources that allow synchronous connection from different locations. However, the educational response to the technological deficiencies of some families and the needs of teachers to update their digital skills has been carried out under teaching coordination mechanisms and specific measures according to health action protocols and the characteristics of musical studies.

In conclusion, music, like other curricular areas, has undergone the appropriate modifications to deal with the pandemic through ordinary health measures (protection against transmission of the virus and isolation of positives) and specific strategies in the field of the conservatories (distancing, reduction of instrumental groups and use of resources within group instrumental practice with wind instruments).

There is no doubt that future lines of research are abundant based on the findings obtained. Both qualitative and quantitative research that crosses objectives related to the effects of the pandemic on musical learning along with the possible gaps or training deficiencies of both students, as well as the professional training of future teachers, point out some of the objects of study on the to keep moving forward.

References


