

## **FOLK INSTRUMENTS IN ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

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The folk music art is getting increasingly an important place in the modern syllabuses in musical education. Childhood is the best period of man's life to discover the benefit and value of folklore and the music syllabus in primary schools can and must contribute to it. *"We should know our past, since a nation without a past cannot have present, and a nation without present and past cannot have future."* (former head of Macedonian Orthodox Church, Mihail - a quote). This text will elaborate one of the possibilities for enriching the materials in folklore music in primary schools, additional educational activities in folk instruments for students ranging from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

As we already know, playing instruments, above all Orff-instruments is an important segment in modern syllabus and contributes to the wide-ranging development of students' musical skills. In this regard, as well as considering the importance of getting acquainted with the traditional folk music, we have decided to carry out an experimental educational teaching in primary schools, to 11 - 14 years old children. The aim of this experimental teaching is direct acquaintance of young students with our instrumental tradition which can and should be an important segment in the educational system.

Considering the reputation of Macedonian folk instruments today, we assume that this teaching will have a positive response and results.

The teaching took place in "St. Cyril and Methodius", a primary school in Skopje which has long-lasting cooperation with the Faculty of Music in Skopje .

Period of teaching: March - June 2005.

Presenters: demonstrator Jankoski Marjan (the author of this text) and six music senior students at the Department of Music Theory and Pedagogy, direction - folk instruments (class reader Dragan Dautovski) and methodology of music teaching (class reader Viktorija Kolarovska-Gmirja M.A).

Consultant: M.A. Viktorija Kolarovska-Gmirja

Participants: A group of seven students 11 - 13 years old.

School music teacher: Dimcheva Blagica.

### ***Main organizational phases in the teaching***

- 1. Preparation:** (evaluation of the possibilities and general planning of activities, presentation of instruments, registration of students)
- 2. Basics** (planning and delivery of classes, preparation of materials)
- 3. Public performance**
- 4. Discussion with the students - participants in the teaching**
- 5. Future prospects**

## **1. PREPARATION OF THE TEACHING**

### **1.1 EVALUATION OF POSSIBILITIES AND GENERAL PLANNING OF ACTIVITIES**

Before starting actual teaching in musical instruments, the management of the school, the music teacher, and the consultant agreed on the following:

- Number of the Faculty of Music students, from the Direction of folk instruments to be involved in the teaching, as part of their practice in methodology of music teaching.
- Selection of school students (not more than 8)
- Selection of instruments.
- Number and duration of classes within a week (two classes a week; the duration of a class i.e. 60 min.)
- Final goal: students public performance

During this process we also identified the need for preparation of books and guidebooks on playing instruments, since this type of literature, does not exist.

### **1.2 PRESENTATION**

Aim: to raise students' interest in folk instruments

Form: concert - class (duration 40 min.)

Participants: demonstrator Jankoski Marjan and 4<sup>th</sup> year students of the Faculty of Music (Music Theory and Pedagogy Department, direction - folk instruments).

The presentation was held in February 2005, in “St. Cyril and Methodious”, a primary school. A lecture was held on Macedonian folklore as well as the features of the most important musical instruments present in our country. A few folk songs were performed at the end.

About 70 students from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade attended the presentation.

### 1.3 REGISTRATION AND SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Before we made the selection, we had decided that the number of students should be 6 to 7 (considering the conditions for holding the classes), and at the end we made a group.

In the process of registration of interested students and their selection, we had a great help from the school music teacher Dimcheva Blagica, who works with these students, and knows them best. Her suggestions were very useful to us in the final selection.

Immediately after the presentation, several students showed interest in studying folk instruments i.e. at the beginning there were five students (boys), which were later on joined by two girls.

The following list shows the instruments chosen by the students in 2004/2005 school year:

1. Stojova Ana ( 5<sup>th</sup> -3 grade) – kaval (folk flute)
2. Petkovska Hristina ( 6<sup>th</sup> 3 grade) - kaval (folk flute)
3. Miloshevska Suzana (6<sup>th</sup> -3 grade) - kaval (folk flute)
4. Jonuz Emran ( 7<sup>th</sup>-2 grade) - tambura
5. Gievski Vladimir ( 7<sup>th</sup>-2grade) - tambura
6. Mitkovski Vlatko ( 5<sup>th</sup>-2 grade) – tapan (folk drum)
7. Kostadinovski Gjorgji ( 7<sup>th</sup>-2 grade) - tapan (folk drum), tambourine

## **2. DELIVERY OF CLASSES - TEACHING**

### **2.1 DEFINING THE OBJECTIVES OF ADDITIONAL TEACHING ON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS:**

1. Establishing musical practice in folk instruments in primary school
2. Attaining basic techniques of folk instruments
3. Developing sense for the style of traditional music
4. Creating a habit for active listening to original folk music
5. Development of intellectual skills
6. Training for individual and group performance (playing instruments)

### **2.2 PROBLEMS IN ADJUSTING THE INSTRUMENTS**

Already during the first class we noticed a serious problem which could slow down the collective teaching. This was the need to adjust the classes for the instrument kaval, to the psychophysical development of the students, more particularly, selecting the appropriate tune of the instrument. The class began using the usual tune of the kaval in C (74cm), in order to check its compatibility to the child's psychophysical development.

However, we are convinced that the classes should not be held with kavals in different sizes, but with the most compatible one, i.e. the kaval tuning in C sharp (68cm). This kind of pipe is suitable also for the tambura, in case of their over tuning for half a scale higher. Unfortunately, we were not able to provide this instrument to the students.

Until the end of the school year, we continued the teaching, using two kavals in C and one in D (62cm). (Due to this as well as performing as a whole group during the classes, and bearing in mind the final performance, we had to retune the tamburas for a major second higher).

### 2.3. CONCEPT OF THE CLASSES

Classes were planned on the following main components: planning the flow of each individual class and referring participating students in the program, to the contents and methodology they need to follow.

The classes were divided in two parts: theory and practice, each aiming at attaining various information about the instrument, used by the students.

#### a) Theory:

During this part students got acquainted with ergology, (a science that deals with production of folklore musical instruments) in a way which is understandable for their age.

#### b) Practice:

The practice was the main part of the class. The goal of the first two classes was a correct position of the instruments. Later on, every student was assigned a musical tasks, rhythmic exercises, exercises for the position of the head and lips, exercises for the position of the arms for tambura, rhythmic exercises for synchronization of the rhythm for drum and tambourine, exercises for collective playing, in order to gain the ability to play that instrument.

Another important goal of this part of the class was to encourage students to artistic way of thinking.

The constant wish of the students to extend the time of the classes and work longer, was a good proof of their love and interest for the folk instruments. It was often the case, that the classes end 30-40 min than planned. This kind of attitude was of great satisfaction to all of us, motivating us for further work.

### 2.4. MUSIC MATERIAL

As we have already mentioned, the material for each class, was prepared by us. The leading criteria were the following:

- The material should be satisfactory in regard to its style;

- The material should be both appropriate for the didactic purpose for overcoming the technical and artistic problems and adjusted to the students' abilities.

Learning the techniques, resulted into greater interest of the students for joint performance. Out of all practice during the classes, we have created a new composition, specially composed for the public performance of the group.

### **3 PUBLIC PERFORMANCE**

#### **3.1. PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE**

Performing in front of the audience is an important segment of the classes in an instrument. The public performance renders the final result of our work with the students: achieved level of the instrument, and the psychophysical readiness for the artistic performance – a concert interpretation. To reach that result the students went through several phases, which served as a preparation for the public performance, i.e. mastering the techniques of the composition and the motivation:

- A constant reminding of the students, that the classes will end with a public performance (the explanation why there is a need of a public performance and the way we should behave in front of the audience);
- Rehearsals (the way of coming, bowing, sitting, performing from the beginning to the end without pauses) - the last two classes;
- A full dress rehearsal;
- A public performance (start playing, concentration, coming to the stage and performing).

The performance took place on 24 May 2005, within the patronal celebration of the school – the day of St. Cyril and Methodious, and was experienced as one of the most impressive parts of the celebration.

#### **3.2 COMPOSITION FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE**

The composition was the crucial element for the performance. It consisted of all elements, necessary for its successful performing. The composition was in measure 2/4, easy to play, and attractive for the students. It originated from the exercises played by the students during warm up. At the very end, the composition, had its own *accelerando*, typical for the forms of folk instruments, which caused a special effects and positive results. The preparation of the new composition took 3-4 sessions of two classes (in total eight classes).

#### 4. STUDENTS' IMPRESSIONS AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

It is understandable to observe the impressions of the participants after the performance. In this case, the participants were children who appeared on the stage for the first time with a new instrument in their hands, so their impressions were fully emotional.

This is how some students felt during the performance:

*“My first performance was at the patronal celebration of the school. When I came at the stage my heart beat like a drum. I had a great stage fright. But, when I started playing, and heard the sound of the kaval my stage – fright flew away as a dove.”*

(Petkovska Hristina, 6<sup>th</sup>-3grade, kaval)

*“The patronal celebration was my first performance. At the beginning, before we started playing the composition I was very nervous. When I heard the sound of the tambura I was seized by the beauty of the composition. At that moment the stage-fright was gone and I felt free and secure in my performance.”* (Gievski Vadimir, 7<sup>th</sup>-2 grade, tambura)

*“During the performance I wasn't very nervous, although I was holding a kaval at a concert for the first time. I was filled with joy. After the performance I had a wish, to play this instrument forever.”* (Milosevska Suzana, 6<sup>th</sup> -3 grade, kaval)

After the concert all students were full of joy and pride about the successful performance.

## **5. FUTURE PROSPECTS**

Our experimental teaching on folk instruments, held in “St. Cyril and Methodius“, a primary school in Skopje, within the period April – June 2005, achieved their goal: this kind of work is possible to organize, and is attractive for students in primary schools. As we have already pointed out, the main goal for the additional teaching in folk instruments in primary schools is bringing the folk music tradition closer to the students, creating a positive attitude towards our own music tradition presented through folk instruments and instrumental music, and at the same time through playing those instruments, and developing musical skills. We assume that some students might consider further education in this field, as a result of program.

In the last few years, when the Faculty of Music in Skopje educated teachers in folk instruments at the Department of Music Theory and Pedagogy, direction - folk instruments, the possibilities for inserting this teaching have greatly increased. This new forces can easily organize good quality of program in primary schools, which is of a great interest not only for the quality of the educational process, but for our music tradition and culture in general.

Thanks to the excellent cooperation of the primary school “St. Cyril and Methodius” and the Faculty of Music in Skopje, this program continues with a greater tempo this school year 2005/2006.