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## **PROBLEMS IN MUSIC PEDAGOGY**

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### **CONTENTS**

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>DEVELOPING RESPONSIVE CURRICULA FOR STUDIO MUSIC INSTRUCTION IN CANADA</b> Julia BROOK, Rena UPITIS & Meagan TROOP	<b>7</b>
<b>THE CLASSICAL GUITAR CURRICULUM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S MUSICAL CULTURE</b> Maksim BENDELSTON & Jelena DAVIDOVA	<b>23</b>
<b>LITERATURE SELECTION PRACTICES OF TEACHERS-CONDUCTORS IN TEACHING CHILDREN TO SING</b> Debra HEDDEN & Asta RAUDUVAITĖ	<b>33</b>
<b>THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S SENSE OF RHYTHM: LATVIAN MUSIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' OPINIONS</b> Iveta USTINSKOVA & Jevgeņijs USTINSKOVŠ	<b>49</b>
<b>THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S CREATIVE ABILITIES IN THE STUDIO OF A MUSICAL</b> Violeta CVIRKAITE-BENDELSTON	<b>63</b>



## EDITORIAL

*It is a great pleasure and honour to present a new volume of the international scientific journal "Problems in Music Pedagogy". This issue contains articles written by young researchers (doctoral students from Daugavpils University Iveta Ustinskova, Maksim Bendelston and Violeta Cvirkaite-Bendelston, and the young doctor of pedagogy Jevgenijs Ustinskovs from Staņislavs Broks Daugavpils Music Secondary School, Latvia), as well as those by experienced doctors Julia Brook, Rena Upitis & Meagan Troop from Queen's University, Canada, and by Debra Hedden from University of Kansas, USA & Asta Rauduvaite from Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences.*

*Topic areas of the articles include*

- a) **development of curricula:** Julia Brook, Rena Upitis & Meagan Troop (Canada) have examined how studio music teachers treat the problems of the subject matter, learner, context and teacher knowledge in the process of teaching/learning to play the instrument; Maksim Bendelston (Latvia) has analyzed the guitar curricula in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria and Russia within the context of the development of early school-age children's musical culture;*
- b) **repertoire selection in the process of teaching singing:** Debra Hedden (USA) & Asta Rauduvaite (Lithuania) have explored how music teachers in Lithuania selected literature for teaching children to sing and how they learned to make those selections. The authors have arrived at the conclusion that the repertoire selection process appeared to be aimed at creating a holistic experience that encompassed musical skills, personal and musical growth, meaning and memory of performances, and aesthetic enhancement for the children;*
- c) **development of pre-school children's sense of rhythm:** Iveta Ustinskova & Jevgenijs Ustinskovs (Latvia) have analyzed the opinions of Latvian music school teachers about various issues concerning the development of the sense of rhythm;*
- d) **development of pre-school age children's creative abilities:** Violeta Cvirkaite-Bendelston (Latvia) concludes that a musical as a synthetic genre is the most effective means of developing children's creative abilities.*

*Summarizing the main ideas presented by the authors, we can draw such important conclusions:*

- In the modern, rapidly changing world the main aim of music education is the development of a learner's creativity, musical experience, abilities and culture;*

- *Music teachers need to feel themselves a part of the innovative process taking place in the education establishment and society. Their pedagogical activity is closely connected with a holistic and experience-based approach: it is necessary to experiment with music curricula, teaching methods, repertoire, and genres during the process of music education.*

*I hope that you, our dear readers, will respond to the ideas put forth here and will contribute more ideas, descriptions of practice, and research that would deepen our collective understanding of how to nurture the heart and soul of pupils, as well as will provide the descriptions of effective methods employed by music educators in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.*

*On behalf of editor-in-chief of the journal, I express my appreciation to the authors, Editorial Board, Editorial Staff, Council of Science of Daugavpils University and the Academic Press "Saule" for successful teamwork, perseverance and valuable support to the continuation of this periodical.*

*Editor-in-chief  
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## **DEVELOPING RESPONSIVE CURRICULA FOR STUDIO MUSIC INSTRUCTION IN CANADA**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research study was to examine how studio music teachers develop curricula for their students. Guided by J. Schwab's (1973) commonplaces framework, which posits that curriculum development should consider subject matter, learner, context, and teacher knowledge, we examined teachers' curriculum development in nineteen music studios located in one urban centre. Using a case-study methodology, and collecting data through interviews, observations, and questionnaires, we examined the perceptions and practices of teachers, as well as the interests and goals of students and parents. Findings from this research indicate that teachers rely on their own expertise rather than exam syllabi to create responsive curricula. This research reveals how front-line studio teachers have tried to keep pace with changing goals that parents and students have about learning to play an instrument, and it calls for music conservatories and institutions to support these teachers through continued research and resource development.*

**Keywords:** *studio instruction, curriculum, commonplaces, conservatory, pedagogy*

### **Introduction**

**The purpose of this research paper** is to examine the curricular components of studio music instruction in music studio in Canada. E. R. Jorgenssen (2003) acknowledged that the music teacher is the primary selector of repertoire and activities, the supporter of the learning process, and the agent who negotiates

interests from students, policy makers, and parents. In Canada, studio instruction is an unregulated field, and as such, it is not guided by government policies; however, Canadian studio instruction is heavily influenced by music conservatories, such as the Royal Conservatory (RCM), that have developed systematic syllabi that provide a sequential outline for learning to play an instrument. While tens of thousands of students register for a conservatory exam annually, the extent to which these components inform teachers' curricula development requires further investigation. At the same time, some students take lessons, but do not want to participate in the exam system and may be more interested in learning to play an instrument out of interest or to participate in other musical activities. Little is known about the curricular decisions that teachers make and the extent to which these conservatory syllabi form the curricula they deliver to their students. Educational researcher and curriculum specialist J. Schwab (1973, 1978) argued that curriculum development needs to take account of four commonplaces of *equal* rank: the subject matter, the teacher, the learner, and the milieu or context. He believed these components should be used to guide educational content: *"Defensible educational thought must take account of four commonplaces of equal rank: the learner, the teacher, the milieu, and the subject matter. None of these can be omitted without omitting a vital factor in educational thought and practice. No one of them may be allowed to dominate the deliberation unless that domination is conscious and capable of defense in terms of the circumstances..."* (Schwab, 1973, 371).

The commonplace framework has been used to examine curriculum in various content areas (e.g., Helms & Carlone, 1999; Sack, 2008).

This research paper aims to fill a gap in the scholarly literature about studio instruction by examining how J. Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of curriculum combine to provide a framework for examining music teaching and learning in the modern music studio. Specifically, we aim to examine what types of musical activities teachers are incorporating into their lessons and how these components are reflective of their own knowledge, their students' knowledge and experiences, and the studio milieu.

The paper is divided into four sections: the first section provides a review of extant literature related to the milieu, subject matter, learners and teachers; the second section outlines the method used to examine the practices of nineteen independent music teachers; and the final two sections present the results and conclusions from this study.

## **Review of Literature**

### ***A. The milieu of the music teacher and student***

J. Schwab (1973) refers to the milieu as a set of nested groups that begin with the learning setting and extend out to families and communities. The learning setting in the music studio and the learning interactions that take place between an independent music teacher and a student reflect the centuries-old tradition of an apprentice learning under the authority of the master teacher, a *"devotional task"* linked to the European Guilds of the Middle Ages (Davidson & Jordan, 2007). After many years of study, novice musicians would have developed enough knowledge and



skill to become professional musicians in the same vein as their teacher. The one-on-one teacher-student relationship of both Western and Eastern cultures continues to this day, although it may be less intense and may require that the teacher and student usually meet only once a week for 30 to 60 minutes (Davidson & Jordan, 2007). Many teachers see their students weekly for several years, establishing powerful, long-term relationships. For many students, this is the only non-parental, extended, adult relationship they form during their childhood years. The trust and mutual admiration that grow from many years of working together are not replicated in any other setting. These aspects of the learning milieu mean that the studio music teacher has a unique opportunity to develop insights that help to individualize the student's curriculum.

While one-to-one instruction has persevered in studio instruction for many centuries, the type of musician involved in studio instruction has shifted. In Western culture, music instruction prior to the 1700s was aimed at training court and church musicians. The European conservatory systems, established in the mid-1700s, aimed to train students to become singers or orchestral musicians. The establishment of these conservatories revealed a shift in purpose away from training church or court musicians exclusively and mirrored a shift to a more music-making outside of the church and court in European society (Babin, 2005; Grove Music Online, 2013). Another shift in European society involved the invention of the piano and its growth in popularity in European homes; this brought about an increased demand for studio instruction, as young women needed to learn how to play the pianos that were in their families' parlors. This era also saw many amateur musicians, in turn, becoming pedagogues (Grove Music Online, 2013). The prominence of the piano in many homes and the increased number of amateur musicians led to the establishment of conservatories in Canada in the 1800s and 1900s (Babin, 2005).

Canadian conservatories, like their European counterparts, have created systematic curriculum programming. While there is no mandatory curriculum, Canadian conservatories, such as The Royal Conservatory and Conservatory Canada, continue to design formalized syllabi providing a series of requirements, including the performance of repertoire, scales, chords and arpeggios, sight-reading exercises, and ear tests. The Royal Conservatory is Canada's largest conservatory examination system, and tens of thousands of students take exams from this conservatory annually (Feldman, 2010). This conservatory system began over a century ago in response to the knowledge that not all students have access to well-trained teachers in this geographically vast country. These conservatories have aimed to develop a systematic set of repertoire and associated skills that will allow students to develop music skills, regardless of their location (Babin, 2005). However, students' location may have a significant influence on the repertoire and/or musical skills that they already know or want to learn. Students experience a variety of music throughout their daily lives through listening to music and develop their own tastes for different kinds of music. Students can also teach themselves how to play an instrument. They may do this completely independent of a teacher (Green, 2002).

Little research has examined why students take lessons in the 21<sup>st</sup> century or, by extension, what their parents hope to gain from enrolling their children in lessons. The extent to which the original mandates of the conservatory - to train orchestral and chamber musicians, or to develop studio pedagogues - are still carried out in the studio is unknown.

Some parents may be interested in music instruction as an activity that provides their children with enrichment and keeps them active and entertained after school; for these parents, playing music as a profession or even as an adult leisure activity may not be a central goal. Other parents may be more interested in connections between music study and improved achievement on standardized tests in other domains (e.g., Babo, 2004; Johnson & Memmott, 2006), self-discipline (Clarke, Dibbons & Pitts, 2009), or well-roundedness (Olszewski-Kubilius & Lee, 2004). Parents may also enroll their children in studio instruction in order to expand their social networks and thus access more resources and opportunities for their children (Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003). El-Sistema programs, designed to support social change while learning to play an instrument or sing, are being established in many countries (Uy, 2012).

While the master-apprentice approach remains the primary approach to learning an instrument in Canada, the goals, expectations, and interests of today's music students and their parents may have little to do with a desire to become a professional musician or music teacher. How these contextual demands affect curriculum development is explored in this research study.

### ***B. The students***

J. Schwab (1973) argued that curriculum developers must be familiar with the learners; they should know and understand the learners' experiences, strengths, struggles, and attitudes. He encouraged a specific understanding of the individual nature of the child.

Many students begin studio instruction at an early age and continue their music lessons for several years. Constructivist learning theories have acknowledged the importance of students playing an active role in the learning process. This theory of learning posits that learners construct knowledge based on what they already know, that is they build it on their prior knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978; Webster, 2011). Outside of studio music instruction, students may be involved with music in school, in church or as a part of other cultural activities, and naturally, students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century also hear music in their homes and in the community (DeNora, 2000; Jaffurs, 2004). The child's context, including parental expectations, shapes the child's experiences and perceptions of the value of various activities.

Familiarity with the learner is important in repertoire selection. In a master-apprentice setting, it would seem natural that the master teacher would use his/her skills and experience to select repertoire that is appropriate for the apprentice's (student's) skill level and provide opportunities for the student to develop certain technical or expressive capabilities. However, one consideration that may be missing from this process is whether or not the student actually likes the music (Uszler, 1996; Williams, 2002; Cape, 2013). While some consider music to be a universal language, we must also recognize that music affects us viscerally and differently: the music one person loves can be loathed by another. In addition to the subject matter and milieu, it is important to consider the learner in the curriculum development process.

As part of understanding how students learn to play an instrument, it is important to consider the other activities in which students engage. Music study is one of many extra-curricular choices that students can make. In addition to learning to play an instrument in the studio setting, students can participate in other music or arts

activities, such as singing in a choir, playing in a band, dancing, painting or acting. Students can also play on a sports team, learn a language, or become involved in cultural or religious activities. In addition to these activities, many school-age children also have homework or household chores to complete after school, and by the time they attend high school, many students also work at one or more part-time jobs and/or volunteer. These other activities may enrich the students' musical abilities and/or limit the amount of time they are able to contribute to their music studies.

### ***C. Studio music teachers and lesson content***

J. Schwab's (1973) article argues that curriculum developers must consider the experiences and attitudes of teachers when developing curricula. F. M. Connelly and D. J. Clandinin (1988) argue that teachers are also curriculum developers and therefore should have considerable knowledge of the learner, subject matter and milieu. Similarly, in studio instruction, the teacher is both instructor and curriculum developer; their expertise and attitudes require consideration in the curriculum development process.

E. R. Jorgensen (2003) posited that as music teachers develop their music programs, they "make decisions on other bases than logical judgment and externally mandated or more or less universally accepted rules or standards" (p. 12). As participants in an unregulated field, studio teachers do not have to meet any minimum qualifications. Some teachers studied their instrument in the independent music studio exclusively, working with a teacher for several years, often studying only the repertoire found in the conservatory syllabi. This cycle of instruction often begins when future teachers are children. While pedagogy programs are part of the conservatory exam programs in Canada, the study of pedagogical practices is not mandatory for studio teaching, and so a young instrumentalist can begin a teaching career at any age. For example, J. Lopinski (2005) described her first teaching experience: "Like many other beginning teachers, my [teaching] approach was based on a healthy blend of enthusiasm, instinct, intuition, and, of course, imitation. My concept of teaching piano was closely modeled on the teaching style I had observed and experienced in my own musical studies – an approach not without merit – but the element of "trial and error" was certainly a factor" (p. 2).

One of the problems in teaching as one was taught is that there is no guarantee that one's own private teachers were good models. Further, this approach of imitating the style of one's mentor often means that new teachers learn by trial and error, potentially causing frustration both for the teacher and the student (Livingston & Murray, 1992).

Teachers are recognizing the need to expand their pedagogical practices beyond their own experiences. T. Robinson (2012) examined the contents of lessons of two teachers who were popular musicians. Both these teachers had both quit formal music lessons as children disappointed in these experiences, but later taught themselves to play different instruments by listening and watching performers, and from time to time, seeking intermittent formal instruction. Over time they became studio music teacher and began teaching lessons where they responded pedagogically to the needs of their students relying on strategies that they had learned in their original formal lessons as well through other means. T. Robinson concluded that teachers taught the way that they wished they had been taught instead of how they were taught. Similarly,

P. D. Pike (2013) examined the practices of four studio teachers and found that they embraced a comprehensive approach to their group lessons by including solo and ensemble repertoire, games, harmonization, and ear training, theory, and transposition.

In summary, the content of studio music instruction can include repertoire from a variety of genres and the development of various skills, such as sight-reading, ear training, improvisation, and composition, and may be dependent on other commonplaces, such as the teacher, the student, or the milieu. Teachers are not merely replicating their own experiences but are actively engaging with their students in the learning process to create an appropriate and responsive curriculum.

The salient literature examining issues related to the studio music context (milieu), content of music lessons (subject matter), students' interests (students), and teacher background (teachers) highlight the many factors that may influence curriculum development in the studio context and reinforce J. Schwab's notion of the commonplaces that should guide curriculum development. A more in-depth understanding of how the curricular components relates to the students' context is needed and is the aim of this study.

## **Methodology**

### ***A. Case study methodology and research questions***

The aim of this research was to explore contemporary studio instruction by capturing the perceptions and practices of studio music teachers, students, and parents. A case study approach was the most appropriate methodology to achieve this aim, as it facilitates inquiry into a phenomenon within its real-life context (Timmons & Cairns, 2009; Yin, 2009). Case study methodology allows for multiple data collection techniques, which allows for a multi-faceted understanding of how the music curriculum is reflective of the students, teachers, content and milieu.

The following two general research questions guided this investigation:

1. What are the characteristics of the teachers, students, subject matter, and milieu in these music studio contexts?
2. In what ways do these characteristics affect curriculum development in studio music instruction?

### ***B. Participant recruitment and data collection***

Prior to selecting studio teachers for the study, ethics clearance was obtained from the General Ethics and Research Board at authors' institution. In order to gather information on a variety of independent teaching settings, a random group of teachers located in a large urban center was recruited from a randomized list of teachers, generated by The Royal Conservatory (Canada's largest provider of music syllabi for studio teachers and their students) and forwarded to the researchers. These studio teachers were initially contacted by phone and invited to participate in the study. The teachers who agreed to consider taking part in the study were sent a Letter of Information. If interested in taking part, they were asked to sign informed consent documents, indicating their agreement. In total, twenty teachers were recruited:

12 piano teachers, four voice teachers, three guitar teachers, and one string teacher (one voice teacher withdrew from the study for personal reasons, leaving a total of 19 teachers in the study). These teachers then recruited their students and the parents of these students to participate in the study.

### ***C. Data collection and analysis***

Data sources included interviews, surveys, and lesson observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all of the teachers at the beginning of the study. The interview questions examined (a) the teachers' pedagogical and curriculum practices; (b) the characteristics and practice habits of students, and (c) the use of technology in music teaching and learning. At the interviews, we also asked the teachers to complete a short survey of closed-ended questions about the number of students they teach and the various levels of instruction they provide. Follow-up questions in the form of a survey about pedagogy were sent via e-mail. In addition, we observed each teacher in a lesson setting to increase the trustworthiness of our data about their pedagogical practices. A research assistant with a background in music and education observed a minimum of two hours of instruction for each teacher. Field notes were taken that included the age and level of the student. A time stamp accounting of the activities of the lesson were recorded by the research assistant, which included the types of questions that were asked by the teacher and/or the student. These observations were used to illuminate the interview and questionnaire data.

Questionnaires consisting of closed- and open-ended questions were distributed to students to gather information about their music background and practice habits. Similarly, parent questionnaires provided information on the students' milieus by examining the parents' motivation for enrolling their child(ren) in studio instruction, the ways they support their child(ren)'s practice, and a description of the practice setting. These questionnaires were gathered from 63 students and 47 parents. Descriptive statistics were calculated from the student and parent questionnaire data examining current perceptions and habits. Findings from the parent and student data were used to triangulate the teacher data.

Verbatim interview transcripts were created, and participant names were replaced with pseudonyms. These interviews and observation notes were uploaded to ATLAS.ti (v6.2, 2011), qualitative analysis software, where deductive analysis techniques were used to analyze the data. Codes were based on themes that emerged from the literature. We first coded the data based on the four commonplaces and then coded the data looking for the interactions among the various commonplaces. The themes that emerged from these interactions are described below.

## **Results**

### ***A. Working within the milieu***

The primary reason students enrolled in music instruction was for pleasure. Forty-five percent of parent respondents said that the decision to enroll their child in music lessons was a joint decision between the parent(s) and child, while 38% of parents made this decision unilaterally and 17% of parents acknowledged that the child made the decision independently. When we asked parents what they hoped their child(ren)

would gain from music lessons, having fun (70%) and developing self-discipline (67%) were the two most popular answers. 65% of the respondents also wanted their children to develop enough fluency to be able to enjoy music as adults, and 60% of parents wanted their children to learn to play an instrument as part of becoming a well-rounded individual. Only 19% of respondents wanted their children to attain enough proficiency so that they could pursue a career as a musician. Some parents were present in the lessons where they observed, took notes or recorded the lessons.

### **B. The teachers**

All of the teachers in the study were trained in Classical music. Several of the teachers received their childhood musical training outside of Canada, and more than half of the teachers had post-secondary degree(s) in music. More than half (63%) of the teachers had 20 or more years of experience, and 85% taught in a home-based studio. More than half the teachers stated that their students had studied with them for at least six years.

The teachers were able to respond to diverse interests and different learning styles by constructing individual curricula for their students. All of the teachers explained that they tailored the music curricula to their students, and not surprisingly, they also reported that getting to know these individuals was one of the most meaningful aspects of their teaching. In recognizing the individual nature of their students, one piano teacher noted that *“every person needs his [or her] own approach”* (Charles). Moreover, this task of individualizing their instruction was not a burden, but rather an aspect of their work that they enjoyed. As one teacher stated, *“I think [it’s the] kids [I love most]—the kids are a hoot, I love them”* (Mary, voice teacher). This combination of sharing their love of music and working with students was the main reason that they reported loving their work. As one piano teacher noted, *“[I love] building the relationship with the kids and the music, simple as that”* (Kate, piano teacher). The value and quality of these teacher-student relationships were echoed by the parents, who spoke of the warm rapport that was established between their children and teachers. As one parent put it, *“this rapport [between my child and her studio teacher] affects my child’s learning in a good way. It allows [her] to enjoy music and do well”*.

### **C. The lessons**

Most teachers taught at least 20 students; many of the studios were comprised of a combination of children, adolescents, and adults, as well as a combination of beginner, intermediate and advanced students. For example, we observed a piano teacher who taught four lessons: the first was to a 14 year old student playing intermediate repertoire (Grade 5 RCM level), followed by a 9 year old student playing elementary repertoire (Grade 2 RCM), and a seven year old beginner student and, finally, an eleven year old elementary student. Another piano teacher taught two advanced students: one was 16 years of age playing Grade 10 repertoire and the other was 8 playing Grade 8 repertoire. Student lessons that centered on preparing for exams, performances, competitions or auditions and those who were playing for fun out of personal interest. Lessons for students who were preparing for formal performance, auditions or exams consisted primarily of these components. Within these lessons the teachers provided insights into preparing a more refined performance and provided strategies to meet this aim. We observed many strategies including the use of metaphor, demonstration, conversations, and co-playing to help students convey the

expressive meaning of their pieces. Lessons for students who were not participating in these formal activities also focused on the learning of repertoire. We observed incorporated improvisation and/or composition in the lessons of five teachers. In summary, the lessons consisted of the learning of repertoire, focusing on developing facility on their instrument and in some lessons, composing and improvising. Each of these components is explored in more detail in the subsequent sections.

#### **D. Repertoire**

The teachers acknowledged that the best way to motivate their students was to assign them repertoire that they liked. One teacher stated: *"I can't make anyone play music that they think is boring"* (Craig, guitar teacher). Repertoire that students liked included both classical music and other genres. One teacher observed: *"Not all of the songs are songs that they like to play, so I have to go elsewhere to pick and choose other songs"* (Selena, piano teacher). In all the lessons we observed, we did not hear the same piece played by two different students. The repertoire we heard included Classical, Jazz, Musical Theatre, Church or Popular music, and were selected based on students' interest or for preparing the students for other musical events in which they were participating. One teacher described her process of working with students to choose repertoire in her account below:

*"I structure it around what they want to do. So some of them might want to audition for a school play so we would do audition pieces – classical, pop. I do have a couple of, did have a couple of, adult students who one guy only wanted to learn pop songs and sing a Johnny Cash song at his golf course annual dinner...Then there is Crystal who is forming [a] band, who wants to do conservatory and band, pop things. So we do both"* (Mary, voice teacher).

Students who were taking lessons for fun and the students were playing repertoire that was interesting to them. In some instances, the students chose the repertoire and brought their selections to the lesson. Sometimes the students shared their selections using their iPods or phones and the teachers would transcribe the selections with the students. As one student noted to one of the research assistants observing the lesson, *"the music [motivates me to play]-if I like it I want to play it and make it sound better. I like to have choices. If I don't want to play something, [my teacher] doesn't make me play it"* (guitar student). The repertoire the students learned were relevant to their learning goals - whether it was to be able to play the music they loved or to compete in a competition and it was also important to the teachers that the students develop their abilities to express themselves through their instrument.

#### **E. Musical technique**

Technical facility included being able to play complex patterns, as well as convey the meaning of layering; the teachers strived to help students understand how musical structures, such as harmony and form, were realized on their instruments and how these were used within the repertoire. Some teachers even gave the impression that the conservatory technical requirements were not reflective of the musical profession. For example, one piano teacher claimed:

*"The [Royal] Conservatory increases the technical requirements, which are way too much, especially for a student who does not want*

*to continue as a professional. Even if a professional, I still think it's way too much of scales and arpeggios and stuff like that"* (Charles, piano teacher).

Relying on their own understanding of the subject matter, teachers were able to criticize conservatory expectations in light of the demands they face as musicians. Most notably, the guitar teachers highlighted the lack of technical components that strengthened students' playing abilities in both hands, recognizing the left hand must learn to move around the fret board, while the right hand must develop facility in picking and strumming. One teacher explained that *"for the guitar perspective, they just tell you to scale and operate it with their own suggested fingering, but they don't show you about the right hand technique at all"* (Liam, guitar teacher).

Others reported on the lack of experience that students have in working with harmony. As one teacher put it:

*"I think in the guitar stream there's just too many scales and not enough fret board harmony. For example, if a student's coming from a rock background, they'll know all their basic chords and chord shapes. Rather than the students having to play a ton of three-octave scales with the exact same finger pattern up and down the neck, you know what I mean? It doesn't mean much to them. I think there should be more things like chord scales, like they do in piano. You know what I mean? Because their [understanding of] harmony is lacking. Even with theory lessons because it's not on their instrument. You know? On a guitar, fret board harmony is interesting"* (Nathan, guitar teacher).

Another technical skill that the teachers addressed was related to the structure of a piece of repertoire. One teacher noted: *"I think what needs to happen is an understanding of the structure of song. Right off the bat. They need to be able to; they need to understand the girders of that song"* (Elisabeth, piano teacher). These structural elements, extending beyond playing notes, were emphasized by many of the teachers. Structural understandings included an understanding of the harmonic and formal structures that underpin Western music.

It was important for all of the teachers that the students insert their own ideas in their music and the teachers wanted the students to enhance their expressive skills. We observed that, as the students were learning repertoire, there were many conversations about what they were trying to convey. During these conversations the teachers asked questions to help the students develop a story about the music. Other times the teachers provided metaphors related to the desired sounds or demonstrated various sounds that the students could try and emulate. And as an extension of inserting themselves into the composed repertoire, teachers also encouraged their students to create their own music. Teachers felt that developing these understandings would not only support the learning of notated music, but could also be transferred to composition and improvisation.

#### ***F. Compositional and improvisational skills***

The student questionnaire asked students to rate how good they were at composition and improvisation, with '1' being very bad and '7' being very good. Forty-two percent



of respondents rated their composition or improvisation ability at five or higher, meaning that they thought that they were good or very good at this component. It seems that the studio curricula have expanded to include opportunities for students to create their own music and insert themselves in the musical performance. Some teachers described how composition and improvisation were part of the lesson such as in the case of the participant account:

*"I would say all of them [compose]... Usually [we] start [composing] as a duet, start[ing] on the black keys, because, of course, pentatonic is always pleasing. Or sometimes I just start and put your thumb on D or put your thumb on A, you've got five notes, five fingers, those are your choices, keep the same beat, something is going to happen. And it depends on the student. I have a little girl; she loves her pig, her little pet pig and her dog, so she's made up a couple of songs about that. So I try to make it relevant to what they like" (Samantha, piano teacher).*

The teacher account makes evident the effort made to link student experiences to the content of the lesson itself. In another lesson we observed a teacher asking his student if he wanted to make up his own piece related to the comic book *Fearless Fortissimo*. One more example that we saw showcased the studio teacher asking their student if they wanted to change the melody for a piece being learned through notation. In this instance, the teacher scratched out the notes that were written and the teacher and student wrote a new melody for the piece.

The observational data reveals how teachers developed compositions based on harmonic progressions. For example, we observed how in one lesson, the teacher and student built major, minor, and dominant seventh chords on the piano. They then applied this knowledge and skill to Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah Chorus* where the student played the piece using a lead sheet. In yet another studio context, the guitar teacher played along with his student as the student played a harmonic progression whilst the teacher layered an improvised melody overtops. The teacher-student dyad then used an I-IV-V pattern as a structure to improvise different melodic rhythms with their original harmonic pattern.

Some of the teachers described how their students composed or improvised on their own, outside of the lesson context: *"Guitar students tend to make up more music, I mean compose music, because they listen to pop or rock music and they just make their own"* (Craig, guitar teacher). These teachers listened to their students' compositions, and coached them when it seemed appropriate to do so, realizing that not all students want feedback on their creations.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Our data reveal that the teachers are not simply replicating their own music education experiences. Rather, they are striving to create a responsive curriculum that aligns with the musical goals of their students. These curricula still center on the learning of notated repertoire; however, this process is enhanced with a desire to help students interpret the repertoire in a more holistic way and to help them create their own music. Teachers continue to rely on conservatory systems to varying degrees to guide them in terms of playing level, and they appreciate the repertoire albums; however,

they enhance their music instruction by incorporating repertoire that the students enjoy playing, and pieces from a variety of genres. The curriculum that each student received considered his/her musical interests, which is most clearly seen through the selection of repertoire. The teachers scoured their resources to find repertoire that was interesting and relevant to the goals of their pupils. In addition to helping their students learn repertoire, teachers helped their students to understand salient technique and encouraged them to create their own music.

Our observational data indicates that the majority of students were active participants in their lessons. Most of the lessons had conversational components where students' ideas were elicited as part of the feedback process. There was one instance where a student admitted to the teacher that she 'should have practiced' between lessons. In this lesson, the teacher remained collegial with the student and applied constructivist principles of building on what the students could do, rather than what the student was supposed to do. Whether or not music lessons were engaging for this student over an extended period of time was beyond the scope of this research.

Active participation in the lessons required that the teachers have a wide array of repertoire and pedagogical strategies. To develop these types of curricula, teachers rely on their understanding of their subject matter and their students. J. Schwab (1973) argued that subject matter knowledge is not only knowledge of the content, but also an understanding of what it is like to be a professional in this field. Many of the teachers in this study had post-secondary training in music and also worked as performing musicians. They used their understanding of the content and the field at large to tailor their instruction. For example, these teachers critiqued the technical requirements of the conservatories, based on their experiences as musicians. The idea of technique as a means of understanding the underpinning of music was demonstrated as a pedagogical practice by many of the teacher participants. This finding also aligns with R. Smilde's (2012) assertion that teachers should model lifelong learning with their students. Here we see that these teachers are modelling their passion for music and learning and also incorporating this content in the lessons they teach.

In addition to repertoire and technical skills, teachers helped their students to understand the fundamental concepts of composition and technique. Teachers aimed to go deeper than teaching merely the notes to students with their orientation towards structure in the lessons as they spent time exploring how composers use harmony, melodic patterns, and form to frame their ideas.

Further, these teachers helped students apply these ideas through improvisation and compositional activities - teachers worked alongside their pupils during this musical process. Studio teachers are trying to capitalize on their students' own ideas and help them express these ideas through composing and improvising. In this manner, they adopted constructivist ideals, such as building on existing knowledge and actively engaging the student in the learning process in the lesson. The extent to which students develop skills that can make them more independent in this aspect of music-making requires further investigation.

Our research findings illuminate that studio music teachers do not rely exclusively on a conservatory syllabus. Rather they consider the aims and interests of their students

and select repertoire and technical requirements to suit these goals. While participating in competitions or completing exams was desired by some students, others were more interested exploring music as a way of having fun. To respond to varying goals, the teachers use their own experiences as both musicians and educators to provide responsive curricula for their students. The fact that there is no infrastructure to help Canadian studio teachers exchange or gather new ideas outside of their own personal experiences and network means that their access to local resources and their own understanding of compositional techniques are the main sources of information for their curricula. While it is true that the Internet has expanded the possibilities of accessing information, finding this information still requires an understanding of what is available. Teachers may need guidance to introduce them to musical and pedagogical ideas that lie outside of their performance or pedagogical experiences. Consequently, the role of larger institutions, such as conservatories or post-secondary institutions may be to provide guidelines or principles that reflect a network of experience and that may serve these teachers well. Arguably, these institutions may have the cultural and human capital to collate and organize ideas and to develop a framework that teachers can tailor to the needs of their students.

In conclusion, the independent studio music teachers examined in this study are striving to instil a responsive and appropriate knowledge of music in their students. These instructors aim to tailor their instruction to their students' interests and needs, guided by their own experiences as musicians and pedagogues. This shifting curricular landscape in studio music instruction suggests that music conservatories would benefit from the (continued) development of teacher education programs, curricula, and resources that can further support responsive music curricula.

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## **THE CLASSICAL GUITAR CURRICULUM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S MUSICAL CULTURE**

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### **Abstract**

*Since the main purpose of music education is the formation of child's musical culture and the introduction of a child to world's musical heritage, the main criterion for the analysis of non-formal education curricula of music education institutions is the development of musical culture. The article is concerned with the comparative analysis of the content of guitar learning curricula. Authors show the importance of the formation of early school-age children's musical culture and identify and determine the main characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of the development of early school-age children's musical culture in different countries by making the analysis of guitar curricula in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria and Russia.*

**Key words:** *musical culture, non-formal education, children, development, guitar playing curriculum*

### **Introduction**

One of the most acute problems facing the contemporary society today is the threat of personality's spiritual decline and the danger of losing moral landmarks, therefore the necessity arises to re-orientate the contemporary education towards an absolutely new level of providing moral education, opposing non-spirituality and consumerism (Bitinas, 2000). A decisive role in the development of personality's culture, naturally, is occupied by a musical activity, which is needed not only by the professionals, but also by all people without exception, since it helps to form an active, creative attitude of the individual towards the society and the world around him (Grakauskaite-Karkockiene, 2002; Girdzijauskienė, 2004). Pedagogical observations show that in

most institutions of music education the educational process is oriented towards training learners' professional skills: this implies that a teacher devotes most of the time to a purposive and consistent development of a learner's technical base rather than to the development of a learner's artistic taste and musical culture in general (Balčytis, 2008).

The documents of the European Union on the reform of music education (The Arts Creativity and Culture Education: An International Perspective, 2000; Baidak & Horvath, 2009; The Global Innovation Index, 2011) underscore the necessity of searching for and introducing the constructive ideas generated by a positive practical experience, the need for a constant renewal of the structure, content and methods of education oriented towards improving the quality of children's music education through the development of their musical culture. Music education in the institutions of additional education has to lay the foundations of children's musical culture: music is the means of developing children's musicality, their creative abilities, emotionality, imagery and their feeling of belonging to the world of music. Learning different kind of musical activities, examples of folk art, creations of world music classics, contemporary art and purposefully acquiring various kinds of musical activity help the children of early school-age enter the world of music, familiarize themselves with the spiritual values of musical culture.

The psychologists of today (Gordon, 2000; Beckett, 2007; Ferrari, Cachia & Punie, 2009 a. o.) speak about the necessity of developing a creative personality, able to perceive novelty and be ready to improvise. Today, in times of constant changes, children really experience need for the development of flexibility and independence of thinking, of trust in their own strength and devotedness to ideas, readiness to try and to err, to adjust and to change the approaches to problem solving, until a satisfactory solution is found. To achieve such goals, one of the best means is the development of musical culture. These changes are important, since the level of children's musical culture is comparatively low (Velička, 2002). Aesthetic values are deformed, because the internal contradictions of classical paradigms of education have reached such a level that education based on them can no longer satisfy the needs of a personality and the society. Like the way social, economic, political environment affects a composer and all his/her moods and emotions are reflected in his/her composition, so just in the same way musical culture exerts an enormous impact on the formation of individual's personality. Therefore, today it is topical and important to effectively develop children's musical culture, and new developmental methods have to serve this purpose.

However, the competences of early school-age children observed in music education institutions of Latvia and Lithuania raise doubt about the conformity of education programs with the requirements of the Ministry of Education and with general normative acts which lay stress on the development of musical culture in music education.

At present, the classical guitar as a musical instrument has won quite a great popularity among children and young people. Just this instrument passes through the era of its upsurge today in the whole world, is the most popular and available, which provides the basis for studying the phenomenon of the development of musical



culture. Consequently, this research focuses on the analysis of the classical guitar curricula in different countries.

**Research object:** curricula of the classical guitar class in music education institutions.

**Research aim:** to analyze the curricula of the classical guitar class in different countries within the context of the development of early school-age children's musical culture.

**Research methodology** comprises methodological and pedagogical principles formulated in works on different areas of science (music pedagogy, art criticism, psychology, cultural studies etc.), as well as on trends emerging at points of intersection of these sciences. To fulfil the set tasks, a complex of the following research methods was applied:

- Analysis and generalization of methodological literature, pedagogical technologies, leading pedagogical experience;
- Comparative analysis of the classical guitar class curricula.

### **The Classical Guitar in Music Education Institutions**

The classical 6-string guitar counts among the most popular and wide-spread musical instruments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is recognized all over the world and takes also quite an important place among the musical instruments which have an extensive concert repertoire.

In many countries, the guitar occupies the same position as the piano, violin and violoncello. It is taught in higher and secondary education institutions, in music schools and studios. Books, numerous journals and collections on the guitar are being published. International competitions and festivals of guitarists are organized, and among them the creative competitions in Geneva, Paris, Toronto, as well as the competitions named after M. Giuliani, F. Sor, F. Tarrega, E. Pucholya are the most prestigious.

However, in the countries of the Baltic region the guitar has not been recognized as a valuable concert instrument for a long time, which, naturally, has made an impact both on its development and the contingent from which the numerous stratoms of guitarists emerged later. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the majority of musicians were amateur artists: consequently, the proportion of dilettantes among the guitarists was prevailing during a long period of time, namely, practically up to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The guitar was basically an instrument of amateur art and did not receive the same support as other academic instruments. This situation lasted until a sufficient number of professional performers appeared, and the guitar was included in the category of full-fledged concert instruments.

It is worth mentioning that the guitar as a specialty in additional education institutions for children appeared only in the 90-s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This situation resulted in the fact that now we have very few works devoted to the guitar art. Despite the fact that the countries of the Baltic region have long had a lot of different "schools" and teach-yourself books on the guitar, from the scientific and methodological point of view they contain a) rather scanty and sometimes even contradictory

recommendations and also b) a minimum of information on music theory, performing art and the development of musical culture. In methodological literature, many topical issues are not fully reflected or even are not reflected at all, but their content mainly consists of exercises for the development of technical skills and of the teaching repertoire. It should be especially underlined that in respect of methodology the most valuable works by foreign authors were published in a considerably abbreviated form, which, of course, made them less valuable. Besides, for a long time the domestic guitar performing art considerably lagged behind the world level due to the isolation from the developed in these respect countries of Western Europe, Russia and Latin America. Even until now, in the countries of the Baltic region the guitar is considered an exotic instrument for scientific studies, despite the enormous popularity of this instrument.

### **The Model of Musical Culture**

D. Kabalevsky (Кабалевский, 1984) was the first who put forward the idea about the development of children's musical culture as being the main goal of music education and an integral part of general spiritual culture. In author's opinion, the basic task of music education is not teaching music as such, but rather exerting influence via music on the whole spiritual world of the learners, first of all on their morality. This implies that the development of children's musical culture is a genetically significant part of the whole mankind's cultural development (Matonis, 2000). Lessons on music must exert influence on the formation of children's aesthetic taste, enhance making up their character, norms of behavior, as well as enrich their inner world by unforgettable emotional experience. These lessons should be nothing else but a cognitive multi-faceted process, which a) develops children's musical culture and artistic taste, b) inculcates in children love of art, c) forms personality's moral qualities and aesthetic attitude towards the world around them.

The development of musical culture is part and parcel of the education and formation of child's personality (Katinienė, 1998; Kievišas & Gaučaitė, 2000); it is especially vital for children's spiritual and moral education, for a consistent broadening and strengthening of their inner world and values, for shaping their abilities to evaluate and consciously develop the relations with oneself and with other people. This process should be begun as early as possible, as it is a well-known fact that children are most impressionable at an early school-age (Krakauskaitė, 1995; Katinienė, 1998; Gordon, 2000; Temmerman, 2000; Piličiauskas, 2002; Souriau, 2002; Zelentienė & Ganusauskienė, 2007 a. o.); and therefore it is essential what a child sees, hears and feels.

The analysis of different authors' conceptions (Цукерман, 1972; Сохор, 1980; Kodály, 1983; Кабалевский, 1984; Тельчарова, 1991; Алиев, 1998; Школяр, Школяр & Критская, 2001; Brown, 2006; Rinkevičius & Rinkevičienė, 2006 a. o.) showed that musical culture is an integrative quality whose indicators are: a) musical development (love of music, emotional attitude, need for music, powers of musical observation) and b) musical erudition (mastery of methods of musical activity, knowledge of art-criticism, developed musical taste, critical attitude towards music).

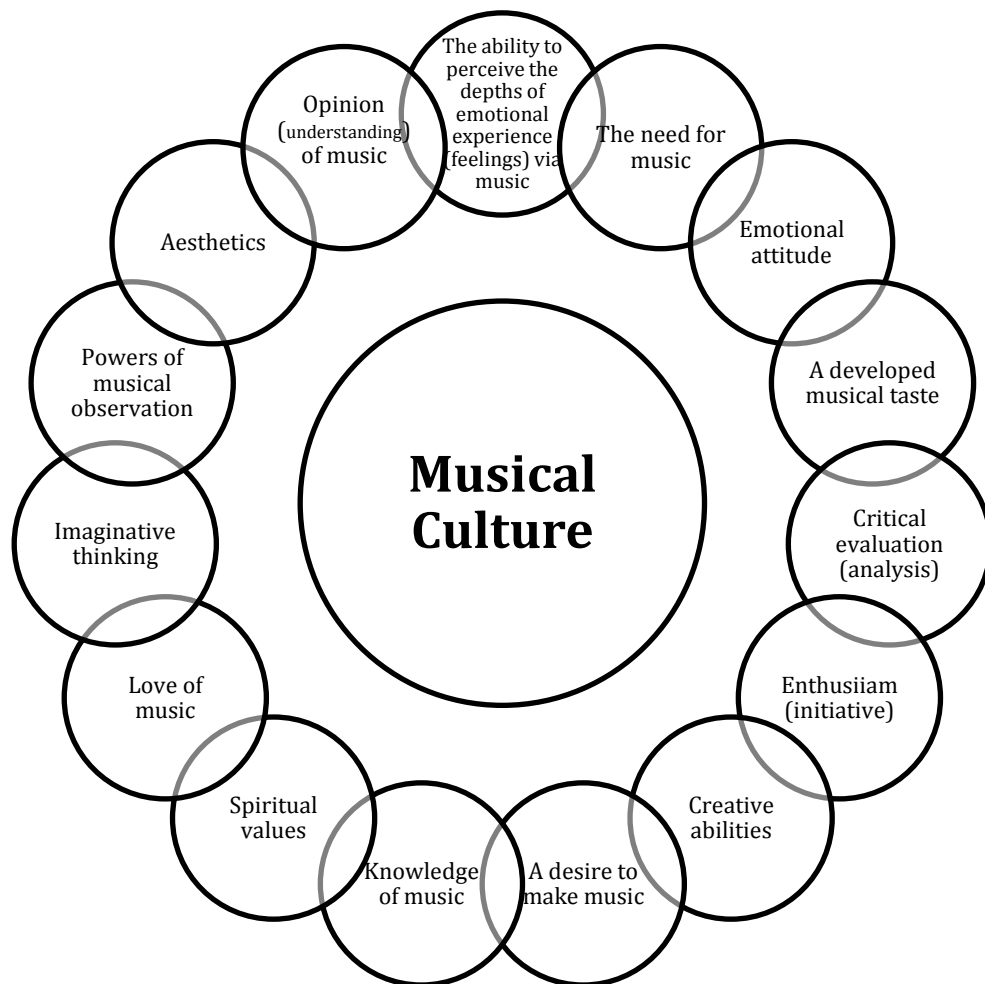
The structure of musical culture includes the aesthetic perception, aesthetic needs and interest, aesthetic feelings, artistic-creative abilities, artistic-imaginative thinking

and other elements necessary for a child's comprehensive musical development. During this process a teachers has to

- inculcate in learners the enthusiasm for beautiful music;
- create a favorable environment to enjoy music;
- inculcate in learners the desire and ability to sing and play music;
- develop learners' understanding of music and their musical culture of thinking;
- develop specific knowledge of music and creative abilities.

The creation and broadening of the individual socio-artistic experience, which is a prerequisite for the emergence of high musical needs, are the principal result of this multi-faceted process.

Having made the analysis of the scientific literature, and then having generalized the obtained data, the authors of this article offer the following Model of Musical Culture:



**Figure 1. Model of Musical Culture**

The process of the development of musical culture is a system oriented towards integrating all elements, factors and components for the development and enrichment

of child's personality. All elements of the given model are important, because each of them fosters the creation of the foundation of children's musical culture as part of general spiritual culture, and, consequently, the reflection of these elements in the content of curricula gives the opportunity to understand the depth of the phenomenon under the research.

### **The Results of the Analysis of the Classical Guitar Class Curricula in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria and Russia within the Context of the Development of Musical Culture**

This article deals with the analysis of the classical guitar class curricula for teaching early school-age children in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria and Russia (6 curricula altogether). The curricula were randomly selected. To ensure the confidentiality, in the research the titles of curricula were coded.

The extent of how widely the early school-age children's musical culture is reflected in the classical guitar class curricula was verified by applying the method of comparative analysis.

The analysis of aims and tasks of the above mentioned curricula (see Table 1) shows that the aspect of the development of early school-age children's musical culture is reflected in almost all aims and tasks of the curricula under the research, with the exception of the guitar class curriculum in Estonia (however, we have to remind the fact that the curricula have been randomly selected and thus do not show the actual situation in the whole country).

**Table 1. Aims and tasks of the classical guitar curricula within the context of the development of early school-age children's musical culture**

Lithuania	To educate a creative, active, emotional personality; to build a foundation for musical culture and for expressing one's personality; to develop musical abilities.
Latvia	To create conditions for perceiving and understanding music as well as for a practical musical creativity; and also gaining work experience necessary for obtaining musical and creative abilities; to develop the basical skills of guitar playing; to motivate a learner to continue studies in the next level of education in accordance with their abilities and interests.
Estonia	To teach the elementary processes of initial music education; to help to acquire practical skills and the needed theory of music for indepth studies.
Poland	To stimulate the passion for music; to develop musical talent in accordance with age abilities; to teach the basics of instrument playing; to prepare for public performance.
Bulgaria	To teach tolerance, emotional attitude to music; to develop musical-technical skills and habits of listening to music; to develop the ear for music as a necessary precondition for an effective participation in a musical activity; to teach love of Bulgarian culture and folklore.
Russia	To teach and develop learners' personality qualities allowing to respect and accept spiritual and cultural values of different peoples; to form aesthetic views, moral positions and need for the communication with spiritual values.

On the basis of the Model of Musical Culture developed in this research (see Figure 1), the following categories for the analysis of the above mentioned curricula within the context of the development of early school-age children's musical culture were put forward:

- Opinion (understanding) on music,
- The ability to perceive the depths of emotional experience (feelings) via music,
- Spiritual values,
- The need for music,
- Emotional attitude to music,
- Aesthetics,
- Musical taste,
- Enthusiasm (initiative),
- A desire to make music,
- Knowledge of music,
- Creative abilities,
- Love of music,
- Powers of musical observation,
- Critical evaluation (analysis),
- Imaginative thinking.

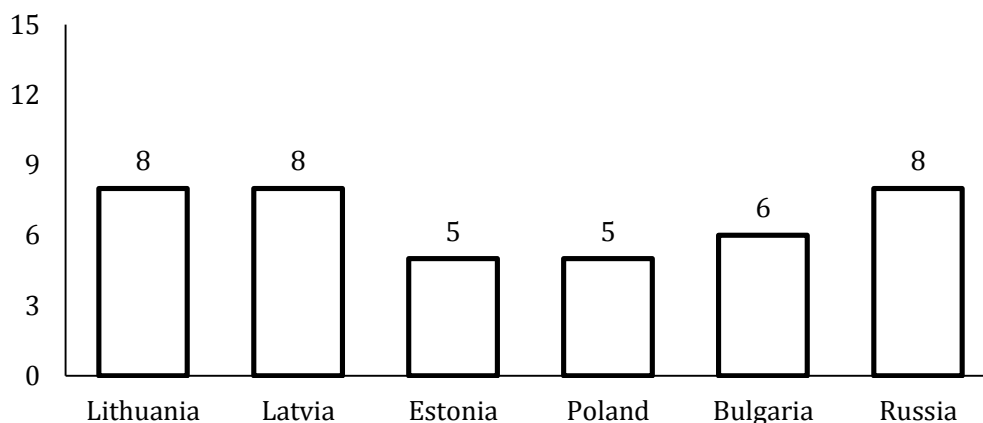
The outcomes of the analysis of the classical guitar curricula within the context of the development of early school-age children's musical culture are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. The results of the analysis of the classical guitar curricula within the context of the development of early school-age children's musical culture**

CATEGORY	LITHUANIA	LATVIA	ESTONIA	POLAND	BULGARIA	RUSSIA
Opinion (understanding) on music	✓	✓		✓		✓
Ability to perceive the depths of emotional experience (feelings) via music	✓					
Spiritual values		✓	✓		✓	✓
Need for music				✓		
Emotional attitude to music	✓	✓			✓	
Aesthetics			✓			✓
Musical taste	✓			✓		✓
Enthusiasm (initiative)			✓			✓
Desire to make music	✓	✓			✓	
Knowledge of music	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creative abilities	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Love of music	✓			✓		
Powers of musical observation					✓	
Critical evaluation (analysis)		✓				✓
Imaginative thinking		✓				

After summarizing the data of analysis, we can draw a conclusion that the aspect of the development of children's musical culture is most seriously reflected in the curricula of Lithuania, Latvia and Russia (eight out of fifteen categories under the analysis are reflected in these curricula).

The curricula of Bulgaria reflect six categories, but those of Estonia and Poland – five. These tables are more clearly presented in the diagram (see Figure 2):



**Figure 2. Aspects of the development of early school-age children's musical culture in the classical guitar curricula according to the given categories**

The obtained data allow concluding that despite the fact that the recommendations of ministries of education and normative acts of European countries have put the development of children's musical culture on the agenda, the aspect of the development of musical culture is basically reflected in the aims and tasks of the classical guitar curricula under the analysis, while the content of the curricula reflects the development of musical culture only fragmentarily: this implies that the institutions of additional music education of the above mentioned countries lay emphasis on the development of knowledge and skills. Consequently, the problem of the development of children's musical culture is topical, and an in-depth research is needed in this area.

## Conclusions

1. In the classical guitar curricula of European countries basically prevails a technical attitude to music education; however, it is just the early school-age when the foundations of children's personality are laid, the development of personality requires organizing new educational models based on the development of children's musical culture.
2. The institutions of additional education require creating new curricula on the basis of which the development of musical culture is carried out via the creation of a spiritual environment, whose principal values are child's personality, creativity, freedom, musical taste and love of music.

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## LITERATURE SELECTION PRACTICES OF TEACHERS-CONDUCTORS IN TEACHING CHILDREN TO SING

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### **Abstract**

*The literature that teacher-conductors choose in teaching junior school learners to sing is often seen as one of the most important components of the singers' and teachers' success. Yet there are scant studies devoted to the subject. This study was conducted in the capital city of Lithuania with purposive selection of five (N=5) well-known and productive teacher-conductors of children's choirs, three of whom taught in the public schools and two who were in the singing schools. Participants were identified by the resident researcher and were interviewed by the other researcher, each for roughly an hour, during a two-week span, all occurring at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences. A qualitative case study approach was used for this investigation with all interviews video- and audio-recorded. Data were transcribed, coded, and then checked by an external auditor who verified accuracy. All data were then analysed using a constant-comparison method to identify themes, patterns, and categories. Six themes emerged that identified the major components of literature selection and preparation for selecting repertoire: a) technical and musical elements, b) specific purposes for music selection use, c) interdisciplinary approaches in teaching, d) aesthetics as they related to the experiences for the singers and audiences, e) taste and preferences of the teacher-conductors, and f) the paths of learning to choose literature for the teacher-conductors. Implications of the findings related both to knowing children's voices in terms of their abilities and motivation to sing, and relying on the influences of the standards of other music teachers, community expectations, and cultural tradition.*

**Keywords:** *music education, music literature, singing*

## Introduction

Selection of literature for teaching children to sing is an important task, yet there is scant research devoted to the subject. Instead, tradition of programming seems to have guided teachers in that selection in tandem with recommendations from successful teachers-conductors, and offerings by music publishers and conference reading sessions. While guidelines for selecting children's literature are available in music magazines and textbooks, the lack of research on that selection process is caused concern. A search for investigations related to selecting repertoire for teaching children to sing yielded only a few studies.

K. Bruno (2016) presented a case for selecting music repertoire for singers in *The Choral Journal* that explored the personal and professional aspects of those choices. She noted that teachers-conductors sometimes make literature selection guided by the personal attachments they have to the composer, the motivation it might generate in the singers, or one related to a personal memory. Sometimes that may involve selecting repertoire that was previously heard, preferred, or simply repurposed and superimposed on different singers, often without taking into consideration the children's abilities. To emphasize her point, K. Bruno noted the following: *"...consider the work of accomplished bakers, who must demonstrate technique and imagination. Even when creating a simple recipe, they must understand how flavours and ingredients work and have a vision for combining them in a new and unique way. Mediocre bakers follow recipes. They assemble ingredients, follow directions, and get a fine, predictable outcome, but there is no creativity involved. So it is with music"* (p. 38).

While subjective in nature, K. Bruno (2016) listed characteristics of music with high quality as capturing our focus, demonstrating some elements of *"unpredictability, a balance in form between repetition and contrast . . . consistent quality and style . . . good orchestration and voicing; worthy text; and a 'happy marriage' of text and music"* (p. 39). She suggested that a most integral part of the teaching process is to select quality music that engages the singers. While most teachers-conductors probably would not argue with the list, research is needed to validate or refute these suggestions.

**The aim of this study** is to present findings based on research, that of excellent teachers-conductors, as a means of contributing to the research base.

## Pedagogy of Instruction

F. Howard (1898), an early proponent of children's singing, professed that the teacher must acquire a technical understanding of the child voice in order to teach vocal production. The vocal mechanism is fragile and incomplete until puberty sets in, which makes the act of singing anything but a simple process (Trollinger, 2005; Davidova, Zavadzka, Šeršnova, Rauduvaite & Chuang, 2015). Thus, it would seem that the teacher-conductor must be cognizant of the singing process and the appropriateness of choices he/she makes both in teaching and in literature selection, all to protect the young singers' voices from instruction that could be injurious.

To underscore the need for teachers-conductors to understand the vocal mechanism, be equipped with methods, and use effective pedagogy, they must understand the

contributing elements to children's singing. A number of factors affecting children's singing are included internal elements such as vocal range (Goetze, Cooper & Brown, 1990; Moore, 1991; Kim, 2000), pitch accuracy (Rutkowski & Miller, 2003; Trollinger, 2003; Hornbach & Taggart, 2005), learning preferences (Persellin, 1993; Reifinger, 2009), age (Welch, 1979; Geringer, 1983; Rutkowski & Miller, 2003), and sex (Trollinger, 2003; Leighton & Lamont, 2006; Mang, 2006; Welch & Sergeant, 2009; Warzecha, 2013). External factors, meaning those imposed by the teacher, centred on individual, small-group, and large-group singing (Smale, 1988; Aaron, 1993; Green, 1994; Cooper, 1995; Rutkowski, 1996), a cappella and accompanied singing (Kuhn & Sims, 1983; Stauffer, 1985; Atterbury & Silcox, 1993; Guilbault, 2004; Hedden & Baker, 2010), the addition of text (Smale, 1988; Levinowitz, 1989; Lange, 2000), vocal modelling (Green, 1990; Goetze, Cooper & Brown, 1990; Yarbrough, Green, Benson & Bowers, 1991; Price, Yarbrough, Jones & Moore, 1994; Yarbrough, Morrison, Karrick & Dunn, 1995; McGraw, 1996), the literature the teacher-conductor selected (Erman, 1981; Mizener, 2008), the addition of harmony (Moore, 1994), and the method for teaching a song either by phrases or through immersion (Klinger, Campbell & Goolsby, 1998).

Depending on the method teachers-conductors embraced in teaching children to sing, either through direct vocal-skill instruction or through the song approach, there are immediate implications for literature choices and the particular use of that literature. While some repertoire might be used for vocal exercises, some are intended for performance. For example, S. White-Williams' (1994) study found that the majority of teachers who taught children to sing, both classroom music educators and private studio teachers, agreed that instruction in breath management, tone production, musical expression, and diction assisted singers in improved singing. Literature used for these purposes might not necessarily be used for performances.

Similarly, in an interview with Jean Bartle Ashworth, D. Shrock noted that *"all rehearsals incorporate[d] vocal skills, sight-reading, ear training, and musicianship. At the beginning of every rehearsal we [did] exercises that develop[ed] the voice and ear"* (Shrock, 1990, 12). B. Atterbury (1984) concluded that instruction that included vocal instruction rather than mere song singing assisted singers in improving their skills. The teaching of breath control demonstrated improvement in changing children's breathing from chest to diaphragmatic, positively affecting singing range and pitch matching (Phillips, 1985). According to K. Phillips and R. Aitchison, using vocal instruction to teach children to sing may extend their range and improve breath control (Phillips & Aitchison, 1997), and build confidence and contribute to more positive attitudes about singing (Phillips & Aitchison, 1998). Thus, concerted planning for instruction and planning for procedure of instruction were necessary for the teacher (according to Kemp as cited by Patterson, 2008), suggesting that the importance of repertoire selection was inextricably connected to the purpose of its use.

## **Repertoire Selection**

C. Price's (2012) article in the *Kodály Envoy* maintained that *"...the core of the process of organization is the selection and documentation of repertoire. Select repertoire, which is of intrinsic value to the child's intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social development*

*guided by the child's world and play"* (p. 19). In a study by P. Bourne (1990), findings suggested that all teachers-directors needed to acquire the skills of selecting, analysing, and interpreting repertoire for their singers to assist the children because the literature directly affected their *"vocal health . . . and sensitivity to the music"* (p. 72). She reported that the participants in the study identified good quality repertoire, and appropriate vocal instruction was essential for the singers, but also needed to be paired with the proper level of maturity for the children. In addition, a variety of literature was deemed necessary to provide interest and challenge to the audience. Among the propositions P. Bourne presented the ideas of *"musical literature based on pedagogical merits, age and vocal maturity appropriateness, compositional technique, and musical nuance of musical components"*, as well as *"a variety of musical styles and periods in performance and rehearsal"* (Bourne, 1990, 73).

The participants in B. Antel's study (2010) identified particular factors that affected their choices of literature: a) variety of repertoire could expand children's musical growth; b) the *teachers-conductors'* choices of literature were dependent upon the targeted skills they wished to teach or enhance; c) literature choices were made that interested the singers; and d) unison literature was selected first to develop listening skills. We might again note that intentional planning for teaching sequence affected the literature selection.

### **Teacher Preparation**

The manner in which *teachers-conductors* learn to choose repertoire has not been well documented. P. Bourne (1990) noted that *"the most appropriate arena for developing skills in guiding young singers was in the college music methods classes"* (p. 17). According to D. Rao (1980), some universities are preparing SATB listeners exclusively. Yet a large percentage of these music education undergraduates will be teaching at the elementary and junior high school level after graduation. If singing and quality ensembles are to become a reality in elementary school and community, the colleges must assume responsibility (Bourne, 1990, 6).

R. Frego and C. Abril (2003) found that college methods courses, particularly those for elementary teaching, offered some instruction in the methods/approaches of Kodály, Dalcroze, and Orff; these might occur in terms of presentations, model lessons, and readings with only 44 percent of the students actually teaching lessons utilizing methods/approaches. No mention was made of attention to literature or to teaching it. In a study among NASM schools, D. Gauthier and J. McCrary (1999) reported that close to 30 percent of methods courses offered a teaching component for practice in methods and pedagogy; they also said that a variety of skills in teaching were identified, but the only one related to singing was *"song-leading skills"* (p. 131). But *"song leading"* is not synonymous with teaching children to sing.

**In this study the purpose was** twofold to investigate how music teachers in Lithuania selected literature for teaching children to sing and how they learned to make those selections. That Lithuania produces exceptional singing among its population is notable. Teachers are rigorously trained and expectations are evident for teaching children to sing well at an early age.

**The research objectives** guiding the study:

- What are the specific factors considered by teachers-conductors when selecting repertoire for children's singing in their choirs or music classes?
- How did the teachers-conductors learn to choose literature for children's singing in their choirs or music classes?

**Method**

It is not specifically known how teachers-conductors learned to select repertoire for their students' singing or what criteria were integral to those selections. Yet, literature selection can fortify or hinder students' motivation to sing, quantity of learning, and musical growth. Because every teacher-conductor must deal with literature selection, the importance of that repertoire is noted. The problem, then, was to illuminate the criteria for selecting literature and the ways in which teacher-conductors learned to choose that literature.

***A. Access to the participant***

A qualitative case study was chosen for this investigation because of the necessity of participants' explications (Merriam, 2001) to provide both context and examples with their responses. Participants ( $N = 5$ ) were purposively selected (Patton, 2002) by the resident researcher who knew them well and worked in the capital city, Vilnius; the second researcher had witnessed several rehearsals and classes by most of the teachers-conductors, having some knowledge of their work.

The participants, practicing teachers-conductors in Lithuania, represented various teaching settings in the city. In public schools music classes existed both as two 'lessons' per week for all children and as an extra learning experience elected by the children in an after-school choir. Quite separate from public school music education, there are singing schools for boys as well as those for girls which offer solfege training and choir rehearsals four or five times per week depending on the age of the child. Each participant had extensive experience and success in teaching elementary children to sing, with three participants ( $n = 3$ , Marry, Egle, and Milda) teaching children in the public school setting and two ( $n = 2$ , Alina and Justina) teaching singing within singing schools. All participants were females because of the overwhelming majority of women teaching at that level. The names of the participants were changed.

***B. Procedures***

After receiving IRB approval, the investigation was launched. This study embraced the idea of a qualitative case study, one that relied on narrative elements *"to understand why people... behave the way they do"* (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. x). In this instance, descriptive narrative was utilized to relay authenticity of the data the participants provided (Polkinghorne, 1988). *"Narrative inquiry in the field is a form of living, a way of life"* (Clandinen & Connelly, 2000, 78), an important element in this investigation.

Interviews were conducted once with each participant at a local university over the span of two weeks' time. The participants were posed a set of pre-determined questions, representing some structure (Merriam, 2001); however, follow-up questions were posed to *"explore the particular themes, concepts, and ideas introduced*

by the conversational partner” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, 136). Each interview required approximately an hour. Interviews were video- and audio-recorded. Because the interviews were conducted with a translator, one researcher took field notes to ensure the translations were accurate, lending credibility to the study (Eisner, 1998). All data were then transcribed and entered into an Excel database for coding, “a process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting those scraps of collected data” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, 133). The coding process allowed major themes and patterns of the data to emerge via the constant comparison method (Creswell, 2007).

We established dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by interviewing five participants, all of whom provided somewhat similar responses. In pursuit of internal validity, we reaffirmed responses with the interpreter and used an external auditor to check the responses on the video recordings; in addition, the field notes served to validate the results. Important to the study, triangulation (Stake, 1995) occurred as congruence between the results of the literature review and the findings of our study. It should be noted that the findings of our study cannot be generalized, but do represent the views of five successful teachers-conductors which can contribute to the research base.

## **The Findings**

From the data, several themes emerged that underscored some consistency of responses as well as a general sense of serious commitment in educating children with a focus on both the children’s skills and their artistic growth. Selection of repertoire was a difficult and challenging task, yet one that was accomplished from a variety of considerations. The major themes identified present a picture, if you will, of the complexity of the literature selection process.

### **A. Theme one: Technical and musical elements**

All of the participants agreed that careful attention to children’s age and vocal abilities was highly important in selecting literature. Alina discussed the intention of concentrating on the children’s vocal abilities, knowing that “the songs [were] chosen with very narrow diapason [range] and then it expand[ed] wider while the children grew”. She adamantly focused on the development of the children’s vocal cords first, followed by enhancement of the voice, breathing, and other technical aspects in singing. Milda, too, proceeded as Alina, later expanding to include phrasing and dynamics. Since vocal range is limited among young singers, Marry noted, not all genres of literature were appropriate to sing. She “focus[ed] on simple folk songs that could be accompanied by simple folk instruments such as xylophone and percussion”. Each of the participants said that vocal development was predicated on children’s abilities, focusing on Lithuanian folk songs in the Lithuanian language because they began with only two or three notes to help the singers match pitch. Marry commented that the eventual use of the diatonic scale forced the eight pitches “to become characters of their lives”.

A second consideration in selecting repertoire was that the teacher must be aware if the children liked the song or not, for they would not pay attention or work diligently if they disliked a piece. Egle discussed the need for starting with simple pieces and gradually utilizing repertoire that presented some challenges, always targeting what

the boys liked to sing since they were more difficult to motivate. The participants agreed that initially singing must start with Lithuanian folk songs as a means of teaching their culture and heritage, focusing on the music of Lithuanian composers first since the children understood the language. Since Justina worked with older children, she emphasized sacred music, often in Latin text, as it was *“very favourable for the development of singing skills”*. She also integrated literature from contemporary composers because there were many good examples.

Most of the participants agreed that *a cappella* singing was less preferred by the children than singing with the accompaniment. The younger children responded well to the accompaniment because it allowed them to *“feel the rhythm [and] be a part of something more complete”*, according to Marry. Milda concurred with the opinion that most pieces were not sung *a cappella* because it required the singers to be more proficient in singing. In contrast, Egle mentioned that many of the folk songs were performed *a cappella* while *“quite complicated compositions were performed with quite a number of instruments”*. Later, more *a cappella* music was introduced which allowed the children to hear themselves and *“to listen to others.... not allowing them to escape”* from hearing their singing (Marry). Because Justina worked with the boys’ singing school choirs, her students performed both *a cappella* and accompanied literature, noting that *“the same song is always in progress”*. Thus, it can first be performed for different audiences as *“a cappella, then with accompaniments, and then with other types of arrangements”*.

### **B. Theme two: Specific purpose of the literature**

Marry remarked that listening was integral to learning music, to learning to sing; people *“do not know how to listen, ...[have] lost...[their] ability to listen”*, thus, the teacher must start at the beginning with the children. In order to train the ear, the participants agreed that many exercises were completed in teaching children to sing before simple songs were introduced. Milda noted:

*“Speaking about the primary children, it is impossible to perform all the songs. Why? Because it takes time to learn a song and in order to perform it has to be shaped. The child should live with that song for a while and the child should feel psychologically secure on that stage. If the song is learned at the surface level, then during performance the song loses about 30 percent of its value”*.

According to Justina, the headmaster of one of the boys’ schools maintained that focus on the boys’ singing was strategic and concerted:

*“Well, the targets of group happen to be boys and boys tend to be a special group and the repertoire should be prepared for the atomic bomb, when there is a tendency to explode any day, so well, they have to work as hard as possible”*.

In effect, literature selection was especially scrutinized to maintain the boys’ interest and participation while that of the girls was easier to sustain and motivate.

There was repertoire selected for teaching singing skills, and as well as choices for events. For example, Alina described the typical set of pieces as being 18, but only 10 were used for performance purposes. Most literature was chosen by teachers as a

concerted measure to address specific holidays in Lithuania in which literature was categorized as *“seasonal... and dedicated to the events”* (Alina). Beyond the special events, literature was *“targeted”* towards concerts or competitions (Milda).

### **C. Theme three: Interdisciplinary approach**

As noted by Alina, *“the development of the repertoire goes alongside the development of the child’s abilities to sing and be artistic”*. The primary program at some schools focused on folklore that Egle enhanced through particular music literature selection *“to transmit the value of folklore to her school children”*. She described projects in Lithuanian schools in which *“various fields of arts starting with painting, drawing, theatre, and ethno-culture”* were explored through an interdisciplinary approach. Marry preferred to teach integrated lessons that might include music, painting, and other arts. For example, she taught the Lithuanian national anthem in combined learning with lessons in *“civics, music, and literature”*.

### **D. Theme four: Aesthetics**

That the child should use the primary years to develop his/her *“kinaesthetic abilities and folklore”* as a foundation for other learning was highly valued by Egle. In addition, the development of the child’s *“aestheticity [sic] was important through concert performance (Alina). “Development of the emotional intellect [was] above all... because through emotions the child gets to the world and also is eager to develop” (Justina);* however, not all pieces held the opportunity for emotional growth (Alina). Justina described the *“emotional world of the child”* that she wanted to awaken to kindle his/her imagination, and *“only good text, good words, good message can do that”* (Justina). Milda elaborated on the idea of aesthetics:

*“When they are able to sing that melody, they are taught how to feel that melody, how to get a meaning out of it, are aware of it . . . [with] the right breathing, the right phrasing, the right dynamics... When speaking about those who have better musical understanding and better abilities and their basics are much better, I develop their awareness of the music piece. Well, I want them to feel the beauty of the chosen piece. And that will be with some educational aspects such as better phrasing, such as rhythmic, [sic] such as dynamics, and the feeling of everything”.*

In addition to learning the music, standing on the stage is also an element of the aesthetics, ‘feeling free’, and having no fear of the audience or communication with the audience, all of which are integral to the performance (Milda). Furthermore, she chose particular literature *“so that the children should know how to stand, what to feel, and how to produce this piece of music”*.

### **E. Theme five: Taste and preferences**

The participants concurred with the idea that personal taste and preferences were integral to choosing literature, saying that they had to like the music in order to teach it. Egle noted that the sound of the piece was of high priority often paired with music that related to Lithuanian folklore. Furthermore, she underscored the emphasis on *“good melodies, good texts, and quality... never rely[ing] on amateur pieces”*. The text had to convey the meaning and message of the song rather than exist as one line



(Justina). And the purpose of the song was important in terms of its capacity for the children's learning including rhythm, form, dynamics, breathing, and vocal range (Milda). She said that teachers often conferred about literature selection during festivals so that they could advise each other.

The teachers observed the responses of their students, noting that songs that were disliked were *"put away and in due time... performed in another way"* (Milda). The children are considered in that literature that is too difficult *"overloads them"* and *"they won't be satisfied"* (Milda). Milda communicated criteria for selecting literature in that *"songs have to be beautiful, they have to be attractive both to the singer and to the audience, and the children should be witnesses of their achievement... and satisfaction"*. Furthermore, with the goal of teaching singing skills, the emphasis rests on the fusion of Lithuanian literature, heritage, and culture (Milda).

#### ***F. Theme six: Learning to choose literature***

The participants identified several factors that influenced the literature selections they made for the children's learning. Justina and Alina studied painting, dance, and music in the gymnasium, a specialized school for music, followed by the music academy which is akin to a conservatory. They emphasized that their education provided a sense of enculturation for recognizing quality literature. While Alina was instructed in literature compilation by one of her professors with whom she still sought advice, Justina suggested that *"the very environment in which she was educated"* had a profound effect on her preferences. Milda's experience in singing in choirs - even today - and observing other conductors led her to refine her repertoire choices. She mentioned that an outstanding choral conductor in Lithuania who currently directed a choir in which she sings has had the most influence on her choices because *"he is a choral specialist"*. Although she did not have direct instruction in choosing literature, she *"followed her professor and observed how he chose music"*.

The most important consideration in that selection, according to Milda, was the audience: *"The repertoire should be close to the audience"* meaning they must hear it, feel it, and have some impact by it. In contrast, Egle said that there are two very important elements that affected literature selection: *"...love to children and love to music"*. During the early years of Marry's thirty in the profession, she chose music that *"she liked and could sing"*. She wanted to teach that repertoire; however, she discovered the music had to be liked by the children. She focused on the children's needs and preferences over the years and found that goal to be most satisfactory.

#### **Discussion and Conclusions**

The participants appeared to be in sync with respect to their ideas about choosing literature. They recognized that making quality literature selection required time to learn and was influenced by their professors, other teachers, and other directors/conductors. There seemed to be a recurring idea that the public's expectations for literature selection and production were quite elevated, in addition to the expectations the participants held for themselves and their singers. Thus, they made concerted effort in carefully choosing repertoire for their children to sing.

The primary considerations in choosing literature included the children's ages and ranges, the use of indigenous music first, particular focus on method and pedagogy for teaching children to sing and later perform, and music that the children liked (Antel, 2010) in order to attract them to singing and maintain their participation. Furthermore, having worthwhile texts in the songs was imperative (Bruno, 2016). There was some difference about singing *a cappella* or with accompaniment, but the participants did use both venues for learning and for performance. It was quite apparent that the participants focused on the singers and their abilities in order to teach singing, but had a particular pedagogical sequence in mind; furthermore, they intentionally related to the singers' approval of the music. Without the singers liking or wanting to sing, participation would dwindle.

They obviously focused on attracting and maintaining male singers, but did not use popular music to do so. They did not 'cave' to popular music nor implement much in terms of currency in their literature choices (except for current Lithuanian composers) because they were steadfast in their approach to teaching singing. They recognized that music was deemed important, successful in their teaching, and would ultimately provide a holistic learning experience for the children that was personal, aesthetic, and motivating to continue singing.

Three patterns emerged from the data with respect to the purposes of learning repertoire: a) the literature served as a means of teaching singers to listen and acquire skills requisite to singing, b) indigenous literature was used to reinforce culture and heritage that preceded the introduction of other cultures and languages, and c) the repertoire was learned over fairly long periods of time to ensure quality singing, planned both for teaching singing and for performances for holidays, national celebrations, and competitions. Literature selection appeared to be concerted, important, and based on particular reasons as opposed to teaching songs just for fun. The idea that the singers 'lived' with pieces for a relatively long time appeared to be useful in teaching them to like the pieces, to engage in more challenging literature, and to work towards accurate and expressive performance for the audiences. Therefore, there was intentional strategy in music selection, the implementation of it, and the eventual outcome. Nothing appeared to be necessarily convenient, hurried, or used as a filler of time.

Use of the interdisciplinary approach facilitated concerted connections between language, history, culture, geography, other arts, and tradition. Because some of the participants preferred to intertwine music with other content areas, it seemed to emphasize their efforts to create relevancy, usefulness, and deeper learning for the students. They recognized the possibilities of forging connections to enhance learning and capitalized on the opportunities to do so.

An emphasis on the emotional development and growth of the singers was central to the participants' literature selection. They wished to create singing environments in which the children heard, felt, experienced, and shared their performance with the audience, learning confidence and expression as a result. One might assume that these goals could serve to maintain singers in their programs and entice others to join. Thus, the experience was not just a singing opportunity, but rather a performance that involved the various senses that could reinforce commitment by the singers and foster

a culture of singing that touched various facets of the children's perceptions, allowing the audience to experience the music as well.

That the teacher must like the music selections was important, but also the transmission of Lithuanian culture and heritage underpinned repertoire selection. Next, the intention of the music was to focus on the preferences of the singers and the audience, and to highlight the children's achievements and satisfaction. Thus, the deliberate manner in which repertoire was selected focused on the people rather than the printed page. Yet, the participants wanted music that was good quality and offered attractiveness to the singers and audience.

The process of learning to select literature was a bit varied. While some of the participants experienced direct instruction in literature selection classes (Frego & Abril, 2003) and ensembles (Bourne, 1990), others learned only by close observation of their professors, other teachers, and conductors. The participants sought the advice of contemporary Lithuanian composers and conductors, frequently consulting during choral festivals. They also identified their choral experiences as having a profound influence on repertoire selection since they 'lived' those experiences, recognizing their responses and those of the audiences.

In conclusion, literature selection was far beyond a single-faceted approach (Trollinger, 2005; Davidova, Zavadska, Šeršnova, Rauduvaite & Chuang, 2015) for the participants, the one that required them to consider a number of factors (Hedden, 2012). The repertoire choices were integral to positive and productive vocal and emotional growth for the children as well as a multi-sensory experience for them and for the audience. The repertoire selection process appeared to be aimed at creating a holistic experience that encompassed musical skills, personal and musical growth, meaning and memory of performances, and aesthetic enhancement for the children. Given the focus on such experiences, it would seem obvious that the participants wanted to stimulate, educate, motivate, and create singing experiences that would inspire future participation. Singing in Lithuania is akin to a national sport in that singing is highly valued. The participants seemingly contributed to the tradition of singing, further transmitting culture and heritage.

Pedagogical considerations, including the children's age and range, were underscored by the participants. Vocal instruction (Atterbury, 1984; Phillips & Aitchison, 1997) preceded any learning of literature, and the sequence of literature introduction was carefully calculated. The participants were highly cognizant of the children's needs, using those as a primary basis for literature selection. Thus, the value of knowing about and understanding children's singing underpinned not only instructional sequence, but also the choice and particular use of repertoire. This was not happenstance, but rather a strategic process to ensure a successful product.

Collectively, the participants held very similar beliefs about the approach to and outcomes of teaching children to sing, all highly organized to achieve their high expectations as well as those by the larger community. In repertoire selection, the participants seemed to be creative in their approaches (Bruno, 2016), relying on recommendations of literature from other teacher-conductors, their observations of successful singing, and their own musical training and experiences. The participants clearly understood that their taste in repertoire and skill and understanding in

teaching children to sing were key to motivating the singers and producing successful learning. The selection process appeared to be one that stemmed from tradition, experience, observation, and evaluation of repertoire from other sources for their singers. The decisions did not appear to be necessarily quick or convenient, but rather prudent, appropriate, and tactical.

Future studies related to this might be further interviews with the children to determine their perspectives of learning to sing. Second, interviews with the administrators in the public schools and singing schools as well as the parents might lend more useful information about the intentions of learning to sing as well as the outcomes of such instruction. And third, similar studies with participants from other countries may provide a different lens in investigating children's singing.

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## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S SENSE OF RHYTHM: LATVIAN MUSIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' OPINIONS**

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### **Abstract**

*The development of children's sense of rhythm is one of the basic problems in music pedagogy. This research is aimed at finding out the opinions of Latvian music school teachers about the issues of the development of preschool-age children's sense of rhythm. The survey has involved 124 Latvian music teachers working in preschool education institutions as well as in secondary schools and higher education establishments. The questionnaire comprises both the statistic data about the respondents, and the assessment of indicators relating to the issues of the development of the sense of rhythm. The research results show that the opinions of Latvian music school teachers about various issues concerning the development of the sense of rhythm significantly differ. This indicates to the need for a deeper exploration of the issues of the development of the sense of rhythm and for working out strategies for developing preschool-age children's sense of rhythm.*

**Key words:** *musical education, sense of rhythm, preschool-age children, preschool education institution*

### **Introduction**

Preschool age is an important period in the development of human personality, since during this period personality's spiritual, physical and moral foundations are being laid, a comprehensive development takes place, personality's core is being shaped, and the basis for personality's world outlook and world model is being built (Boša, 1990; Suruda, 2001; Галанов, 2006; Miesniece, 2011; Randoha & Augstkalne 2011; Lāsmāne, 2012). The research proves the significant role of preschool education for the developmental process of human personality: the investments in preschool

education yield the greatest return and provide the best results in future, but teachers of preschool education institutions have to maintain children's creative activities and the development of their interests (Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Lāsmāne, 2012 a. o.).

One of the most important prerequisites in the process of a harmonious development of personality is the unity of child's emotional and intellectual development (Выготский, 1987). According to the findings of a number of pedagogues (Теплов, 1985; Ветлугина, 1987; Arne, 2001; Suruda, 2001; Рубан & Тарасова, 2001; Zariņš 2003; Анисимов, 2004; Marčēnoka, 2007; Riņķis, 2007; Birzkops, 2008; Bjūzens, 2008; Игнатова, 2008; Brice, 2010; Lāsmāne, 2012), music education is one of the means for the formation of a harmonious development of a personality, because it has a great emotional and intellectual influence. Several pedagogues (Ветлугина, 1958; Тарасова, 1988; Радынова, Катинене & Палавандишвили, 1994; Suruda, 2001; Bičuka, Grasmāne & Pāgraba, 2003; Дрень, 2003; Судзуки, 2005; Bjūzens, 2008; Игнатова, 2008; Brice, 2011; Lāsmāne, 2012; Rajan, 2013) emphasize that it is vital to start the process of music education at the preschool age already.

According to I. Kivle (2009), a musical composition is a single complicated phenomenon incorporating sounds, rhythm and silence arranged in a musical context. Rhythm is important for the processes of composing, performing and perceiving music (Короутек, 1976; Тарасова, 1988; Brophy, 2000; Анисимов, 2004; Кирнарская, 2004; Kārklīš, 2005; Marčēnoka, 2007; Toussaint, 2013). Music rhythm in the interaction with music meter and time organizes music sounds in time, and thus is the organizing foundation of a music structure, and there is no music style or genre whose rhythm wouldn't be important (Мазель & Цуккерман, 1967; Назайкинский, 1972; Анисимов, 2004; Кирнарская, 2004; Thaut, 2005; McLaughlin, 2011).

By the sense of rhythm we understand the ability to feel the emotional expressiveness of music rhythm and precisely reproduce it (Радынова, Катинене & Палавандишвили, 1994). The nature of music rhythm relates tightly to the movements of a human body, and usually a human experiences music rhythm through bodily movements (Теплов, 1985; Кирнарская, 2004; Kivle, 2009). According to D. Kirnarska (Кирнарская, 2004), all good musicians have a perfect sense of rhythm, which is reflected in the emotional expressions of their body (movements), and such movements are to a greater or lesser extent typical of both performers of the 'light' genres and academic musicians.

Therefore, the development of the sense of rhythm is considered one of the most essential components in music education. It underlies the music teaching method by Carl Orff (see: Баренбойм, 1970), and is the cornerstone for other famous music education methodologists as well (Е. Jaques Dalcroze (see: Шторк, 1924), F. Jode (Jöde, 1962), Z. Kodaly (see: Добсаи, 1983), S. Suzuki (Судзуки, (2005))).

Music pedagogues and psychologists point out that a child reacts to the rhythm of music in an early childhood already (Ильина, 1959; Bentley, 1966; Теплов, 1985; Тарасова, 1988; Сечкина, 2009; Brice, 2011, 2012). According to K. Tarasova (Тарасова, 1988), the sense of rhythm and the perception of its components – time and meter – develop actively just at the preschool age.

The researchers (Ветлугина, 1958; Ильина, 1959; Дрень, 2003; Игнатова, 2008) think that the sense of rhythm develops gradually, and the preschool age is a very

favorable and effective period for the development of the sense of rhythm. K. Tarasova (Тарасова, 1970), in turn, speaks about the following order in the development of the sense of rhythm at a preschool age:

- At the age of 2-3 a child starts perceiving music time;
- At the age of 4 a child is able to perceive and reproduce stressed and unstressed sounds;
- At the age of 4-5 a child is able to perceive and reproduce the rhythmic pattern of music.

O. Dren, (Дренъ, 2003) thinks that the development of the sense of rhythm contributes to a child's self-expression and to a natural and constant adaptation to musical and other kind of activities as well. The model of the development of the sense of rhythm developed by O. Dren is based on child's involvement into different rhythmically-organized activities: plastic, graphic, verbal, games a. o.

Lately, several works on the development of the sense of rhythm have been published in Latvia (Dzintere & Stangaine, 2005, 2007; Brice, 2010, 2011, 2012). Latvian teacher I. Brice (2012) thinks that teaching the sense of rhythm should be started as early as possible; otherwise it will require much effort on teacher's part to make up for what has been missed in the development of the sense of rhythm. In her opinion, the best way how to develop children's sense of rhythm is using special games by applying such principles as:

- To select games taking into account children's age, interests and level of their previous preparedness;
- Desirably, to begin with simpler games, and then, during the learning process, gradually add more complicated assignments;
- To use a slower tempo at the beginning;
- Rhythm assignments should be fulfilled very accurately and precisely, otherwise they lose their sense;
- During the rhythm games, it is important to support, promote and encourage a child with elements of improvisation;
- To support children's wish to engage themselves in rhythm games also at some other time, e. g. during a walk.

Consequently, a precise reproduction of a song rhythm is an essential component of singing art, but what are Latvian music teachers' opinions as to the problems of the development of the sense of rhythm?

## **Method and Sample**

The exploration of literature relating to the development of preschool-age children's sense of rhythm has raised several questions:

- Do Latvian music teachers consider the development of the sense of rhythm an important component of children's music education?
- Do Latvian music teachers support the development of preschool-age children's sense of rhythm?
- Is it possible to develop all children's sense of rhythm?

- Is the development of musical hearing more important than the development of the sense of rhythm?

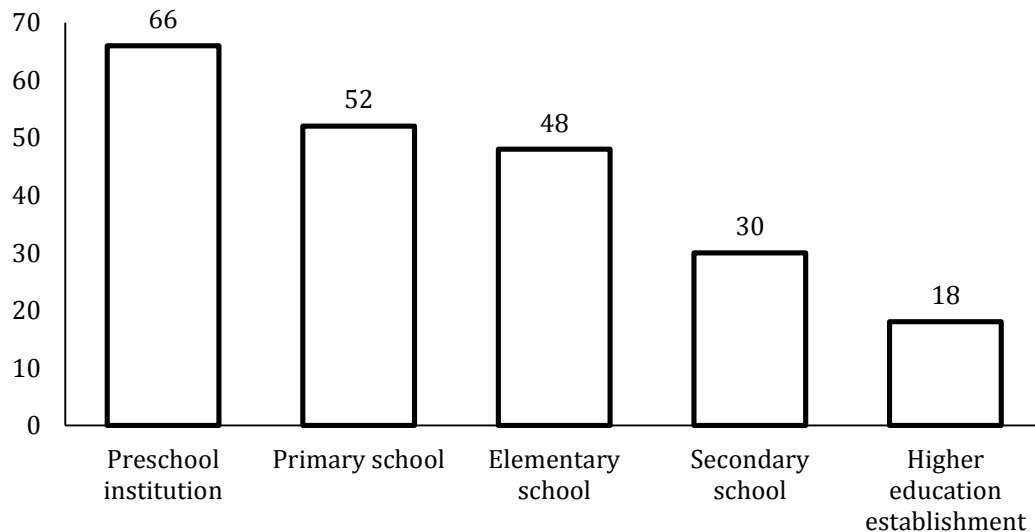
**Research aim:** to study music teachers' opinions about the problems of the sense of rhythm in preschool education institutions as well as in schools of general education.

**Research object:** the development of preschool-age children's sense of rhythm.

**Research base:** Latvian music teachers (n=124).

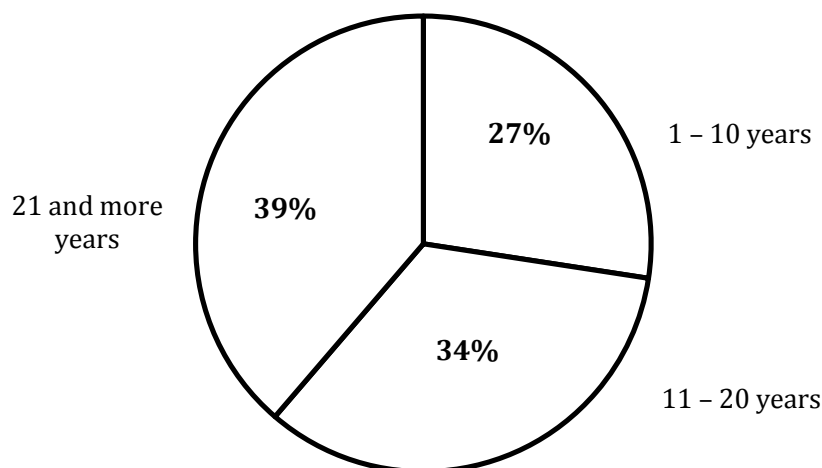
The survey data analysis tools – MS Excel 2007.

The questionnaire survey was carried out in the spring of 2015. It was conducted by the researcher herself and some volunteers. In real life, music teachers can work at several education levels, and therefore the respondents were allowed to indicate several workplaces. Music teachers from different Latvia's regions working on all levels of music education (starting from preschool education institutions to higher education establishments) took part in this survey. The choice of such sample results from the fact that music teachers of general education schools and higher education establishments see both the shortcomings and achievements of music education in preschool education institutions, and, consequently, unbiased and more precise and detailed information can be received. The distribution of the respondents by their workplaces is reflected in Figure 1, and it shows that the respondents represent all levels of music education.



**Figure 1. Distribution of the respondents by their workplaces (n=124)**

The respondents have an extensive work experience. By music teachers' length of service the respondents may be divided into three groups:



*Figure 2. Distribution of the respondents by the length of their service (n=124)*

## Research Results

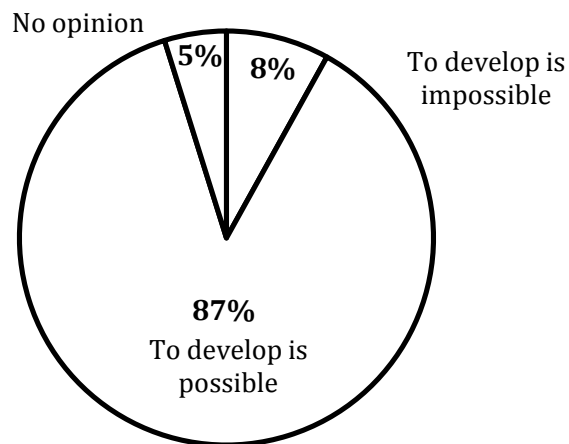
In the basic part of the questionnaire, the respondents had to assess the issues of the development of the sense of rhythm by the Likert scale. The questionnaire questions were divided into two groups:

1. Questions relating to music teachers' experience of the general issues concerning the development of the sense of rhythm:
  - The sense of rhythm is an essential component of child's music education;
  - To develop children's sense of rhythm is possible;
  - The sense of rhythm must be developed;
  - The sense of rhythm has to be developed throughout the whole life;
  - Children come to school with a developed sense of rhythm, to my mind.
2. Questions related to the methodological issues of the sense of rhythm:
  - I know the methodology of developing the sense of rhythm;
  - The sense of rhythm should be developed at preschool education institutions rather than at school;
  - I consider that the development of musical hearing is more important than the development of the sense of rhythm;
  - Children's sense of rhythm should be developed together with musical hearing;
  - Only musically-gifted children's sense of rhythm can be developed.

The research results show that Latvian music teachers unanimously agree that

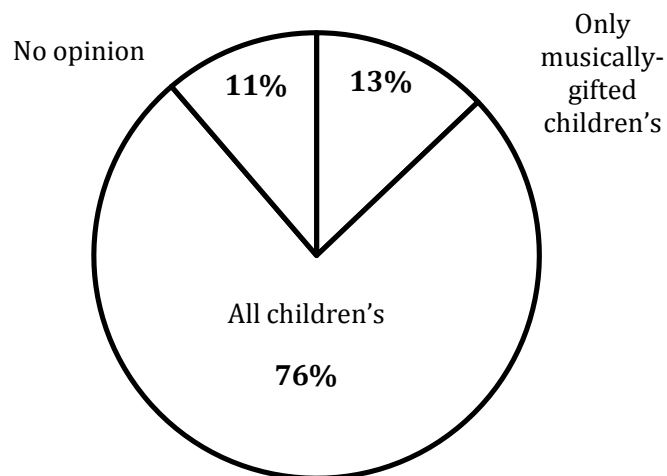
- The sense of rhythm is an essential component of children's music education;
- The sense of rhythm has to be developed;
- All know the methodology of developing the sense of rhythm.

The majority of Latvian music teachers (87%) consider that to develop the sense of rhythm is possible (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Respondents' opinions about the statement "To develop children's sense of rhythm is possible" (n=124)**

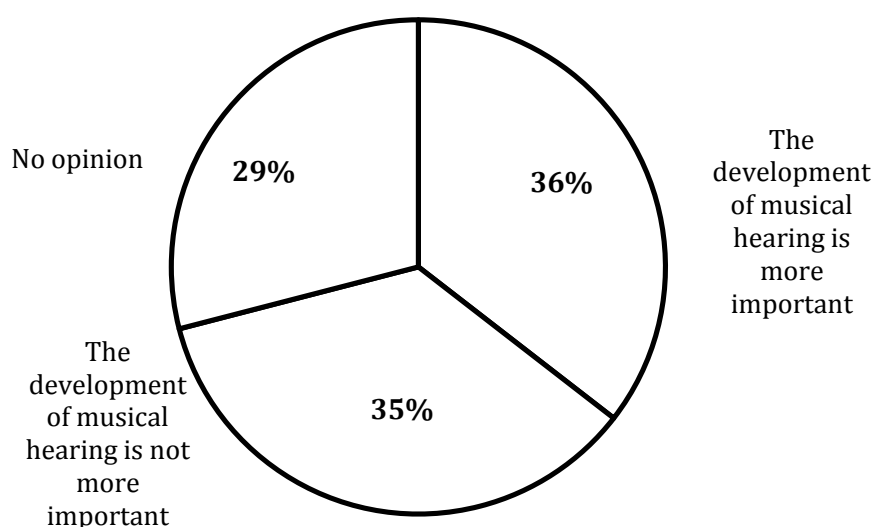
Though 87% of respondents think that to develop the sense of rhythm is possible, however only 75.8% consider that it is possible to develop all children's sense of rhythm. Part of the respondents (12.9%) are of the opinion that it is possible to develop only musically-gifted children's sense of rhythm, and 11.3% of the surveyed respondents have no opinion about this question (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Respondents' opinions about the statement "Only musically-gifted children's sense of rhythm can be developed" (n=124)**

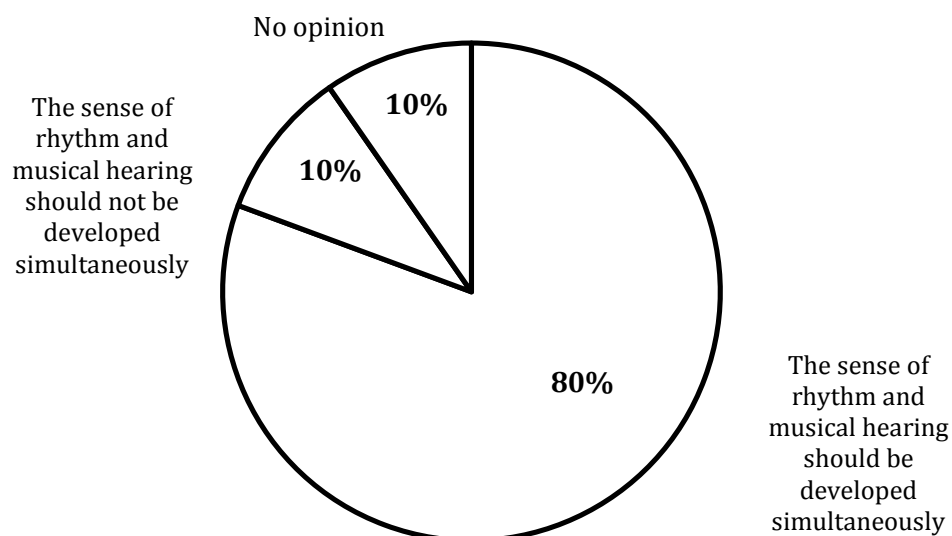
The respondents expressed the major disagreement about the question what is more important – the development of musical hearing or the development of the sense of rhythm. The respondents' answers fell into three almost similar groups (see Figure 5):

- 35.5% of respondents think that the development of musical hearing is more important than the development of the sense of rhythm;
- 35.5% of respondents consider that the development of musical hearing is not more important than the development of the sense of rhythm;
- 29% of respondents have no opinion about this question.



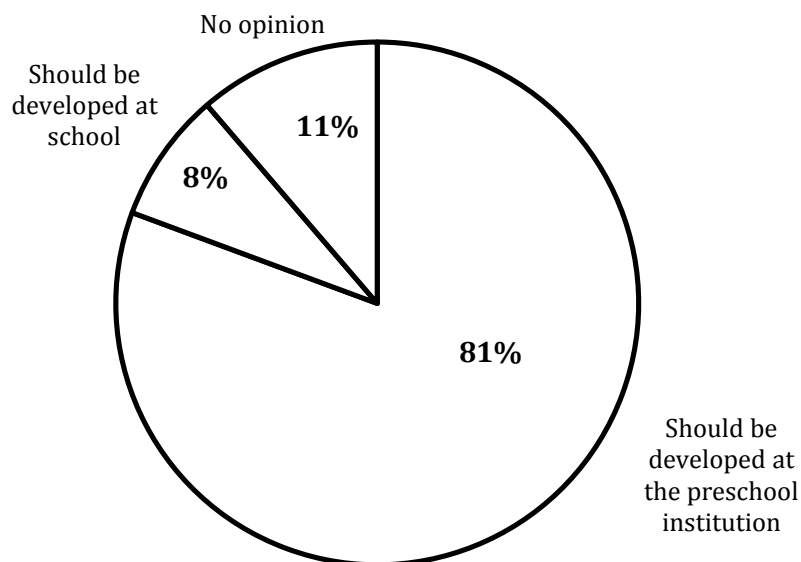
***Figure 5. Respondents' opinions about the statement "I consider that the development of musical hearing is more important than the development of the sense of rhythm" (n=124)***

In music education, special exercises for the development of the sense of rhythm are extensively applied; however, 80.6% of Latvian music teachers hold the opinion that the sense of rhythm and musical hearing should be developed simultaneously (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6. Respondents' opinions about a simultaneous development of the sense of rhythm and musical hearing (n=124)**

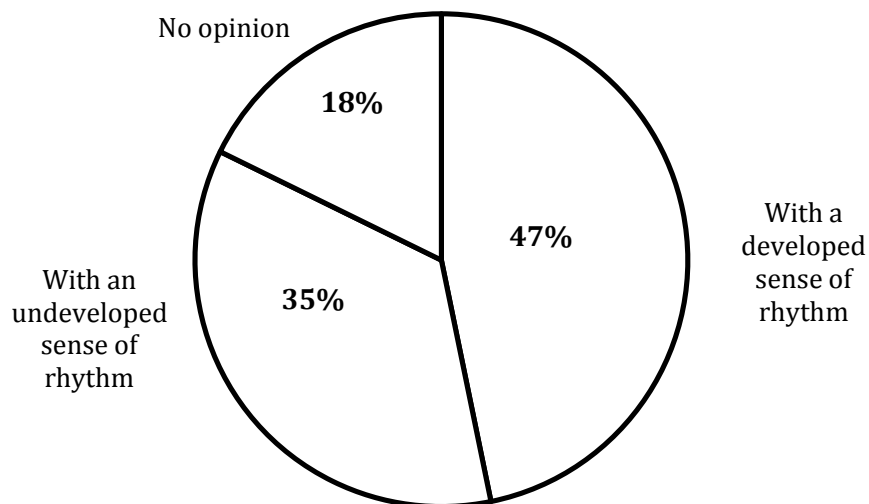
According to the survey results, the majority of music teachers (80.6%) consider that the sense of rhythm should be developed at the preschool education institution rather than at school (see Figure 7).



**Figure 7. Music school teachers' opinions about the development of the sense of rhythm at the preschool education institution or at school (n=124)**

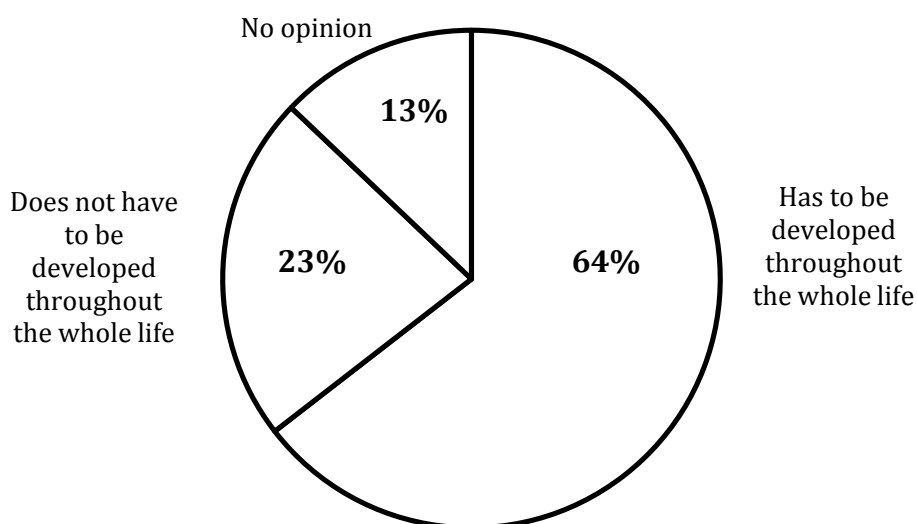


Despite such opinions on the necessity to develop the sense of rhythm in preschool education institutions, only 46.8% of music teachers assert that children come to school with a developed sense of rhythm (see Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Respondents' opinions about the statement "Children come to school with a developed sense of rhythm, to my mind" (n=124)**

According to the received answers, a large part of Latvian music teachers (64.5%) hold the opinion that the sense of rhythm has to be developed throughout the whole life (see Figure 9).



**Figure 9. Respondents' opinions about the statement "The sense of rhythm has to be developed throughout the whole life" (n=124)**

Whether it is really necessary to be occupied with the development of the sense of rhythm throughout the whole life is a debatable question which may be addressed by some other research.

## Conclusions

1. Latvian music teachers unanimously agree that the development of the sense of rhythm is an essential component of children's music education and must be obligatory developed. Though there are a lot of well-known and broadly used special exercises for the development of the sense of rhythm, the majority of Latvian music teachers consider that the sense of rhythm has to be developed together with musical hearing. However their opinions differ on the question what is more important – the development of musical hearing or the development of the sense of rhythm: part of teachers maintain that the development of musical hearing is more important than the development of the sense of rhythm, and just as great part of teachers think that the development of musical hearing is not more important than the development of the sense of rhythm.
2. The greater part of Latvian music teachers hold the opinion that they know the methodology of developing sense of rhythm, and to develop children's sense of rhythm is possible. Though they are competent in the methodology of developing the sense of rhythm, only 75.8% of music teachers consider that to develop all children's sense of rhythm is possible, while 12.9% of music teachers think that only musically-gifted children's sense of rhythm can be developed.
3. Most of Latvian music teachers (80.6%) maintain that the sense of rhythm should be developed at a preschool education institution rather than at school; less than a half of the respondents (46.8%) think that children come to school with a developed sense of rhythm.

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S CREATIVE ABILITIES IN THE STUDIO OF A MUSICAL

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### **Abstract**

*The present article deals with the problem of children's creativity developing through the perspective of a musical. This paper reveals the theme of a musical as a special means of the identification and development of creative abilities. The essence, criteria of creativity in music pedagogy, as well as the pedagogical aspects of the creativity development through a musical were analyzed. The article has an interdisciplinary nature: it is written at the intersection of music psychology, pedagogy, art history (the direction is the social functions of art). The practical experience of work with children in the studio of a musical and the experience of the production of a musical as a demonstrative form are generalized.*

*On the basis of the analysis of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical literature the author comes to the conclusion that the process of a collective music-making is the most important factor in creating the atmosphere for revealing and developing a child's creative potential: a musical provokes children's genuine interest in music and a collective music-making, and the communication among the team members is being developed to the level of spiritual personal relationships. The author concludes that a musical as a synthetic genre is the most effective means of developing children's creative abilities.*

**Keywords:** *collective music-making, music studio, creativity, music pedagogy, children's musical, musical development*

### **Introduction**

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it becomes obvious that the realization of creative potentialities and the education of child's personality are the basic task of education beginning already from a pre-school period. In the contemporary world, a child learns to be ready for a maximally effective use of one's abilities, for applying knowledge and skills in non-standard conditions and situations, for demonstrating a skill to quickly react to all changes occurring in the world, science, technologies and art (Joubert, Mills & Widdowson, 2009). Undoubtedly, a teacher's role in the formation of the above

mentioned competences is significant: to inculcate love of music in children, to develop their creative abilities, to form their sense of the beautiful through music-making are teacher's primary tasks. R. Smith (2000), having identified the phases of a creative development, maintains that the period between the ages of five and seven in a child's life is the most favorable period for the development of creative abilities.

However, a lot of contemporary music pedagogues (Hargreaves, 1999; Daugėlienė & Straksienė, 2009 a. o.) consider that one of the main reasons hindering a rapid and dynamic progress of music pedagogy is inertness and immobility of a former music education system. Stereotypes of old way of thinking are to be found at different stages of music education:

- Old and already obsolete working forms and methods are being still applied;
- Pedagogical technologies created many years ago and due to their conservatism no longer being adequate to the new situation in the *socium* are still used;
- Classical forms and methods of teaching music lessons in art education institutions (practicing, listening to classical music, the development of the sense of rhythm) have reached the limit of their resources, they are not interesting enough for children experienced in contemporary technologies;
- The standard function of a musical leader often comes to getting ready for festivities envisaged in the plan of the institution, and consequently, there simply remains no time for the development of children's musical abilities and their creativity.

It is quite obvious that in order music education could reach the level of contemporary technologies, changes have to be introduced from the respective areas of the humanities (didactics, psychology, cultural science, aesthetics etc.) and they have to be assimilated into music teacher's consciousness. Thus, the necessity for the attraction of new forms and methods of the development of children's creative abilities arises.

This research investigates the production and realization of children musicals as an untraditional form of organizing preschool-age children's cultural activity. In this way, the aim to motivate the learners to apply their knowledge and skills creatively, as well as to create the conditions for involving the parents and peers in a creative interaction with children via producing a musical is achieved.

**Research object:** the process of the development of preschool-age children's creative abilities at the lessons in the studio of a musical.

**Research aim:** to study the development of preschool-age children's creative abilities through the lessons in the studio of a musical.

**Research methods:**

- The analysis of scientific (pedagogical, psychological) literature;
- The interview with the parents of preschool-age children learning in the studio of a musical;
- The analysis of the obtained data.



## **A Musical as a Multi-functional Means of the Development of Children's Creative Abilities**

A musical (from "a musical comedy") is one of the contemporary and most interesting genres of a musical theatre which unites children of different age in a joint creative process. Due to its great genre likeness with a musical comedy, a musical was not recognized as a separate genre of theatrical art for a long time; however, in the long run it developed features that distinguished it from other genres. A musical is a dramaturgical work involving the elements of a variety show, as well as those of art of music, drama, choreography and opera. And this attests to N. Sac's (Cau, 1993) words that combining of theatre, music and dance hides enormous potentialities.

A remarkable phenomenon of a contemporary musical theatre is the increasing number of those musicals where the artists are children. A musical has taken one of the leading positions in a contemporary musical culture. It grows in demand, and this excites great interest in this genre. A scientific approach to the investigation of this genre is important for a further development of children's creativity in additional education institutions. During several recent decades, many pedagogues (Poškienė, 1996; Katinienė & Vaičienė, 2001; Savukynaitė & Lukoševičiūtė, 2004 a.o.) have focused on children's theatrical-musical creativity. Pedagogues of children theatre (Brėdikytė, 2004; Kazragytė, 2007; Barzdžiukienė, 2011) have also given their attention to the problems of education. Among most popular studies are works by E. Kampus (1974) and by M. Grinberg (Гринберг, 2011). E. Kampus (1974) mentions a well-known paradox by O.Schneidereit (1955) about the operetta and offers to paraphrase it in regard to the genre of a musical:

- A musical is the most studied musical genre;
- A musical is the least studied musical genre;
- A musical is known to everybody because everybody knows musicals;
- A musical is known to nobody because nobody knows what a musical is.

Despite the enormous popularity of this phenomenon in the world and the fact that a genre of a musical has already existed for quite a long time, a serious pedagogical research on the development of children's creative abilities through the lessons in the studio of a musical has not yet been done, moreover, in the countries of the Baltic region such a research does not exist at all. The investigations are basically concerned with the genre of a musical in general (Bargainnier, 1989; Flinn, 1997; Everett & Laird, 2002; Jones, 2003), rather than with studying the pedagogical values of this phenomenon. Consequently, the need arose for the investigation of a musical not only as a means of organizing a cultural-recreational activity in additional education institutions of children, but also as a unique environment contributing to revealing and increasing children's creative abilities.

What are the peculiarities of a musical? Why does its popularity as a genre grow, and why can we say that a musical contributes to identifying and revealing children's creative abilities?

## **Pedagogical Aspects of Children's Creativity Developing through the Perspective of a Musical**

As we know, at an early age children are very impressionable, therefore what a child sees, hears and feels is extremely important. A musical is produced on the basis of literary works and actually is an addition to them. All children like to play, their imagination constantly conjures something up; this can be used for the development of a creative activity in a musical.

Many researchers in the field of children psychology (Gordon, 2000; Walker, 2014 a. o.) state that teaching done in a musical theatre contributes to children's development in many respects: intellectual, creative, physical, social. Often, a musical presents certain information in a colorful and emotional tone: this helps the children to relax and feel much freer in the communication with their peers, and thus, prerequisites are created for an easier acquisition of information and knowledge. This kind of art develops different features of child's intellect, for instance, such as musical, spatial, communicative and others. Besides, in addition there develop such features as perception, critical thinking, ability to find a solution to problems, and other abilities. A joint music-making in the musical studio enriches children's emotional experience, develops culture of expressing their feelings and enhances the development of independence and individuality. The development of preschool-age children's creative abilities by means of such lessons exerts essential impact on their cultural competences, reveals the unique knowledge and values of the world - the knowledge which is as important as the knowledge of science, mathematics, religion and other disciplines.

On the one hand, a children musical is a fascinating game and having a merry time with peers; however, on the other hand, it is a well-considered teaching of some very useful skills to a child and an accurate, unobtrusive monitoring of child's development. If a child starts learning in the studio of a musical from the very childhood, his development is many-sided, and in the long run a child grows into an interesting and attractive personality. An active participation in joint activities, communication with peers and performing together with them on the stage avert suffering from different complexes and from feeling of inferiority. Skills of communication, openness, communicability and collective music making will prove useful for any person whatever way in life he/she might choose.

Child psychologist D. Grakauskaite-Karkockiene (2003) considers that a child's imagination develops in its natural way, but if efforts are made, it can be developed and can even surprise other people. In her opinion, if children are faced with sensations, images or sounds unexperienced before, their mind opens up to meet the wide and versatile world. It is vital to experience this glorious feeling of discovery together with them, to help them and, perhaps, to learn ourselves.

Children are receptive, open, they allow themselves to indulge in fancies, they are inquisitive and restless, but, unfortunately, not always get answers to their questions: Why is the grass green? Why is the snow wet? Where do fairies live? Consequently, the development of child's personality and of his creative abilities requires creating conditions for the implementation of their abilities in a musical theatre.

G. J. Puccio (2001) thinks that the artistic activity in the studio of a musical involves not only teaching actor skills, but also rendering a child the assistance in familiarizing himself with the world around him and in developing his imagination. This is the first step towards the formation of aesthetic feelings. Such a pedagogical method not only develops children's creativity, but also contributes to their interaction with the society, teaches them to concentrate their attention, to distinguish between the elements of the good and of the evil; after all, the heroes of musicals – common fairy-tale characters – embody the principal life values, dreams or experienced feelings.

The production of a musical, being a joint creative activity (a collective music-making), requires coordinated efforts on the part of all participants: a director, musicians, actors, artists. Skills of a creative interaction in such an activity are complex coordinated mutual activities of all members of a collective, allowing fulfilling creative tasks during the process of producing a musical. The acquisition of the language of musical-dramaturgical art lays the foundations for the development of skills of perceiving and understanding the reasons and peculiarities of people's behavior, as well as the skills of communication, including the ability to impart emotionally-colored verbal, bodily-motor, representational information, which contributes to the formation of skills of creative interaction between the participants of a theatrical activity.

Quite often, classical literary works, plays by contemporary authors, films, biographies, and science-fiction provide the literary basis for musicals. A plot for a children musical can also be taken from children stories, fairy-tales, and animated cartoon films. A variant of combining fragments from several fairy-tales is also interesting. Taking into consideration the fact that a musical involves music, dance as well as dramatic "play", the artist of a musical may be said to be a universal performer and the performance itself – a synthesis of arts by means of which the young artists engage in a dialogue with the audience by combining at least three kinds of activity (the skill of singing, dancing, performing a role). After all, according to C. Orff's (Orff, 1975) conception, the ideas determining music education are a synthesized use of a sounding word, singing, dance and rhythm, the instrumental atmosphere and even children's own creativity however simple it might be.

What are creative abilities? What are the prerequisites for their development? It is generally known that every child is characterized by an individual complex of creative abilities. For example, we may say that a child shows the ability to draw, if he can draw some object without any difficulty; musically gifted is the one who can quickly and easily memorize and reproduce some melody; the ability to dance is demonstrated by a child who shows imagination at plastically rendering the character and image of music, who quickly memorizes musical movements, whose movements correspond to a musical-rhythmic pattern of music.

Abilities imply human's psychological qualities which help a child successfully acquire knowledge, skills and apply them in practice (Петрушин, 1997). To develop abilities, it is necessary to provide opportunities for manifesting oneself in different kinds of creative activity: dances, singing, games etc. Abilities develop only during activities, and we cannot say that a person lacks any abilities until this person has tried him/herself in this sphere (Stroia, 2015). The significance of an early development of abilities in general is well-known, and, consequently, the significance of an early

development of those of children, too. In childhood, the nervous system is extremely sensitive, the organism is still developing, a goal-oriented training entails not only creating new links and improving processes in the cortex, but also anatomical-physiological changes in the organism beneficial for this kind of activity. 'The indicator of abilities', which might appear in future, is child's interests in this or another kind of activity.

It is worth mentioning that a child's immersion into the bright, versatile and saturated world of a musical, into the atmosphere of rehearsals and the performing of different roles make a positive impact on the development of personality qualities, such as patience, responsiveness, mutual assistance and understanding, generosity, and they develop human's creative nature as well.

In order to study the development of creative abilities of preschool-age children attending the studio of a musical closer and from a practical aspect, the decision was taken to investigate a specific case, drawing a sample from the musical studio "Viola@" at the Visaginas House of Creativity and conducting a semi-structured interview with parents.

## **Methodology**

### ***A. The description of the research environment***

In 2011, the author of the article founded the musical studio "Viola@" at the Visaginas House of Creativity (Lithuania) which trains children, teenagers and young people between the ages of 4 and 18. During the five years of studio work, a lot of musicals have been staged, among which are:

- *"On Board a Ship of Friendship"* (on motifs of Grimm brothers' fairy tale "Bremen Musicians");
- *"A Contemporary Story of Snow-White"*, *"Towards a Dream..."* (a musical created by studio learners);
- Opera *"Beans and the Olds"* (on motifs of a Lithuanian folk tale);
- *"Luka and Friends"* (a musical is written by a well-known Lithuanian composer J. Siurbis) and others.

We have to mention the fact that the studio learners (about 30 people) independently write scenarios, librettos, choreography, create costumes and scenography. The learners of the studio "Viola@" are winners of many national and international musical and theatrical competitions and festivals.

### ***B. Choice of the research method***

To elucidate the opinion of parents of the youngest studio learners on the development of children's creative abilities at the studio of a musical (situation, conditions, suppositions, and opportunities), the method of a semi-structured interview was applied. Such an interview lasts until the researcher and the respondent have come to a mutual understanding (Marton & Booth, 1997); this indicates that a theoretical "satiation" has been reached (Creswell, 2007).

The aim of the interview was to elucidate parents' opinion on the development of their children's creative abilities at the lessons in the studio of a musical.

Questions:

1. How do you understand creativity?
2. What does the development of creative abilities imply for you?
3. Why is it important to develop creativity, in your opinion?
4. Mention an example of a creative personality. How is creativity reflected in one's behavior? What are the qualities that distinguish a creative personality?
5. What is a creative environment to your mind? Why?
6. What kind of environment, in your opinion, stimulates/does not stimulate a creative education? Why?
7. Does music-making in the musical studio develop your child's creative abilities? If yes, then - what kind of changes have you observed as regards his/her creative development?
8. What obstacles, to your mind, may hinder the development of children's creativity in the studio of a musical?
9. What would you propose to change, improve in the activity of the musical studio in order to improve the quality of creativity development?

Further, the content analysis of the interview results was made. The information obtained in the process of interviews is sent for receiving more precise and in-depth data on the development of creative abilities resulting from children's training in the musical studio. The author is convinced that this information will be useful when conclusions about the research are drawn and recommendations for the development of children's creative abilities are produced.

### ***C. Sample***

The research involved eight parents of children attending the musical studio "Viola@". For the sake of confidentiality, the names of informants participating in the research were coded. Two informants were males, the rest (6) – females. Informants' age – between 23 and 41 years; the education of the informants – various. The interview was conducted in July, 2016.

### **Results of the Study**

From the nine interview questions the following sub-categories were distinguished:

- Creativity – this is...;
- Development of creative abilities;
- Need for the development;
- A creative personality;
- Environment stimulating creative education;
- Creative environment;
- Proposals;
- Obstacles hindering the development;
- The development of creative abilities through a musical.

Fragments of informant's statements regarding the established sub-categories are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Informants' statements about the development of children's creative abilities as regards the established sub-categories**

SUB-CATEGORY	INFORMANT'S STATEMENTS
<b>Creativity – this is...</b>	<p>"&lt;...&gt; creativity – this a special look at the world around us, which helps us to see the gloomy and uninteresting life from a different angle, from the angle more colorful, interesting and unusual, where you want to live, create and love. &lt;...&gt; Everything would have been different without creativity, however I hardly would like to live in the world without creativity" (X3);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; most probably this is a state of your soul which does not allow us to remain in one place, which makes us develop, changes us for the better. And in some respect it tries to change the world" (X1);</p> <p>"Aspiration, enrichment, development and learning new things enhance the development of creativity. &lt;...&gt; I think that I am a creative person as I constantly try to learn something. &lt;...&gt; reading literature, studying arts – this helps me to develop my creative potential and creative qualities. &lt;...&gt; This will help me in future as well" (X6);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; a wish to tell somebody what is happening in your soul. A wish to express oneself. &lt;...&gt; why are some people able to write poetry or paint pictures while others are not even able to devise a rhyming word? What does it depend on? Does it depend on mentality or the state of the soul? It is impossible to give an unequivocal answer to this question simply because such does not exist! &lt;...&gt; Creativity is one form of human's activity, based not on encyclopedic knowledge, but on fancy, imagination and one's own thinking" (X8).</p>
<b>Development of creative abilities</b>	<p>"Creative abilities can be developed quite rapidly. There are a lot of special techniques for it, I have read about such. These exercises are basically aimed at abandoning the habitual ways of thinking and creating fresh ideas, which later may be assessed and the most useful may be selected from them. I also consider that all people are creative, but their creativity manifests itself in different spheres. &lt;...&gt; there are people who can paint very well and their approach to any picture is creative, however they are not able to sing. Sport is also creativity" (X1);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; creative qualities develop only in hard work" (X4);</p> <p>"Often, all that you need to do to be creative is to set a task for yourself in creativity and devote time to it. I am not a creative person, I fail to be such, but I am trying hard" (X5);</p> <p>"Extremely important are certain factors contributing to the formation and development of creativity. One of them is the environment under whose impact an actually creative personality may emerge" (X7);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; a successful cooperation between a teacher and a learner in a creative environment is the main condition for the development of creativity" (X8).</p>
<b>Need for the development</b>	<p>"&lt;...&gt; creativity must be developed for your brain to work and not to be stagnant".</p> <p>"If you inculcate purposefulness and creativity in yourself since your very childhood, you will achieve everything, and success will attend you in everything!" (X2);</p> <p>"This process is open, allowing you to develop spiritually and culture-wise,</p>

	<p>to create new things and strive for enriching your inner world and the soul itself" (X3);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; creativity is the basis. People have to develop their creativity and skill to create! You get nowhere without creativity, after all, creativity is the basis for a beautiful and lively life" (X5).</p>
<b>Creative personality</b>	<p>"A creative personality constantly strives to learn more about the world around him, and not only about the field of his own activity, but also about the related branches" (X1);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; a creative person, first of all, is a person thinking originally, and able to offer non-standard solutions" (X2);</p> <p>"A creative person is a person who has created something that nobody before him has even imagined to create".</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; this is a personality of a man-creator, namely, the one who creates some, new in principle, products as the result of his creativity" (X4);</p> <p>"A teacher training us in a musical is a creative person indeed. She knows how to rouse learners' interest, and selects new materials, new exercises for every lesson, searches for interesting facts from prominent people's life, entertaining stories. Undoubtedly, one of the most important values of the teacher is her professional competence. A teacher has to be an authority, to surprise a learner by her technique and mastery, I mean a concert activity. I'd like to mention also such a quality of teacher's work as fairness. It is essential to notice even the slightest learner's progress and emphasize, evaluate it, but also require some result at every lesson" (X7).</p>
<b>Creative environment</b>	<p>"A creative environment is a place where creative people meet and communicate, the people who are interested in music, fine arts, photography, theatre and cinema"(X3);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; this is a factor which enhances the formation of child's personality"(X6);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; this is a kind of a greenhouse where the ideas are sown into a fertile soil and there they can sprout and break into blossom" (X7);</p> <p>"A creative environment is a world within a world where romance, warmth and kindness are concentrated" (X8).</p>
<b>Environment stimulating creative education</b>	<p>Child's creativity develops in the environment where the process of developing a creative personality takes place at every stage of his/her development" (X2);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; creativity is stimulated by the environment where there are enough of ways and means as well as of time" (X4);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; I think that this is the environment where children learn to appreciate such values as their family, ancestors and parental house, after all, a person having no family feels, indeed, lonely and inferior. It is not for nothing that the people say that children bring happiness to their parents, but the parents try to make their children happy" (X5);</p> <p>"Child creativity manifests itself only in a safe environment, which is characterized by respect and trust, in which children are encouraged for their creativity" (X8).</p>
<b>Development of creative abilities through a musical</b>	<p>"In the musical studio children reveal their creative abilities. Here, my child got more daring, artistic, interesting; his theatrical and musical abilities were manifested, which nobody had noticed before" (X1);</p> <p>"A musical – this the ocean of opportunities where a child can reveal and implement his/her ideas" (X2);</p> <p>"After a year of training in the studio my daughter has greatly changed, I would say "by 180 degrees". &lt;...&gt; I can see it also by her communication</p>

	<p>with me, with her friends, by her character etc. And I consider that this is good" (X4);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; my child has become more confident about himself. He sings at home, with his grandmothers, friends. I never thought it could be possible" (X7);</p> <p>"My Robert was very uncommunicative, he had no friends, and constantly seemed to be at his computer. Now he is the life and soul of any party" (X8).</p>
<b>Obstacles hindering the development</b>	<p>"You need to get over yourself, boldly express your opinion, be confident" (X2);</p> <p>"What hinders is low self-assessment, lack of confidence in one's words and actions" (X5);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; fear of being wrong" (X6);</p> <p>"&lt;...&gt; of course, the insufficient support of parents hinders" (X8).</p>
<b>Proposals</b>	<p>"&lt;...&gt; first of all, the support on the part of administration, both moral and financial, is very essential or rather necessary" (X1);</p> <p>"We need to meet oftener. Such lessons might take place every day, but two times – it is very little" (X3);</p> <p>"It seems to me that we might try to work less on specific results, but more on the process, on creativity. I think this would do children much good" (X6).</p>

The analysis of the received information shows that the development of preschool-age children's creative abilities has many characteristic features. The results obtained from the interview allow us to confidently assert that all the informants realize the importance of developing children's creative abilities and all of them support their development. They remark that creative abilities can be developed at the lessons in the studio of a musical. Some informants emphasize the idea that the development of creative abilities has to be brought into the foreground, or, perhaps, set as the main goal of the lessons in the studio of a musical.

In the given studio, a special attention is devoted to the development of creativity, since the lessons are interdisciplinary: here, every child can find what to do and how to express oneself through music, dance or theatre, or, perhaps through all these things taken together. The main thing is that you never feel bored here; anyone can find something to do and demonstrate one's skills here, since in the studio of a musical, as in the studio offering plenty of opportunities, anyone can find a sphere where he/she is really unique. Parents are glad that a musical has greatly contributed to the development of their children's personalities, and this is just like an excellent investment made in the future of the society.

## Conclusions

1. The analysis of the interview showed that the parents of preschool-age children learning in the musical studio "Viola@" understand the definition of creativity similarly and agree with the statement that creative qualities can be developed only by hard work. They have come to the conclusion that since the very childhood we need to inculcate in ourselves purposefulness and creativity, to develop spiritually and culture-wise, to create new things and strive for enriching our inner world, and, first and foremost, set ourselves



goals and strive for them. Noteworthy, to parents' mind, the environment stimulating the formation of a really creative personality occupies an important place in this process. They expressed the opinion that in the studio of a musical children reveal their creative abilities, they become bolder, more confident, artistic, interesting, and they manifest their theatrical and musical abilities, which have not been observed before.

2. It turned out that children's music-making in the studio of a musical is one of the most effective forms of music education enhancing the development of child's creative personality. This activity is understandable for a child; it is close to their nature since it is related to a game. Via a game, a child receives more information about the world around, his memory and imagination develop, and he experiences various emotional states. Participation in a musical generates strong interest in literature, theatre, music and dance, it develops artistic skills, stimulates creating new images.
3. The research in the field of music pedagogy demonstrated that lessons in the studio of a musical make a personality richer, expand children's general and artistic horizons, and implement their cognitive interests. A musical, being a peculiar form of aesthetic cognizing of reality and its reflection in artistic images, allows a child to perceive the world in all of its richness and to learn to transform it through artistic activities. Performing in the studio gives children not only pleasure, but also allows them to display their skills in different situations, take on various roles (in the direct and figurative meaning). It creates favorable conditions also for children's self-expression and cognition of the world around us with all our organs of senses. In a musical, a child is first of all a creator, and this creativity provides anybody, independent of the degree of his/her giftedness, with the opportunity to actively and independently join the creative process, to gradually acquire more elements of this kind of art and learn to efficiently operate with them.
4. Self-realization via an active creative and practical activity based on natural abilities and opportunities, done in a pleasant, welcoming atmosphere created by the favorable attitude of teachers and by the process of creation itself – such is the approach to the development of preschool-age children's creativity through a musical.

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