

THE CLASSICAL GUITAR CURRICULUM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF JUNIOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN'S MUSICAL CULTURE

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Abstract

The development of musical culture is a necessary condition for a comprehensive development of human's personality, for the development of his/her creative, artistic and esthetic potential.

This paper deals with the junior school-age children's psychological-pedagogical peculiarities, as well as characterizes the authorial classical guitar curriculum in the context of the development of junior school-age children's musical culture. In the process of the study, several advantages of this curriculum were identified: its orientation towards the development of junior school-age children's musical culture, its short-term character, and diversity.

Key words: *personality's musical culture, classical guitar curriculum, junior school-age children*

Introduction

Musical culture of junior school-age child's personality, living at the beginning of the 21st century, is a new and yet insufficiently studied spiritual space that requires reconsidering a lot of musical, social and cultural phenomena in the framework of the approach of cultural studies (Balčytis, 2008).

At forming and developing personality's musical and esthetic culture, a number of important factors affecting this process should be taken into account. First of all, this is the age of a person, his/her social environment, as well as the state of the community within which the individual grows up and develops.

However, contemporary children (just like the rest of the humankind) are exposed to and display the tendencies towards unification, de-traditionalism, globalization and technocracy (Фельдштейн, 2004). Since the very birth, a contemporary child lives within an ever-growing flow of information, coming, at first, from his/her family and the nearest environment, and later – from his/her peers and teachers. However, constantly – from mass media, which devote more and more time to mass pop-culture, but less and less – to maintaining classical music heritage and the unique peculiarities of authentic folklore the more so. By the way, in a poetic way folklore reflects everyday life of peoples, their social activities, way of life, habits and rituals, their vital activity and knowledge about life, about natural phenomena and nature, their religious beliefs and cults and etc. The developing *socium* in time was reflected in the changing folklore.

We have to emphasize the fact that now the majority of developed countries have a system of purposeful music education which has a considerable pedagogical potential, but which is not fulfilled to a full extent in its potentialities (Brown, 2009). This gives rise to the emergence of problems and contradictions between the contemporary children's estrangement from traditional ethnic peculiarities of the culture of their own people (from the point of view of music as well) and possibilities of overcoming this problem with the help of music education.

This paper deals with the analysis of the authorial curriculum for teaching a classical guitar. This curriculum based on the analysis of the experience of the teaching activities of the contemporary and previous scientists and researchers in the field of music education (Adorno, 1958; Rinkevičius & Rinkevičiene, 2006; Balčytis, 2008; Brown, 2009; Baidak & Horvath, 2009; Кабалевский, 2014).

Research object: the curriculum for teaching junior school-age children to play a classical guitar, oriented towards the development of child's musical culture.

Research aim: to elaborate the authorial curriculum for teaching a classical guitar in the context of the development of junior school-age children's musical culture.

Methods and Sample

Research methodology includes the analysis of the authorial curriculum for teaching a classical guitar for junior school-age children according to such parameters:

- A. Conformity of the designed curriculum with
 - the standard rules and regulations on the primary music education institutions in the Republic of Lithuania,
 - requirements for the classical guitar curricula for junior school-age children;
- B. Structure of the curriculum;
- C. Content of the curriculum;
- D. Conformity of the curriculum content with
 - a primary level of music education in a guitar class;
 - world and national achievements and traditions in the field of music and folklore;
 - cultural-national peculiarities of the region;

- modern forms and methods of education;
- material-technical provision and possibilities of music education institutions;
- E. Presence of the addressee in the curriculum;
- F. The analysis of the fullness of possibility to implement the curriculum;
- G. The analysis of the effectiveness of the curriculum;
- H. Provision with organizational-pedagogical conditions for implementation of the curriculum;
- I. Provision with the teaching staff and necessary conditions of educational environment.

The complex of methods applied in this research is as follows:

- the analysis of methodological literature, pedagogical technologies, and the advanced pedagogical experience on the problem under the research;
- the analysis of the authorial classical guitar curriculum made according to the stated parameters.

Junior School-Age Children's Psychological-Pedagogical Peculiarities

A junior school-age child grows up very rapidly: his/her height, weight and anthropometrical indices change, and the basic psychic processes are forming as well. D. Elkonin (Эльконин, 2014) singles out such new formations of junior school-age child's psyche as:

- final formation of one's own 'Ego';
- the development of the need for physical movements as well as for a psychic development: everything is interesting for a child, his/her cognitive interest reaches the peak of its development; junior pupils rely on their cognitive activity at whose account all processes of psyche develop, including memory and its characteristics;
- child's activity as well as his/her behavior becomes conscious and spontaneous; cognitive and communicative activities are basic kinds of child's activity;
- a child develops small motor functions of his/her hands and motor memory of hands and body on the whole, i.e. his/her movements become integrated, dexterous and flexible;
- a child is capable of a lasting physical and mental work;
- verbal-logical thinking is being shaped, and logical-conceptual apparatus starts to be forming as well; therefore a child is able to perform logical operations, to make analysis, generalization and other thinking operations;
- the formation of the general method of mental activity occurs, which consists in the skill of taking or setting a task, of selecting the ways of fulfilling it, and controlling and assessing the outcomes;
- a child's speech becomes connected, fluent, intelligent, and consequently he/she is able to form long combined phrases and texts;
- a child is capable not only of conscious comprehension and perception of art objects and things, but he himself/herself strives to become the subject of a creative activity also.

In this context, at studying the concepts of junior school-age children's musical abilities, musical giftedness and inclination for music making, whose musical feelings and initial notions about music are being formed, researchers (Adorno, 1958; Rinkevičius & Rinkevičiene, 2006; Balčytis, 2008; Brown, 2009; Baidak & Horvath, 2009; Kabalevsky, 2014) look at this problem from the viewpoint of different approaches, which testifies to their great interest in this side of personality's development.

The concept of musicality occurs in both pedagogical and psychological literature (Revesz, 1920; Seashore, 1930; Adorno, 1958; Готсдинер, 1999; Brown, 2009; Кабалевский, 2014) is interpreted from different aspects. G. Revesz (1920) thinks that musicality has to be looked upon as an integrated concept and, consequently, musicality cannot be divided into separate components: the understanding of this conception must be approached from the position of the integrity of this phenomenon; he also suggests that the analysis of musicality is impossible in general.

According to C. Seashore (1930), musicality is a systemic concept, and it incorporates no less than 25 different musical talents, i.e. separate independent musical abilities, all together forming the concept of personality's musicality. Such approach is abstracted and analytical, and describes the existence of some or other human's musical abilities (talents) in general. This approach can even define the parameters of their expression and degree of their development; however, the assessment of a common degree of musicality does not absolutely take into consideration the peculiarities of personality's development and psychological features of child's individuality, as well as does not see opportunities for their further development either.

Some research works discuss also the idea that if a person does not have inborn musical abilities (in our opinion, quite a controversial point), it is useless to apply methodologies of music education in respect of this person. For instance, T. Adorno (1958) considers that we need not develop musical abilities, if the individual does not have inborn qualities for music. Thus, a number of studies (Adorno, 1958; Brown, 2009) treat musicality as an elite quality, and think that it is not obligatory, but is even undesirable, to develop it in people whose musicality is not explicit.

Other studies (for example, Готсдинер, 1993), on the contrary, postulate the idea that any individual has inborn musical qualities, and with the help of a regular music practicing these qualities can be developed up to a definite level. Music pedagogy too, is based on the postulate that music education not so much develops individual's abilities and inborn qualities, as it contributes to a harmonious development of a human's spiritual side, to familiarizing people with world and ethnic values of musical culture, to the formation of a right system of values, as well as promotes the development of children's basic psychic processes (Выготский, 2014; Эльконин, 2014; Кабалевский, 2014).

Speaking about teaching to play a guitar as

- a) a means for developing personality's musical culture and personality in principle,
- b) a means for developing individual's psychic processes and raising the level of his/her culture,
- c) a means for the formation of child's value system and spiritual growth,

authors have to mention the fact that it gives a child the opportunity for self-realization and for expressing oneself, and perfectly develops creative abilities as well. During music making, a child learns to play the guitar, and this enables the learners not only to independently learn different musical instruments which are analogous to a classical six-string guitar (electric guitar, banjo, ukulele, mandolin, bass guitar, different ancient string instruments), but also to enrich their musical experience on the basis of musical thesaurus of different epochs and cultures.

The Role of Musical Culture in the Formation and Development of Junior School-Age Child's Personality

The formation of imaginative thinking allows children learning to hear and understand the texture of a musical composition. Musical imaginative thinking, developed at music lessons in general and at guitar classes in particular, contributes not only to the personality's musical development proper, but first and foremost broadens general knowledge about reality, creates a new, unknown to a child, channel of receiving information, which enhances the formation and development of intellectual activity and creative activeness.

One of the basic tendencies of the contemporary education of junior learners (6 – 9 years old) is activating a musical-esthetic perception and educating through child's own creative activity, which depends on a number of objective factors:

- immense significance of creativity as a way of perceiving the world,
- need for a comprehensive and harmonious development of a personality,
- child's need for a creative activity (Выготский, 2014).

A creative activity stimulates the development of the principal psychic processes – memory, thinking, power of observation, cognitive activity and intellect. Participating in a creative activity in the sphere of music, a child relies, first, on emotionality, imaginative thinking, integration of logic and intuition, analytical abilities and esthetic education.

Observation of a creative musical activity gave the opportunity to identify the main stages of a creative process:

- 1) the stage of accumulating impressions;
- 2) the stage of a spontaneous creativity in a speech, sensory-motor, and visual direction;
- 3) the stage of improvisation – speech, motor, musical, illustrativeness in drawing (collective creativity with single cases of individual one);
- 4) the stage of personal creativity – producing one's own products of creative activity, resulting from the received artistic impressions – musical, literary, plastic, representational;
- 5) the stage of musical creativity proper – writing one's own music piece (Кабалевский, 2014).

As we know, music is filled with emotional intonations, nuances of feelings, and a whole range of emotional experiences. However, we have all these things in an emotionally colored speech as well. Music, just like speech, has emotional states and intonation

coloring, which are communicated through timber, pitch, force, tempo, accents, pauses, and dynamics (Фельдштейн, 2004).

According to the degree of expressiveness, music is comparable to speech; therefore, some researchers (Кабалевский, 2014; Эльконин, 2014) compare music with speech, even stating that music itself could have emerged from the emotional component of oral speech.

The perception of musical intonations as means of emotional expressiveness of music is a creative process. Creativity may manifest itself in any children's activity, if there are the necessary conditions for it. This depends on the perception, which can provide the development of those creative qualities that may later ensure child's participation in creative work. A junior school age is a fundamental basis of a creative activity, which is being manifested in the development of children's ability of generating and implementing ideas, in their skill to combine their knowledge and notions, and in the sincere expression of their feelings (Выготский, 2014).

During the process of music education, children can learn techniques of rhythm, pronunciation of isolated words, develop their perception of timbre, as well as learn sound pitch and dynamic characteristics of music. The stimulation of child's musical activity provokes him/her to communicate with his/her peers, to establish emotional and speech contact with teachers.

The contemporary music education envisages introducing children to musical art and its examples. The junior school age is just the optimal time for starting to teach music. If at this period a child is not provided with good conditions for his/her development, the intellectual maturation might be hindered, since regular music lessons promote the improvement of memory and stimulate children's intellectual development.

The Analysis of the Authorial Curriculum in the Context of the Development of Learner's Musical Culture

The goal of the authorial curriculum (author – M. Bendelston) is the development of personality's musical culture at the key stage of its formation - at the junior school age.

Authors carried out the analysis of the authorial curriculum according to the parameters mentioned above:

A. Conformity of the designed curriculum

This authorial curriculum has been designed in conformity with standard rules and regulations on primary music education institutions of Lithuania:

- Conception of cultural education of children and youth (*“Vaiku ir jaunimo kultūrinio ugdymo koncepcija”*) confirmed by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos švistimo ir mokslo 2008.01.09 ministro isakymu Nr ISAK – 43*);
- Regulations Nr V-733, 2016-08-31, on confirming the specialized direction of art education (primary, basic and secondary with art education curricula) (*“Isakymas del specializuoto ugdymokrypties program (pradinio pagrindinia ir*

vidurinio ugdymo kartu su meniniu ugdymo program) meninio ugdymo dalies patvirtinimo" 2016-08-31. Nr V-733);

- National professional requirements for the content minimum and the level of learner's training in the speciality "guitar" in Lithuania and are based on the following curricula:
 - a) a primary music education curriculum supplementing the formal education of Zarasi School of Arts (*Zarasu meno mokyklos pradinio muzikinto formaluij švietimo papildavičio ugdymo programma*);
 - b) the curriculum of primary, basic, extended and amateur music education for a classical guitar class in Garliavo Music School (*Garliavos meno mokyklos pradinio, pagrindinio, išplestinio ir megeju muzikinio ugdymo styginiu instrument skyriaus (klasikine gitara) programa*).

B. Structure of the curriculum

This authorial curriculum complies with the following requirements set for the structure of an educational curriculum in Lithuania: the presence of a title page; explanatory notes; calendar- thematic plan; content of the training course; methodological provision of the training course; list of the basic and additional literature, and the list of music pieces for the learners to listen to and record individually, in small groups and in ensembles.

C. Content of the curriculum

The content of the curriculum corresponds to the following principles:

- Orientation towards creating conditions for the development of child's personality: the selected age group (6 – 9 years old) corresponds to the most intensive period of child's development, to the period of the formation of his/her personality and also the formation and development of personality's musical and esthetic culture in all of its diversity. Consequently, focusing on the principal components of personality's musical culture at this age contributes to the harmonization of child's development;
- Orientation towards generating personality's motivation for a cognitive activeness and creative activity: in the process of teaching, the development of creative initiative has especial importance, it promotes emotional attitude to music, reveals learners' individual potentialities, and stimulates interest in the subject. All this is a vital prerequisite for successful learning and is envisaged by the content of the curriculum;
- Creation of emotionally positive environment, health-preserving conditions of learning, and taking into consideration personality's individuality;
- Creation of conditions for the development of children's musical giftedness, familiarizing children with world and national cultural values, encouraging personality's self-realization, personality's spiritual and intellectual development: learners are offered a wide choice of musical material (songs from animated cartoons and feature films, folk songs, old and contemporary ballads, pop and rock music, popular pieces of classical music).

The content of the curriculum complies with

- A primary level of music education of the guitar class: compared to the traditional school curricula, this curriculum comprises a three-year training course, which will enable the learners to deeply immerse in the world of music, develop their creative abilities, acquire skills of playing the guitar, study music theory and the heritage of world music culture during a shorter period of time;
- world and national achievements in the field of music and folklore: learners are offered a wide choice of music material (songs from animated cartoons and feature films, folk songs, old and contemporary ballads, pop and rock music, popular pieces of classical music);
- Cultural-national peculiarities of the region: learners acquire skills of playing the guitar on the basis of Lithuanian folk songs (“Jurgeli meistrel”, “Ganiau palšus jautelius”, “Oi ieva, ieva”, “Tykiai tykiai”, “Žemaičiu muge” etc.);
- Contemporary forms and methods of teaching: while implementing the curriculum such methods as verbal (explanation, conversation, narration); visual (demonstration, observation, demonstration of work techniques); practical (mastering the techniques of playing on the instrument); and emotional methods (choice of associations, images, artistic impressions) are employed;
- Material-technical provision and possibilities of music education institutions: every learner is provided the access to library holdings and to the collection of audio and video recordings in the school library; the library holdings include printed and electronic publications, teaching-methodological and music literature. The learners are provided with music materials during their classes at school as well as at home, which contributes to the efficiency of the educational process. During their classes learners use music equipment and thus are introduced to the sphere of modern music industry. When doing their independent work, learners can use internet for the collection of the material on the theme under study.

D. The presence of the addressee in the curriculum

In the context of this parameter

- the curriculum is designed for children having minimal training in music and an average level in the development of musical culture (gifted children and children with a well-developed musical culture are recommended a traditional course);
- within the framework of this curriculum, a) requirements and recommendations to the learners, to the level of their preparedness for learning are produced and b) principles for work in small groups and ensembles have been formulated, taking into account the age differences between children of various years of training:
 - the first year of training – the stage of primary education: during this time a learner is taught to adopt a correct posture at the instrument, he/she masters the basics of playing the guitar, acquires elementary practical and theoretical knowledge and skills. At this stage, it is essential to develop child’s need for music and desire to make music;

- the second and the third year of training – the basic stage of education, during which learners deepen their knowledge, develop the received skills and acquire new ones, participate in concert activities, build up their repertoire.

During studies, learners can play in different ensembles and participate in festivals and competitions.

E. The analysis of the fullness of possibility to implement the curriculum

The curriculum has a sufficient number of hours for

- theory, which is shown in the calendar-thematic plan – 210 hours for classroom lessons;
- practice, which is shown in the calendar-thematic plan – 210 hours for classroom lessons;
- performing activities in every half-year, which is reflected in the calendar-thematic plan;
- independent creative activity, which is shown in the calendar-thematic plan – 210 hours for independent work;
- didactic material of different level for the implementation the principle of individualization and differentiation of education.

Lessons are given individually, however individual lessons may alternate with those in small groups (from two persons), and this enables a teacher to build up the teaching process in compliance with the principles of the differentiating and individual approach.

The curriculum ensures continuity in the distribution of the number of hours and content of the taught themes in different years of training.

This authorial curriculum envisages

- in the first year of training - to diagnose child's musical abilities and creative bents, to develop interest in music and music making;
- in the second year of training - to specialize the received knowledge, to deepen and accumulate it, to develop the acquired skills and pick up new ones, to broaden musical experience through perceiving music, and also through individual and ensemble music making;
- in the third year of training – to systematize the accumulated knowledge and skills, and also to demonstrate the development of musical culture of learner's personality not only at concerts, festivals and competitions, but also by promoting one's own musical creativity.

The curriculum envisages using a socio-cultural space of the music education institution and interaction with the institutions of professional education, with institutions of additional education, inter-school training-centers, educational establishments etc., as well as the participation in thematic parties, class concerts, in cultural-educational activities, creative activity of the school and other institutions.

F. F. Analysis of the assessment of training results

The curriculum provides criteria for assessing the quality of training. The curriculum envisages a current control, as well as intermediate and final attestations. Current and intermediate control forms are a control lesson, participation in thematic evening parties, class concerts, cultural-educational activities, and in creative activities of school. For the final attestation, a control form may be the examination. The content of the examination involves performing a solo program and/or participation in the ensemble.

When assessing learner's achievements at acquiring this curriculum, the following aspects should be taken into account:

- development of a stable interest in music art, in music lessons;
- presence of performing culture, development of musical thinking;
- possession of skills and abilities in different kind of musical-performing activities (solo, performing in ensemble, providing the accompaniment);
- the degree of learner's progress, successfulness in personal achievements.

The anticipated results of child's personal development are shown in the curriculum:

- familiarizing the junior school-age children with the instrument – guitar, discovering performing possibilities and diversity of techniques of playing;
- developing skills of playing a musical instrument;
- acquiring knowledge in music reading and writing;
- acquiring knowledge in history of musical culture;
- developing the understanding about music styles and genres;
- acquiring the system of knowledge, skills and ways of musical activity which provide the basis for a further independent communication with music, for self-training and self-education in music;
- feeling love for music;
- junior school-age children's industry, diligence, patience, discipline;
- aspiration for practical use of knowledge and skills acquired at the lessons and in practical activity.

Within the framework of this curriculum, the criteria for diagnosing the level of the participants' (learners', their parents' (guardians') and teachers') satisfaction with the teaching process have also been worked out.

G. The Provision of Organizational-Pedagogical Conditions for the Implementation of the Authorial Curriculum

This curriculum a) corresponds to learners' age peculiarities, b) envisages the provision of conditions for observing maximally permissible load for the learners and complying with the requirements for the regime of training.

H. Provision with staff and necessary conditions of educational environment

This curriculum envisages

- a fully staffed pedagogical collective which is able to implement the declared curriculum (provided for by the structure of the staff and training received in music schools);
- observing systematism in increasing the efficiency of pedagogical staff;
- sufficient number of instruments and music literature for performing activities, a library supplied with recommended music pieces and literature in print and/or electronic – planned for supplying music schools;
- premises equipped in accordance with the requirements of the curriculum under implementation;
- conditions for the material-technical provision of the educational process;
- use of different forms of informing the participants of the educational process about the results of its implementation.

In accordance with a) the discussed aspects of the junior school-age psychological-pedagogic peculiarities, b) the role of music in the formation and development of child's personality in general, the given curriculum focuses on child's interests and his/her musical culture based on creative freedom of learner's personality.

Conclusions

1. The junior school age (comprising the period from 6 to 9 years of age) is a key age for the formation of the fundamentals of music perception, as well as basic components of personality's musical culture, among which are
 - the need for music, emotional attitude to it,
 - gaining socio-cultural experience of one's ethnos via music,
 - the development of creative abilities, and imagery thinking,
 - the development of love for music and its understanding,
 - accumulation of knowledge about music etc.
2. In the process of the analysis of the authorial curriculum several advantages of the curriculum were identified:
 - Orientation towards the development of junior school age children's musical culture;
 - Taking into consideration the psychological peculiarities of junior school-age, the peculiarities of the development and the formation of personality's musical culture;
 - A short term (at the peak of personality's sensitive development and activeness of child's cognitive interest, the express-course allows forming his/her musical culture most intensively and effectively in quite a short time);
 - Diversity, i.e. the possibility to use in such a course the samples of not only classical, but also folklore music, as well as examples of world musical culture, including well-known pieces from animated cartoons, from feature films, pop and rock music.

These important factors stimulate growth of child's motivation for music making and studying music, that allows harmoniously and fully affect the development of all components of his/her personality's musical culture.

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