

Contemporary Issues of Music Education Theory and Practice from the Visegrad Countries PhD Students' Point of View, Prague 2015

Research activities by music education professionals often focus on musical teaching practice. Interconnecting theoretical and practical issues is the only way leading towards efficiency of music educational process.

In 2007 the Visegrad team of music teachers was established at the Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague. One of its goals is to support research activities of post-graduate students at music departments of Czech and Slovak universities, focusing not only on music psychology and teaching but also on the implementation of research findings into the educational practice. For this reason, a number of music education seminars and conferences was arranged. The first conference, under the title Theory and Practice of Music Education, was initiated by Prof. Jaroslav Herden (Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague) in 2009. Preparations and content of the conference were arranged by Doc. PaedDr. Miloš Kodejška, CSc. (Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Education, Department of Music Education), the leader of Visegrad team. Three more conferences with the same title followed under his leading in 2011, 2013 and 2015¹. They were highly appreciated by PhD students and primary and grammar school teachers. The conferences resulted in the proceedings available at www.czechcoordinatorreas.eu.

The last scientific conference from 12 and 13 November, 2015 was held in a partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic in Prague; the Private Elementary School of Arts – the University School of Charles University in Prague; and the Grant Agency of Charles University in Prague (GAUK) under the auspices of European Association for Music in Schools (EAS), an international organization of music teachers.

Its main motto was: “To help teaching in practice”. The conference aimed at implementation of music theory and research findings into music education practice at primary schools and grammars schools. Special attention was paid to teaching children and developing their skills in all of their music activities, considering the context of changing aesthetic and music values within the applied educational reform. Among others, there were also presentations evaluating the level and state of educa-

¹ M. Slavíková, S. Kopčáková, M. Kodejška, *Teorie a praxe hudební výchovy III*, Praha 2014.

tion provided to future music education teachers by universities of the Visegrad countries.

The conference was opened by doc. MgA. Jana Palkovská, Head of the Department of Music, Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague. She introduced Prof. Franz Niermann from Austria, EAS ex-President. His opening topic, titled Actual Needs of Music Education at General Schools, pointed out that it is necessary for science and research to carefully consider the actual dilemma between serious research and ethical impulses and interests of music education. He claimed that education is originally characterized by ethical impulses and values and intentions associated with them. EAS has been trying to enforce research concerning the school music teaching practice and draw attention to it. This raises challenging questions of whether and to what extent teachers could act as researchers and be actively involved in research processes (so called practical research). In other words, how to interconnect teaching practice with scientific research methods, involving teachers and leading to renowned research findings². The aim might be: “a reflective teacher of music education”.

Benefits of international cooperation for music education practice were in the context of educational policy of particular countries solved by national coordinators from Visegrad countries – Doc. Miloš Kodejška representing the Czech Republic; Prof. Irena Medňanská the Slovak Republic³; Prof. Noémi Maczelka representing Hungary and Dr. Gabriela Konkol Poland. Specialized music magazines such as “Hudební výchova”, “Múzy v škole”, “Ars inter Culturas”, “Ästhetik – Bildung – Multikulturalität” also participated remarkably and their editors were present. All of them were represented by Dr. Jarosław Chaciński.

1. Global social changes in music education and culture regarding school children

An exceptional presentation under the title of *80 Years of Society for Music Education and Current State of Music Education in the Czech Republic* was given by PaeDr. Jan Prchal, President of the Society for Music Education in the Czech Republic. He emphasized the vital role that music education plays within the entire educational process and highlighted its unique ability to influence the emotional part of pupils' characters; however, its benefits and impacts on social and cultural development of each individual and also on his/her future professional career is often not obvious and evaluable before adulthood. Maintaining music education as a compulsory subject in all nine years of primary education and improving the university education provided to future music teachers are the contemporary fundamental goals for Prchal. Furthermore, he defined and evaluated activities of the Society for Music Education associated with these topics, namely: organizing and providing further

² This issue is handled, for example, at the publications: H. Váňová, J. Skopal, *Metodologie a logika výzkumu v hudební pedagogice*, Praha 2007; M. Slavíková, *Hudebně pedagogický výzkum na Katedře hudební kultury FPE ZČU v letech 1992-2014*, Plzeň 2014.

³ I. Medňanská, *Komparácia kontinuálneho vzdelávania učiteľov hudby a vedeckej prípravy v doktorandskom štúdiu*, [in:] *Musica et educatio IV*, ed. M. Procházková, Ružomberok 2013.

education for teachers through Summer Workshops of Music Education, and collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MŠMT ČR) and NÚV on creation of Standards for Music Education. Reflecting the current geopolitical situation, he highlighted the importance of music education as one of the most effective means of preserving traditions and fostering values established by preceding generations, having a similar function as literature. Further details are available at: www.shvcr.cz.

Reflection of the European Students' Forum in Rostock was the topic of an interesting entry by Bc. Kristýna Šrámková and Bc. Anett Pankovics (Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague). Dr. G. Konkol (PL) discussed the use of qualitative methods in educational research within her presentation called *Qualitative Research in Pedagogy*. She also paid attention to their origins in ethnography, phenomenology and hermeneutics. Wide possibilities of these methods have been known among Polish scholars for many years. The author introduced the conditions for conducting such research and also presented some critical and contradictory attitudes taken by various significant researchers.

The most important concept of European music education (primarily Polish and German) from comparative perspective was presented by Dr. Jarosław Chaciński from Pomeranian Academy in Słupsk, Poland. The author focused on introducing concepts based on values which become a frequent topic of music pedagogical and philosophical-cultural considerations. The traditional understanding of music education based on values may be represented for example by the concept of didactic interpretation by Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth; *Music Didactics, Focusing on Work of Art* by Michael Alt⁴; the Polish pluralistic concept of music education by Maria Przychodzińska; and also by Zofia Konaszkiwicz⁵ and her work oriented towards spiritual and cultural values.

Prof. Ass. Dardane Nallbani (RKS) introduced the system of training and education of teachers for general school in Kosovo. Her presentation was titled *Training & Education of Teachers in General Music Education*. Another foreign contribution to the conference was the presentation by MA. Anna Biró (HU) (Bence Asztalos), who dealt with the topic of *Supporting Creativity and Entrepreneurship through Music Performance and Cultural Cooperation (Musik kreativ+)*.

Global social changes in music education, upbringing and culture regarding school children nowadays have historical sources which shall be reminded. It is highly enriching that many PhD students reflect these original, specific and less known sources, and that they construct new pedagogical concepts based on them.

Markéta Bébarová (SK) provided an entry titled *Teaching Music and Singing at Czech Schools from the Very Beginning to the Late 18th Century*. She compared the levels of the past and contemporary music education and dealt with the beginnings of organized music teaching at convents, parishes and municipal schools. Subse-

⁴ J. Chaciński, *Niemieckie tradycje i tendencje rozwoju pedagogiki muzycznej jako sfera inspiracji i odniesień teoretyczno-praktycznych*, [in:] *Nowe drogi rozwoju edukacji muzycznej w Polsce*, ed. A. Białkowski, Warszawa 2012, p. 183-211.

⁵ J. Chaciński, *Estetsko-umjetničke vrijednosti u glazbenoj nastavi u poljskim školama – između posredovanja tradicije i kritike kanonizirane kulture*, „Tonovi. Časopis glazbenih i plesnih pedagoga” 2008, no. 51, s. 25-29.

quently, she continued to analyse the practice of Czech teachers – the composers from the classicist period of music. She described the ways of how the music teaching was realized and how the students participated in particular music performances. She also introduced the music education specific requirements imposed by the then practice on the teachers and students.

Mgr. Kateřina Andršová (CZ) presented the pedagogue P. Dobroslav Orel, who became the first “associate professor of singing” at a priestly seminar. Her presentation was titled *Music Teaching Concept of P. Dobroslav Orel in the Context of Contemporary Music Education*. Related to the newly established University of J.A. Komensky in Bratislava, he became the founder of Slovak musicology and the first musicologist appointed the Head of University as a Rector. Simultaneously, he worked as the chief editor for the magazine “Cyril”, where his music pedagogical ideas and interesting methodological treatises were published.

Mgr. Barbora Šobáňová (CZ) marked the 80th Anniversary of Society for Music Education Foundation and described the varied journey of this extraordinary institution, its founders, other significant members and the main aims of this society, which are still relevant today.

MgA Ena Stevanović, Ph.D (CZ) contributed to the conference with a topic in the field of music psychology: *The relationship between Music Performance Anxiety, Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among American, Czech and Croatian Music Students*. Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) is one of the most frequently reported problems among music students and professional musicians that can cause severe performance impairment and distress. The author was researching whether self-efficacy and self-esteem could be predictors of MPA among students coming from three different educational systems. Moreover, the author tried to determine possible differences in the levels of self-efficacy, self-esteem and MPA between those students; gain deeper information about the principles of such correlations; and specify whether the potential differences could be attributed to different educational experiences of the students. Quantitative method used in the research included Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale⁶, Sherer’s Self-Efficacy Scale⁷, and Music Performance Anxiety Scale (KMPAI)⁸; and the qualitative method was a semi-structured interview. The research sample consisted of 53 music students for the quantitative research and 10 music students for the qualitative research. The students studied at the Manhattan School of Music in New York, Academy of Music in Prague and Music Academy in Zagreb.

PaedDr. Lenka Kaščáková (SK) examined the *Influence of Family Environment on the Music Development of a Pre-school Child*. She focused on those factors which influence the development of child’s musical abilities. A special attention was paid to the factor of family influence. The research findings showed that music abilities of

⁶ M. Rosenberg, *Society and the adolescent self-image*, Princeton 1965.

⁷ M. Sherer, J.E. Maddux, B. Mercadante, S. Prentice-Dunn, B. Jacobs, R.W. Rogers, *The self-efficacy scale: Construction and validation*, „Psychological Reports“ 1982, no. 51, p. 663-671.

⁸ D.T. Kenny, *The factor structure of the revised Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory*, „International Symposium on Performance Science“ 2009.

children can be improved through a fairy tale. Regarding the findings, Kaščáková prepared her own diagnosis of musicality, based on preceding music researches carried out by doc. Miloš Kodejška⁹.

2. Singing activities at school

The issues of vocal education and singing activities at school have long been in the centre of attention. Singing is an absolutely natural activity and due to this fact it is highly motivating and popular among children. However, an improper methodology of singing activities causes the lack of interest in singing, which may subsequently establish a negative relationship to music education as a whole.

Mgr. Zuzana Uhríková (SK) introduced the song works by Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský in her presentation titled *Vocal Activity at School*. Considering the Slovak vocal pedagogy, he holds a highly privileged position. Uhríková focused in more detail on interpretational attributes of sample songs and gave an insight into his more or less known songs. She defined the pedagogical procedures and pillars typical for Trnavský's song works.

Mgr. Martina Procházková, Ph.D. (SK) presented the topic of *Motivation, Creativity and Integration in Teaching Singing at the 1st grade of Elementary Schools of Arts*.

PaedDr. Miriam Žiarna, Ph.D., ArtD. solved the topic of *Preparing Students of Faculties of Arts and Education for Singing and its Application to the Educational Process at Elementary School of Arts*. She emphasized the importance of breathing, articulation, resonance and vocal exercises for the development of vocal techniques and also for the reduction of bad voice habits.

PaedDr. Monika Kormaníková and doc. PaedDr. Daniel Šimčík introduced the multimedia educational programme: *Music is a Game – Songs for Children and the Whole Family*, whose authors are both the teachers and the students of the Department of Music and Art, Faculty of Education, University of Presov in Presov. The aim of this programme is to bring the particular musical material closer to children, parents, teachers and other interested and involved people.

The issue of singing at school was solved by Prof. PhDr. M. Pazúrika, CSc. in *Choir Educational Concerts as a Part of Educational Process*. This activity and his lifelong efforts are not only deeply inspiring for all choir mastering disciplines, but also strongly motivating for all music graduates.

Related to this, there was another noticeable presentation given by Mgr. Jana Chumchala under the title of *Using the Moravian Wallachian Folk Songs within the Vocal and Instrumental Activities in Music Education*. National traditions are a treasure deserving the due diligence, protection and attention; moreover, it is necessary to integrate them constantly into the music educational practice at schools.

⁹ M. Kodejška, *Doktorandská studia na pomoc hudebně pedagogické praxi v České republice*, [in:] *Teória a prax hudobnej edukácie*, Banská Bystrica 2013, s. 5-8.

There were three workshops in the afternoon part of the conference. PaedDr. Alena Tichá, Ph.D. worked with a group of children within the programme titled *Voice Education in Children's Choir*. Subsequently, Mgr. Jiřina Jiříková, Ph.D. demonstrated her music motivation work with the same group of children. Her entry carried the title of *Game towards Music Experience*. It was astonishing due to the large amount of resourceful and witty music teaching activities, which children greatly appreciated and enjoyed. The following workshop *Music Activities in Logopaedic Prevention* by Mgr. Milena Kmentová was also enriching. Integrating music teaching components into corrective and health care programmes for children should be accepted as essential, especially nowadays.

3. Music instrument activities

Playing a musical instrument takes an important part and has a long and significant history in the Czech education system, relating to both the classical instruments and the easy to handle Orff instruments. Music instrument activities have always been considered a very important means of activating students. PaedDr. Jan Prchal confirmed and further developed this perspective by his own new expert suggestions involved in his entry titled *Music Instrument Activities as a Motivational Component in Music Education*.

J. Prchal regards instrument activities as a motivating means leading to creative work of children in the class. He gave examples based on practice and mentioned for instance: using instruments as a rhythmic training tool, playing simple scores, or elementary music improvisation. To develop creativity and music imagination of his students, he uses a popular resonant instrument called boomwhackers.

Mgr. Vladimír Novotný focused on the possibilities of developing creativity in student orchestras of various types. His presentation was titled *Creativity in Leading the School Orchestra*. On the other hand, the postgraduate student Mgr. Radek Dlouhý (CZ) dealt with the issues of accordion teaching in his presentation titled *Accordion Composers from the Czech Republic*. Mgr. Vojtěch Zajac (CZ) discussed the issues of keyboard instruments teaching in his entry *Teaching Keyboard Instruments and Demonstrating a Methodical Aid for Jazz Playing*.

4. Music and movement at school

Božena Viskupová died on 29 August, 2015. She was a significant Czechoslovak music teacher. Doc. PaedDr. Miloš Kodejška, CSc. (CZ) delivered a reverent remembrance and evaluated her life and importance for the Czech music education. He presented her memories and authentic video recordings associated with her work. Furthermore, he introduced a soundtrack which he had created with Mgr. Vladimír Poš, who had cooperated with Božena Viskupová on the Czech Orff School.

5. Presentation of music educational projects to support music education at schools

PhDr. Marie Lišková arranged her presentation in the form of demonstration of music activities done at College of Education and Social Services and Grammar School in Prague 6 in connection with the 20th anniversary of the foundation of Czech Orff Society. She also commemorated Jakub Jan Ryba who was born exactly 250 years ago.

6. Listening to music and integrating listening with other music activities at school

Mgr. Júlia Kopilcová (SK) opened the issue of *Alternative Approaches within the Subject of Music Interpretation* and she focused on features of elementary music improvisation connected with listening to music. Mgr. Anna Prištiaková (SK) contributed to the issue by her presentation titled *Probes into Contemporary Composition in the Slovak Republic and Alternative Forms of Meeting with a Music Piece*.

The issues of Listening to Pop Music was solved by Veronika Švencová (CZ) and Mgr. Zuzana Selčanová (CZ) discussed the topic of *Didactic Use of Melodrama in Music Education*. This paper offers practical examples of the use of melodrama in educational context including particular tasks for different age groups that are mutually interconnected. Such tasks provide space for the student to discover and experience music on his own¹⁰.

Doc. PhDr. Judita Kučerová, Ph.D. acquainted the conference participants with the objectives of the international project “Supporting Creativity and Entrepreneurship Through Music, Art Performance and Cultural Cooperation” implemented within Erasmus+ Programmes in four European Union countries (Germany, France, Hungary and Czech Republic). She introduced the structure and sub-programmes of educational and cultural institutions which are involved and whose main aim is to support creativity within music education at primary and secondary schools and in cooperation with universities, orchestras, ensembles and other schools.

Prof. Mirosław Dymon (PL) introduced results of his research done in the area of after-school music education in his presentation titled *Realization of Music Education within the After-School System*.

Doc. PaedDr. Slávka Kopčáková, Ph.D. (SK) discussed the possibilities of integrating music and mathematics within music education. Her presentation was titled *Philosophical, Psychological and Didactic Aspects of Integrating Music Activities into Mathematics*.

Mgr. Anna Babjaková (SK) was, on the other hand, solving the issue of interconnecting pop music and natural sciences.

Mgr. Jiří Červený (CZ) provided a very interesting presentation on the topic of *Music Education for the Visually Impaired Youth*. He presented the history and profile of

¹⁰ J. Herden, *Modelové situace v přípravě na poslech*, [in:] *Poslech hudby. Sborník příspěvků z konference konané ve dnech 27. a 28. dubna 1998 na PedF UK v Praze*, Praha 1998, s. 88.

schools integrating heavily visually handicapped students and focused on Jan Deyl's Conservatoire and High School for Visually Impaired on Maltese Square in Prague.

Prof. Belo Felix (SK) opened his topic *Painted Music – Sounding Picture* with a block of listening to music and finished it with a creative music and drama workshop. He demonstrated the process of permeation of art and music activities through many interesting activities. Due to this permeation process and involving a greater number of sensory analyzers, an enhanced artistic effect can be reached and it might become a bearer of important ethical values for school children.

The conference was held in three conference halls of the Ministry of Education, where all necessary media technology devices and convenience were available. Moreover, the support from the Department of Tertiary Education and Technology was extraordinary. The long-lasting help with computer processing and publishing various abstracts, annotations and other materials concerning PhD conferences connected to Bc. Josef Vondráček, MBA, Principal of University Elementary School of Arts in Prague 5, should also be noticed.

A regular part of Prague Visegrad PhD conferences are concerts held at Jan Deyl's Conservatoire and High School for Visually Impaired in Prague. This was also the case of the conference held on 12 November, 2015. The music pieces performed that night were composed by S.V. Rachmaninov, R. Schumann, V. Novák, E. Ysaÿe, F. Liszt and B. Bartók. In addition to the outstanding artistic performances by young artists: the pianist Ráchel Skleničková (CZ – Jan Deyl's Conservatoire in Prague), violinist Miroslav Ambrož (CZ – Academy of Performing Arts in Prague), pianist Kristýna Šrámková (CZ – Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague), prof. Noémi Maczelka (HU) from Szeged, a Hungarian pianist and National Coordinator for EAS Hungary also performed. This year, participants of the conference greatly appreciated the performance of a part of the musical for children called *Noah's Ark: On the Ark* (Composed by Jiřina Jiříčková, lyrics: Jan Gregora and Kateřina Bartošová-Fialová, accompanying text: Kateřina Bartošová-Fialová, piano accompaniment: Marek Müller, choirmaster: Jiřina Jiříčková) performed by members of the Children's Choir Jiříčky Minorky from the Elementary School of Arts in Mladá Boleslava.

The Visegrad PhD conference under the title *Theory and Practice of Music Education IV* has shown the urgency to pursue the theoretical bases of music education. This aspect is even more urgent nowadays as the needs of school education have been changing generally. Research in this area helps teachers in their daily practice. Meetings between students and university teachers from all Visegrad countries, organized by the Department of Music Education at the Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague has become a platform always following the European Conferences EAS. Publishing the ideas in magazines is highly important and we deeply appreciate the possibility to do so in particular and famous magazines such as "Hudební výchova" (Czech Republic), "Múzy ve škole" (Slovak Republic) and the prestigious international magazine *Ars inter Culturas*. Due to them, we stand a chance of publishing articles on contemporary issues related to music education at schools. Moreover, we may already look forward to the next scientific conference which will be held in November 2017 under the initiative of the Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague. All entries from the conference in 2015 are going to be published in the confer-

ence proceedings under the title of *Theory and Practice of Music Education IV* and issued in 2016 by the publishing house of Charles University, Faculty of Education and available at www.czechcoordinatoreas.eu.

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