

SERBIAN TRADITIONAL FOLK MUSIC CREATION IN EDUCATION

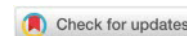
Vojislav Ilić^{1*}, Tamara Stojanović², Svetlana Božović³, Adem A. Preljević⁴

¹Faculty of Arts in Priština, with headquarters in Zvečan, Serbia,
e-mail: vojislav.ilic@art.pr.ac.rs

²University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Philology and Arts Kragujevac, Serbia,
e-mail: tamara.stojanovic@filium.kg.ac.rs

³PhD candidate at the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation in Belgrade, Serbia,
e-mail: svetlanabozovic15@gmail.com

⁴State University of Novi Pazar, Department of Sports and Physical Education, Serbia,
e-mail: apreljevic@np.ac.rs



Abstract: In this paper, the authors analyze folk music creation in education. The paper will highlight the goals and tasks of educational work in teaching music culture in elementary school. The authors emphasize the importance and benefits, not only of children's musical activities but also of children's musical creation inspired by our traditional musical heritage. Music has always had a strong impact on people. In their books, many music historians, such as Josip Andreis, Roxanda Pejović, and Sonja Marinković, describe music as part of everyday human life, which, with its simplicity of melody and diversity of rhythms, awakens various experiences and encourages movement and play. A child's need to explore the world around them and creatively process elements of their experience is internally motivated. Children enjoy listening to music, whether it is artistic or folk, and if the selected traditional music is presented to them in the right way and in correlation with similar disciplines that make the presentation interesting and appealing to their age group, children will enjoy the class. Music education in elementary school involves several activities. These include singing songs (by ear and from sheet music), listening to music, playing, and children's creativity. Outcomes are realized within these activities, and through content that the teacher independently selects based on suggested directions. Among the contents through which the goals of music are achieved, folk creation should be singled out. The significance of folk creation in music education is manifold, and through it, children learn about the cultural heritage of their own and other peoples, which contributes to the development of general culture, mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation. By nurturing folk creation, we educate young generations to preserve their cultural tradition, customs, and identity. Works that are fundamentally based on folk music are easier to adopt than works of art music because of their simplicity, thus contributing to the faster achievement of set tasks.

Keywords: traditional music creation, music culture education, customs, cultural identity, creation.

Field: Social Sciences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tradition is a faithful legacy of national culture. It is enduring art. For this reason, the entire musical art of our people is built on the foundations of folk music folklore. It signifies a set of beliefs, values, symbols, rules of behavior, and production techniques that are transmitted orally and whose existence is maintained and justified by invoking the past. Tradition also represents a set of spiritual, material, technical, knowledge, achievements, values, and ways of thinking that have accumulated in the continuity from the genesis of a people to the present day. According to this definition, as stated by J. Jovanović, "the prerequisites for considering a song or instrumental piece traditional/folklore are: age, orality, anonymity, collectivity, continuity, variation, selection – thus, it is about collective experiences and collective memory – naturally, through the practice conveyed by individual carriers, talented individuals, or groups of individuals" (Jovanović, 2020: 28). Folk music in Serbia represents a unique complex cultural phenomenon tied to various forms of celebration and activities, to sorrow and joy, notions of the world and religion, history, and morality. Taking into account the uneven development due to historical events, migration movements, various cultural influences, and socio-economic trends, folk music has preserved many elements and characteristics from the past but has also absorbed some influences. Traditional musical games speak of myths and legends. Additionally, certain musical heritage speaks of the existence of the culture of a specific social community, confirming its identity and origin. Every region in the country has its characteristic folk games and represents a unique archetype, which often tends to be very diverse. These diversities are achieved at a high level of original creativity and have become synonymous with the common style of folk songs, recognizable by their lyrics, rhythm, and melody. The musical tradition of our people is rich and diverse. We can recognize its value both in terms of volume and in terms of quality

*Corresponding author: vojislav.ilic@art.pr.ac.rs



and complexity of the material available to us to this day. Considering that influences of various cultures intertwined on these territories for centuries due to historical events, migration movements, different cultural influences, and socio-economic trends, it is not surprising that such a large number of diverse folklore creations, both vocal and instrumental, emerged from the people in such a small area. If we accept the view that folklore is a value of the society that formed it, then the entire folklore heritage from which this type of musicality has emerged is the basis for further musical development.

Numerous music educators like Miodrag Vasiljević, Zorislava Vasiljević, and Gordana Stojanović speak of the need to establish musical literacy on folk foundations. Through creative activities, children gain experiences necessary for “the fluency and flexibility of human thought and learning” (Wright, 2010: 2). The importance of folk creation in music education is manifold, and through it, children become acquainted with the cultural heritage of their own and other peoples, contributing to the development of general culture, mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation. By nurturing folk creation, we educate young generations to preserve their cultural tradition, folk customs, and entity. Nurturing an appropriate attitude towards folk music creation requires a special place and demands appropriate importance in the education and upbringing of young people. Schools as educational institutions should pay special attention to the mentioned issues. In this sense, folk music creation should occupy a prominent place in both educational and extracurricular activities. Through the following chapters, we have endeavored to explain the method and importance of studying musical creation; the role and significance of traditional musical creation in education through the subject of Musical Culture; the objectives, tasks, and contents of Musical Culture teaching, as well as the factors influencing the development of interest in musical creation in the teaching process among students; and the implications we have reached by exploring this issue.

2.METHODOLOGY

Questions about the origin of music and its first appearance in the lives of people, both individuals and communities, have always interested musicians, musicologists, ethnomusicologists, philosophers, and many other researchers and scientists whose interest lies in the development of human society, its culture, and traditions. In order to assemble the mosaic of the emergence and development of our people's creativity, we must primarily delve into the origins of music in general, its role and significance in the lives of human communities and individuals, meaning we must go back to the very beginning of human society. Music “poured out” from humanity itself, from its needs to alleviate difficult everyday tasks - to appease gods and natural forces through song, playing instruments, or dancing. In the folk, there is a known saying: “Without the past, there is no future,” which clearly states that the culture of a people cannot survive without continuity. Folk musical creativity itself implies a rich musical heritage that has been evolving for centuries, surviving to this day, and our task is to preserve it from oblivion. “As folk musical creativity lives in a people such as ours and continues within it, this generational heritage extends its influence into contemporary culture and art, giving it new qualities, inspired contents and forms, and new creative achievements” (Đurić and Janković, 1991: 7). Creativity is a general, inherent tendency of development in children, and art is an important support for their development, influencing all its aspects (Flohr, Persellin, 2011; Novaković, 2015: 13).

To have a clear and comprehensive picture of the development of a nation's culture and music, as well as to elaborate and understand its course, by analyzing tradition and listening to its pulse, we must rely on musicology - the science that studies the music of all peoples on the planet, and ethnomusicology, which as a science deals with the study of the music of a particular people. It is important to emphasize that music has always been present in the community's life; it has always held a significant place in society, for some it was art, and for others an activity with a specific function and purpose that follows ethical norms. When it comes to our folk creativity, two directions are differentiated: historical monographs and sociological direction. The goal of the first direction is to collect data on individual ethnic areas, as every culture is complex and subject to change, requiring all these changes to be continuously recorded and analyzed, while the second direction relates to discovering connections between individual cultures and, directly on the ground, analyzing the elements that connect them. Every nation has its cultural treasury, which without the efforts of ethnomusicologists would remain closed, and in music, a void would be created that would remain unfilled without folk musical creativity.

As mentioned earlier, the significance of folk creation in music education is manifold, and through it, children become acquainted with the cultural heritage of their own people. According to the opinion of Gordana Stojanović, our distinguished music methodologist, children's musical abilities develop and shape themselves starting from content that is closer, known, simpler, and easier (Stojanović, 1996: 9). Namely, the first musical experiences and experiences of children originate from the family, more precisely from the

mother's singing while rocking or swaying in her lap. Later, in contact with peers, children learn counting rhymes, riddles, fast-paced songs, sayings, and proverbs. Music educators/teachers use folk counting rhymes, riddles, and fast-paced songs to develop the rhythm and speech of children. Ethnomusicologist and performer of traditional music, Jelena Jovanović, believes that research, but also performance of traditional music, must take into account not only aesthetic but also ethical understandings and standards of the original carriers of traditional music, which further initiates the conclusion that their entire life experience is taken into consideration (Jovanović, 2019: 279).

One of the important tasks of education is to introduce students to the folk tradition of their own people. As Stojanović emphasizes: "the richness of playful rhythms, movements, steps, costumes, has produced a large number of folk dances. Through them, strong feelings develop, and an attitude towards one's own and others' cultural heritage is formed" (Stojanović, 1996: 65). In order to find out and better understand the prevalence of traditional folk music creativity in schools, we felt the need to review a survey conducted in Vranje in 2011, the results of which will be presented in more detail in the next chapter, and then discussed in the context of modern school education.

3.RESULTS

It is a fact that traditional folk music, especially singing, in our region is conditioned by the origin of those who cultivate it. The natural environment in which traditional folk music originated and was nurtured was the village. However, over time, the village, at least in the form we know it when referring to it as the place where traditional forms of rural culture originated and were cultivated, no longer exists. In such a situation, the question of what happens to traditional folk music may seem inappropriate, or at the very least, inadequate. Although it has disappeared from most regions, there are still a few places where traditional folk music somewhat persists (Golemović, 2022: 139-140).

In a survey conducted in Vranje in 2011, as part of Slobodan Kodela's doctoral dissertation, supervised by professors Dimitrije Golemović and Stana Smiljković, the obtained results indicated a significant lack of knowledge about our traditional songs among students in the environment they live in. In both urban and suburban schools, a significantly higher number of respondents stated that they did not know the names of traditional songs from the region they live in. We can assume that the term "traditional song" was unfamiliar to the students and that they did not encounter it in their families. Similarly, we can assume that they did not have opportunities to become familiar with the term "traditional song" in their schools, and their teachers did not explain it to them (Kodela, 2011: 210).

In the same survey, responses to the question, "What are the classes where you learn traditional songs like compared to others?" confirmed the previously mentioned stance - that students at this age had unclear understanding of the importance of traditional songs and their role in the development of general culture and tradition in our nation. The reasons for the students' weak knowledge about this important issue can be found in their attitude toward our national tradition and in their families. In elementary, and especially in elementary music schools, the fact is that students receive very little knowledge about their traditional music and its importance for preserving the cultural identity of their nation (Kodela, 2011: 2018).

It is important for schools to offer more than just music classes. Therefore, every school should organize extracurricular activities such as choirs and orchestras. These activities could enable students to become acquainted with the tradition of our and other nations. However, many schools do not have school orchestras, and the songs performed within the framework of the school choir are often not traditional, further reducing the possibility for students to discover and appreciate the heritage of their culture through music.

In addition to the weak knowledge of the vocal tradition of our nation, students are even less familiar with the folk (traditional) instruments and games of our nation. In our rich tradition, each instrument had its specific role and was tied to a particular event or ritual, but students are often unfamiliar with their appearance, tone production methods, playing techniques, and roles. This lack may have deeper consequences for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage because students miss the opportunity to connect with the roots of their culture through music and instruments. It is important to explore ways in which this knowledge can be integrated into music education to preserve awareness of the richness and importance of traditional musical heritage. Likewise, there is a significant lack of presence of folk dances in school education. Although folk dances are an important part of the cultural identity of our nation, they are often neglected in the educational system. The reasons for this may include a lack of adequate resources, insufficient teacher training to lead these activities, and priorities given to other contents in the curriculum. Regarding teacher training, it is important to note that in schools throughout Serbia, music culture classes in lower grades are often taught by female teachers who may not be sufficiently qualified

and empowered for that specific role. In the following, we will discuss the goals and tasks of music culture education, as well as ways to support its implementation in education - from the curriculum and program, through the role of teachers, to the content of school textbooks.

4.DISCUSSION

In the current development of our society, musical culture should find its place as an expression of the needs of modern individuals. As an integral part of culture in general, musical culture has a variety of activities, and certainly one of the most significant places belongs to music education in primary schools. "From the moment the word 'tone' is mentioned, it should be brought to life, experienced, sung, or played. Therefore, a child should be constantly in touch with live music" (Dejanović, 1998: 19). All theoretical presentations about music must be supported by systematic and practical musical examples so that children's awareness develops to the extent that they can directly perceive and feel the beauty and values of musical art. Music as an art is a very complex phenomenon, and engaging in music education requires such a methodological-pedagogical approach that introduces a child to the world of music from an early age, continually accompanies them in all stages of their development, and thus prepares them for active participation in musical life.

The contents of the curriculum of Music Culture teaching in primary school are set up in such a way that through various work contents, they can develop interest and love for music, and they are divided into several areas and program units: (1) listening to music; (2) singing or playing songs by ear and from sheet music; (3) musical games; (4) children's creativity.

Teaching Music Culture in primary schools is not a privilege of musically gifted children but has a significant role in shaping young personalities. As such, it has its goals set by the curriculum and program.

The main objectives of teaching Music Culture are:

- to develop students' interest in music, musical sensitivity, and creativity;
- to enable students to understand music and express themselves musically;
- to develop a sense of musical values through getting to know the artistic traditions of their own and other peoples.

The tasks of teaching Music Culture are:

- to nurture students' ability to perform music by singing and playing;
- to instill habits of active listening to music, experiencing it, and understanding it;
- to engage students in creative activities through performing and listening to music, to explore and create music;
- to acquaint students with the traditional and artistic music of their own and other peoples;
- to enable them to express their own views on music, i.e., to develop critical thinking;
- to familiarize them with music literacy and the expressive means of musical art.

From the stated objectives and tasks, the complexity of the subject of musical culture can be observed. It is important to emphasize the significance of acquainting with musical tradition and culture not only of our own but also of other peoples. This goal is elaborated more thoroughly through the content of the subject's program, especially through singing songs, musical games, and listening to music, which provides students with the opportunity to get acquainted with the values of musical art and develop the need for independent exploration of musical works. Additional instructions provided facilitate teachers in realizing the program content more concretely and clearly, especially when it comes to our tradition. Among other things, they emphasize getting acquainted with valuable pieces. The title translates to "Musical Arts and Acquisition of the Need for Independent Familiarization with Musical Works in the Field of Folk and Artistic Creation (Educational Gazette No. 2/2010).

Through educational programs, objectives, and outcomes, students develop interests in musical arts, emotional responses to music, which contribute to the creation of aesthetic criteria and can lead to the formation of musical taste. Additionally, one of the objectives is to familiarize students with the cultural heritage of their own and other nations, which, besides acquiring new knowledge, ensures awareness of preserving musical, vocal, instrumental, and vocal-instrumental heritage of their nation, as well as respect for the heritage of other nations. To fulfill this objective in teaching, it is important to ask to what extent music textbooks contain content related to vocal music tradition. A textbook primarily has a cultural role because it contains "a sum of civilization knowledge that one culture considers important to pass on to the next generation" (Antić, 2009: 25). To develop aesthetic criteria, critical thinking, love for music, and interest in vocal music tradition of their own and other nations in students, it is necessary for the textbook to have a sufficient number of musical examples belonging to folklore tradition (Živković, 2022: 78-80).

Within both educational and extracurricular activities, it is the teacher's responsibility to foster

students' interest and love for music; create habits for active listening to music, thereby encouraging musical experiences among students, as well as systematically guiding students to observe aesthetic qualities in artistic works. Musical experiences and conscious aesthetic shaping can only be achieved through an active relationship with music (singing, listening to music, playing), and the ability to play music harmoniously lies in the development of musical abilities (hearing, rhythm, memory). Acquiring appropriate musical knowledge contributes to a better understanding of works, and together they gradually develop independent evaluation. This complex task is achieved throughout schooling, but it is crucial to systematically start with music education from the early grades of primary school.

In the final chapter, we have reflected on the work as a whole, emphasizing the place and significance of traditional creativity in the teaching of Music Culture in elementary schools in Serbia, as well as the implications we have reached through researching this issue.

5.CONCLUSION

"Folk songs are like old photographs, nostalgic testimonies of the past, witnesses of different times, different people... they should be cherished just as we reach for old family albums..., their old-fashioned sound is a hallmark of the once recognizable national identity of the Serbian people. It would be unfortunate if that sound became foreign to our musical ear. Not recognizing a certain sound is not the cause of the dissolution of national being, but it is certainly one of the many significant symptoms that such a process is underway!" (Ljubinković, 1999: 147)

Folk dances have been lovingly preserved in our nation and hold a significant place in students' education, as they teach them to cherish folk customs and their cultural tradition. In these dances, "the richness of various dance rhythms, movements, steps, and harmony in movement, in various performing forms and even more splendid choreography" is reflected (Bratić and Filipović, 2001: 175). Therefore, teachers must systematically and organizedly work to preserve folk musical heritage, not allowing negative musical trends and newly composed musical contents, to which younger students are susceptible, to significantly influence it.

This paper focused on Serbian traditional musical creativity in education. An essential segment of musical culture is traditional folk creativity because through folk songs and dances, programs are realized and influence the versatile development of students' abilities and personalities as a whole. Program content includes folk songs, dances, and folk compositions for listening, as well as playing on children's folk instruments.

Traditional songs and dances in music education should occupy a much broader and more significant place, viewed from professional, educational, pedagogical, sociological, cultural, and historical aspects (Koleda, 2011: 292). Concrete measures are necessary to achieve a better approach to understanding and preserving our traditional creativity in music education. This would instill a positive attitude and relationship toward the traditional songs and dances of one's region in students, nurturing their need for knowledge and preservation of their national musical identity, and the ability to evaluate and distinguish traditional musical expressions from other music genres themselves. D. Žunić's words testify to this: "We cannot 'defeat' popular culture, which, among other things, absorbs traditional music and makes hybrid forms with it. Nor should we 'defeat' it, 'overcome' it, push it aside, or belittle it. We will accept it as a fact, and a very effective fact in global society and culture, and therefore, in the majority of individual societies and cultures, but we must take care to raise its level and value" (Žunić, 2020: 23)

REFERENCES

- Antić, S. (2009). Contemporary understandings of textbooks: consequences for the construction of quality measures. *Innovations in Teaching*, XXII (4), 25–39.
- Bratić, T., Filipović, Lj. (2001). *Musical culture in class teaching*. Jagodina – Pribitina: UF
- Dejanović, S. (1998). *Methodology of music teaching (script-practical)*. Niš: Higher Music School.
- Đurić, B., Janković, R. (1991). *Serbian folk dances*. Belgrade: Prosveta coproduction.
- Flohr, J.W., Persellin, D.C. (2011). Applying brain research to children's musical experiences (3-22), in: S.L. Burton, C. Crump Taggart (Eds.). *Learning from young children research in early childhood music*. Lanham - New York - Toronto - Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Golemović, O. (2022). Should traditional forms of folk music playing be taught and can they be taught in music schools?. In: M. Petrović (Ed.). *Proceedings of the twenty-fourth pedagogical forum of performing arts Folklore in music pedagogy* (138 - 152). Belgrade: Faculty of Music.
- Jovanović, J. (2019). Ethnomusicological and artistic work in the domain of traditional folklore heritage, in: *Inaugural Lectures of Corresponding Members, Book 1*, edited by Miro Vuksanović, Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Presidency, 2019: 289–319.
- Jovanović, J. (2020). Presence of traditional music in Serbia today, in: *Presence of traditional music in Serbia today: in changed*

- work and holiday everyday life, editors Jelena Jovanović and Dragan Žunić. Niš: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts - Branch of SANU in Niš: 27–41.
- Kodela, S. (2011). Methodological approach to the application of traditional songs in music teaching in primary school and school for basic music education. Niš: University of Niš.
- Ljubinković, N. (1999). Past, present, and future. Belgrade: Razvitak. Educational Heralds: 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008.
- Novaković, S. (2015). Preschool teacher's role in the art activities of early and preschool age children. *Croatian Journal of Education*, 17 (Sp.Ed.No.1), 153-163.
- Stojanović, G. (1996). Teaching musical culture. Belgrade: Institute for textbooks and teaching aids.
- Živković, V. (2022). Representation of vocal music tradition in textbooks for music culture in higher grades of primary school, in: Proceedings - Folklore in general music education, editor: Dr. Milena Petrović. Novi Sad: Academy of Arts, University of Novi Sad, 76–87.
- Žunić, D. (2020). What is traditional music today?, in: Presence of traditional music in Serbia today: in changed work and holiday everyday life, editors Jelena Jovanović and Dragan Žunić. Niš: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts - Branch of SANU in Niš: 11–26.
- Wright, S. (2002). Understanding creativity in early childhood. Meaning-making and children's drawings. Los Angeles - London - New Delhi - Singapore - Washington, DC: SAGE.