

Short science
article

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Teachers' Course by Miodrag A. Vasiljević (1940-1941)

Extended summary

Musical literacy and its development as the basis of general musical education, or rather, of the teaching of the subject of Musical Culture in Serbian primary schools, has turned out to be an element of teaching that is systematically neglected. The authors of a number of scientific and expert analyses have tackled this issue and have indubitably determined the causes behind this state of affairs. The root issue is insufficient prior knowledge and an insufficient number of music teaching classes in the course of teachers' studies. The unevenness of curricula at the faculties where future teachers are educated also contributes to their level of competence when it comes to the teaching of musical literacy.

The goal of this text is to inform the professional public about the possibility of organising efficient professional development courses within which teachers would, within a relatively short time frame, be trained to conduct the teaching of musical literacy.

The theoretical part of the report explains the issues affecting the teaching of musical literacy. By combining the methods of theoretical and historical analysis, it has been determined that the most appropriate solution to the aforementioned challenges would be to establish and conduct a systematic teachers' education based on Miodrag A. Vasiljević's "Occasional one-year course for teachers of note singing in folk schools", conducted between 1940 and 1941 in Belgrade, Stara Pazova, Niš and Skoplje. Through the analysis of historically relevant factors, periodicals and materials from the Miodrag A. Vasiljević Archive, it has been determined that the historical evidence supports the possibility of a successful solution to the above-mentioned issue.

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The development of musical literacy is a key part of the musical education of teachers. Within the scope of music teaching in the context of teachers' studies, it is a matter of attaining elementary musical literacy – the acquisition of basic note singing skills. The determining of pitch and duration, in other words, decoding a musical whole, must be made automatic. This is necessary for the comprehension of the musical whole, beginning with individual motifs and phrases and later on the wider musical syntax. When it comes to pedagogical implications, it should be noted that the “deposit of sound”, consisting of example pieces already known from prior education, should be used to develop an understanding of musical notation and how it is connected to sound, through productive association. This “deposit of sound” develops precisely through the reception of musical content, and the further processing of said content, followed by its transformation into an organised and specialised basis for further work. They are the result of work done as the content is received, but also a prerequisite for the later processing thereof.

The direction of music teaching not only mandates this order of actions, but also indicates the only valid way of making tonal pitch and its further integration into the general semantics of a musical whole comprehensible, acceptable and usable in the decoding of new musical wholes.

Historical sources on musical pedagogy, as well as historical practices, have convinced us that it is possible to establish a basic level of musical literacy in teachers, especially since it concerns functional musical literacy in the basic C major scale.

Key words: intonation, Music, Teaching Methodology of Music, Music Literacy, professional development.

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