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The Methodological Applicability of Traditional Folk Songs from the Area of Novi Pazar in the Development of Elementary Music Literacy²

Extended summary

Pupils in the lower grades of elementary school in Serbia master within the school subject Music Culture the elementary music literacy which implies basic pitches and duration relationships among the basic rhythmic types. The setting of music literacy is based on melodies the children are familiar with, namely, the songs of their own cultural heritage, given that the setting of pitches and rhythm is closely related to tonal, harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic features of a region or a country. The sound of the basic tones is set by singing and learning model songs (songs with lyrics whose initial syllables correspond by association to the syllables of solmization, while the initials correspond to their pitch), mostly created by Miodrag Vasiljević, and other authors as well (folk songs that can function as model songs), or, more rarely, by authors themselves. Children, in line with each model, learn two or three songs – the songs beginning with the same tone as the corresponding model song, but do not begin with the corresponding solmization syllable. They begin instead with any syllable and play a role in setting sound images and as layers for basic tones and rhythmic types, while also being a useful music material for initial work on vocal development.

Building music literacy in the region of Novi Pazar is not based on the content belonging to its music tradition. The reasons are manifold: 1. the lack of methodological and textbook literature containing the songs from this area due to the lack of interest of music pedagogues for its research from the perspective of the elementary music literacy; 2. insufficient ability of

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teachers to select songs for building music literacy from the existing ethno-musicological compilations, in line with the requirements of teaching music in the lower grades of elementary school, and their adaptation to childrens' vocal abilities at this age. With the aim of creating the basic music material that meets the methodological criteria for setting elementary music literacy in the area of Novi Pazar, and bearing in mind the multicultural essence of the area and the fact that teachers should start with songs that children are familiar with, namely, the folk songs of their own cultural heritage, a research was conducted where the songs of Novi Pazar area were evaluated in terms of their applicability in the process of building elementary music literacy. Theoretical analysis method and descriptive method were used in the research. A dependent variable was created – evaluation of applicability of the folk songs in music literacy instruction. Following this variable, these indicators were defined: facture, tonal foundation of a melody, ambitus and flow of the melody, rhythmic structure, and music form. In order to identify as precisely as possible the songs that could serve as music material used in music literacy lessons, the indicators had to be viewed in terms of their interrelationships. A song was considered methodologically acceptable only after all criteria set within all indicators were met.

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained by analyzing 1013 songs from Novi Pazar area, from three ethno-musicological compilations, confirmed the general hypothesis: folk music of Novi Pazar area, recorded so far in ethno-musicology, can be a source for the selection of music material used for a successful solving of music tasks and problems in the instruction of elementary music literacy. Auxiliary hypotheses were also confirmed: a) the melodies of the songs with melismatics can be simplified by eliminating the ornamental tones, namely, by reducing the original melody to its basic structure, and b) the initials of some songs can be adapted to conform to the model for setting basic tones. The research showed that only 44 songs (4,34% of the analyzed songs) are methodologically applicable in elementary music literacy instruction. Out of this number, five songs are model songs for tones from do-sol (the result of the modelling process), while 39 songs are composed for special occasions. The results of this research will serve as a starting point for further research and development of textbooks and methodological literature in the field of music literacy in the area of Novi Pazar.

Keywords: folk songs, music literacy, the area of Novi Pazar

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