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Teachers' Attitudes towards Representation and Significance of Serbian Spiritual Music in Music Curricula in the Second Cycle of General Education

Extended summary

Nowadays, spiritual music has found its place in the curricula of the educational system, although there is no clear definition of the term itself. Musicology treats spiritual music as all music that is inspired by free religious topics. Apart from the musicological one, there are other approaches to spiritual music, such as theological (music in the service of worship) or anthropological (music as a factor in shaping culture). The terms church, religious, sacral, service, and liturgical music further complicate the interpretation, because they are used as synonyms or in opposition to one another (Perković-Radak, 2006).

Political and social upheavals were transferred to spiritual music, which, under their pressure, was incorporated or completely omitted from the curricula, changing its role and meaning in music education. In the 19th century, the idea of spiritual music was clear when it comes to its function and place in society. After the Second World War, ideological circumstances led to the absence of spiritual music from the content of the Music Education subject. Today, although reintroduced in schools, its definition, function, representation, as well as the outcomes it affects, remain unclear. Its definition is lost in the fragmentary nature of the concept of culture and the fluidity of the phenomenon of spirituality, while the function and outcomes are insufficiently clarified in the Music Education curriculum.

The aim of our research was to determine the representation of Serbian spiritual music in teaching Music Education in the second cycle of general education schools, according

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to the opinion of the teachers. Bearing in mind the stated goal, we also defined the tasks of the research: (1) to determine to what extent Serbian spiritual music is present in the current curricula and recommended contents, as well as in classes and (2) what function it fulfills from the perspective of teachers. For this purpose, research was conducted on the territory of the city of Niš, on a sample of 24 teachers. For data collection, a survey procedure was applied, whereby a survey questionnaire was used as an instrument. The following conclusions were reached: teachers believe that Serbian spiritual music is sufficiently represented in the curriculum for Music Education in the second cycle of general education schools, and that it is, above all, significant for the purpose of educating students. Of the three offered outcomes: educational - getting to know folk customs and nurturing traditions, educational - developing a sense of belonging to the people (preserving national identity) and developmental - contributing to the all-round development of the student's personality, teachers believe that spiritual music contributes to the preservation of national identity (M=4.21 ; SD=0.83), nurturing tradition (M=3.92; SD=0.97) and in the third place – an overall personality development (M=3.79; SD=0.93).

The results can be indicative of the current situation, but they can also serve as a starting point for designing more complete curricula with a larger number of recommended compositions, such as recently composed spiritual songs, simpler liturgical chants, two-voice chants with ison, as well as more compositions by foreign and domestic composers who were inspired by (Serbian) spiritual music.

The focus of future research can be on the outcomes and function of spiritual music, as well as the challenges and obstacles that teachers face during the preparation and implementation of Music Education classes in terms of topics from the field of Serbian spiritual music. Given all the challenges in the preparation and implementation of these topics in the Music Education classes, as well as the advantages, this issue is gaining importance in the future of primary school music education.

Keywords: music, Serbian spiritual music, curriculum, teachers' attitudes, students

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