

II.5 Teaching Music through Active Participation and Involvement in Music Making

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The development of Estonia's national music culture has really taken place over the last 145 years, thanks to the national choral song festival tradition that began in 1869 and has continued until today. Song festivals have been always important as a form of non-political resistance confirming Estonian identity and self-confidence. Many have characterized Estonia as a "singing nation" and we know that a great contribution to this is provided by music teachers at schools.

Today Estonia's compulsory general education is organized in three stages – primary school, elementary school and secondary school and music is part of the curriculum. In addition to music lessons many schools offer children the opportunity to study an instrument in their music classes if they wish. Music instruction in comprehensive schools that teach singing, playing instruments, music theory and history of music for 1–2 hours a week from the first grade of primary school to the last grade of secondary school, has the widest and most general base. There are also extra-curricular choirs in most of the schools, and some schools have their own orchestras.

Music is a compulsory subject from the 1st to the 12th grade (National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011 [Põhikooli Riiklik Õppekava]) and the number of music lessons taught each week is as follows:

Kindergarten		–	two lessons
Primary school	grades 1–3	–	two lessons
Elementary school	grade 4	–	two lessons
	grades 5–9	–	one lesson
Secondary school	grades 10–12	–	one lesson

In Estonia music is mostly taught by specialist music teachers (there are a few exceptions in primary and elementary schools where music is taught by class teachers).

From the 7th grade up to the 12th grade all subjects are taught by specialised teachers and this is regulated by the law.

Riho Päts (1899–1977) determined the methodology of general music teaching in Estonia’s elementary and secondary schools. According to Inge Raudsepp (2013) the innovations created by Päts were:

- 1) Use of analytical-synthetic relative method;
- 2) Use of analytical commentaries and synthesis in studies;
- 3) Use of improvisation as means of activating musical thinking;
- 4) Development of analytical music listening skills;
- 5) Development of vocal skills and singing through differentiated teaching-learning;
- 6) Using group singing to preserve and shape national identity

(Inge Raudsepp 2013).

Päts emphasized that although children’s musical abilities are very different, we all have a common basis for musical development: an ability to actively make music through practical musical activities like singing and playing musical instruments, while applying the acquired musical knowledge and skills. He considered that getting to know and developing children’s musical abilities has to begin at pre-school age since that would lay the foundation for music education of later stages – and this remains the basic principle of music pedagogy today.

In the 1980s and 1990s the idea of praxial music education that was based on constructivist approach to learning and gave priority to practical music making began to spread. According to the praxial approach music is a human activity involving praxis, process and a means of communication. An analysis of Päts’s views of music pedagogy shows that several of his principles of learning design coincide with the philosophy of praxial music education. He condemned the theorising teaching style and emphasised that in teaching we always achieve stronger and more lasting results through practical and lively examples and emotional treatment than through theorising about unfamiliar material. On the one hand it is connected to music making (singing and playing instruments), on the other it is activation of thinking through focusing on the application of the Kodály method, improvisation and analytical music listening skills.

The development of the above skills is also emphasized in the current subject syllabus for basic and upper secondary schools of Estonia. The Estonian Music syllabus in the National core curriculum emphasizes the idea that the basis for general music education is “learning by doing”, meaning that all the knowledge and skills are taught mainly through music practices.

In the development of musical thinking, Päts gave a central position in his learning design to the application of the Kodály method, improvisation and listening to music. Päts attached special importance to the development of singing from notation. The method is based on the historical Tonic-Do method, which relies on relative stage symbols used for the development of conscious perception of tone relations.

He started an active process of introducing the method of relative sight-singing. The Congress of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) in 1964 was a significant event for Estonia, since Riho Päts and Heino Kaljuste (1925–1989) were inspired by the ideas of Orff and Kodály. Päts and Kaljuste worked out Estonian relative sight-singing method and started compiling new study materials and textbooks (Sepp 2014). The school song-books were based on the principles of relative sight-singing (the Estonian version – “JO-LE-MI method”).

Today, Estonian music education relies on these above-mentioned principles, reflecting them in the National Curriculum adopted in 2011, which states:

Music is taught on the basis of the traditions and principles developed in the Estonian school music subject (by Riho Päts and Heino Kaljuste) that rely on the adapted approach to the Zoltán Kodály method and Carl Orff’s pedagogy coupled with modern educational knowledge and experience.

Making music in this context is any form of musical self-expression, such as singing, playing musical instruments, movement or students’ own creations. Listening to music develops listening skills, attention, analytical capabilities and skills in comparison. Musicology introduces different composers, characters, means of expression, styles and interpretations. Musical literacy means skills in reading the musical notation, included in the syllabus, while making music. To expand the students’ horizons and shape their musical tastes, educational outings (including virtual trips) to concert venues, theatres and museums are necessary. The students’ general cultural knowledge is based on an awareness of local, national and European cultural heritage and its place in the world. This includes knowledge of main cultural achievements (including in pop culture). It is important to conduct concerts at the school so that the students become accustomed to listening to music and organising such events.

Educational Goals in Estonian Music Syllabus

The subject of music strives to direct the students to:

- 1) derive joy from music and discern, realise and develop their abilities through making music;
- 2) become interested in music as an art form and shape their personal aesthetic tastes;
- 3) think and act creatively and also express themselves creatively through musical activities;
- 4) apply the acquired basics of musical literacy skill in musical activities;
- 5) value music and musical activities as they enrich people, culture and daily life;
- 6) know and maintain the traditions of national culture, participate in its promotion and understand and respect different national cultures; and
- 7) comprehend and value the creation of pieces of music and take a critical attitude to the information technology and media-based environment.

The subject of music supports the development of the students' individual distinctive features through musical self-expression. Music is taught to open up and broaden the scope of opportunities for involvement in and enjoyment of music. The emergence of lifelong musical hobbies is supported. By introducing Estonian and global musical culture to the students their musical taste and socio-cultural value judgments are shaped.

The components of the subject of music are:

- 1) singing;
- 2) playing musical instruments;
- 3) musical movement;
- 4) composing;
- 5) listening to music and musicology;
- 6) musical literacy; and
- 7) educational outings.

The music subject syllabus was compiled on the basis of the following principles:

- 1) to understand and respect the important role of singing together in the national cultural tradition;
- 2) to stress the relative importance of making music;

- 3) to encourage and support creative self-expression;
- 4) to understand and reinforce the personal student-music relationship;
- 5) to stress the role of music in the shaping of ethical and aesthetic value judgments for a balanced personality and developing and enriching sensory and intellectual perception; and
- 6) to teach in accordance with the needs of the learner and to attach importance to integrated activities. (National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011 [Põhikooli Riiklik Õppekava])

Every successful method presumes first and foremost a teacher's ability to arouse interest in his or her subject. Orff directed children to active music making by using rhythm and instruments and thus developing creativity and personality. Zoltán Kodály wished to develop children's sight-reading using a valuable musical material – folk music. He adds work with rhythm and improvisation to the activities. It can be compared with learning to read – long hours are usually spent reading individual syllables and one day the child can read whole sentences. Anyone has more chance of enjoying the arts more if they know about specific methods. The positive results achieved in music education depend on the teacher's ability to connect the instruction with the surrounding environment. One could start with musical literacy, songs, instruments, choirs and orchestras and finish with Song Festivals, national identity and world culture. These key experiences should provide the motive for the pupil to achieve the final aim – a well-developed personality whose world outlook also involves general understanding of culture (gained through music studies).

Just as in every young musician's first touch of a piano key or the first draw of a bow one can hear the so-called inner need for a tone, so every music teacher should have an inner need to create a meaning. Not until the knowledge has been given a meaning can it influence a person's values. There are at least two sides to mastering the subject: readiness to use the knowledge in practice and an ability to give it practical and ideological value. When both of those aspects are sufficiently well-developed they form a new quality when combined – creative mastery of the subject. The precondition of mastery of a subject is the personal and social meaning of the knowledge for the pupils. Creativity is not possible unless one is ready to use the knowledge gained and has mastered it at the intellectual level (Heino Liimets 2001).

As a first step, the teacher needs to elaborate the skills so that the technical elements of the activity are fluent and automatic to such a degree that work



Fig. 1: What makes Bach an absolute genius?

can be started instantly whenever the situation requires it. Secondly, the teacher has to bear in mind constantly those educational tasks the activity is aimed at. The teacher should also stick to those principles of action in the didactic process which are as follows: unity of teacher's guidance and pupils' action, unity of individual and collective development, unity of success and failure (nothing encourages more than success) and unity of the pupil's studies. (Heino Liimets 2001).

Estonia-Lesson – Safe and Successful Music Teaching

1. Music lesson was well integrated (holistic approach).
2. The choice of topics was based on the curriculum (music from different countries – Beethoven, Schumann, Bach).
3. Knowledge and experience together (successive activities were well prepared).
4. A rich choice of methods: crossword, discussion, performing (singing and playing recorder), listen to the live performance of the classmate (classmate performing etc.).
5. Drawing parallels and building bridges between music, history and literature. "... the reasons why I chose the example where the melody from Bach's "Peasant Cantata" is played by a bass guitar trio I want them to understand that Bach's music is not something ancient and mythical, something that happened hundreds of years ago, but vice versa – Bach is a composer whose music is frequently played nowadays, his music can also be played on modern instruments." (T-Interview I, Lines 65–70)
6. All activities were related to each other and prepared step by step (singing, playing the melody from "Peasant Cantata" and listening to different performances of the same melody).

Fig. 3: Tabular Presentation of the Complementary Information for ASF-1, Estonia-Lesson

Safe and successful music teaching/Estonia

Cut No	Time	An- gle	Source	Special Effects	Reminder	Point of Quality
1	00:00	----	Final cut			ASF-1 Kangron
2	00:02	3	07:56			Teacher`s questions about previous lesson: Bach as a genius. Parallels with Beethoven. Starting the holistic process.
3	00:48	3	08:41			Teacher makes an introduction to the music listening. The goal is to listen to the music – teacher uses the best possibility – live per- formance. Teacher`s role changes (equal with the students – as a member of the audience).
4	01:19	3	09:13		Classmate playing pi- ano.	Student playing. One student plays J. S. Bach “Invention nr 1”. Class as an audience.
5	01:51	4	22.00		Peasant Cantata	Excerpt from the “Peasant Cantata”, J. S. Bach, “Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet” (“We have a new boss”). The goals are: listen to the music and to prepare the singing (to learn a new melody – from “Peasant Cantata”).
6	02:26	3	26:12			Teacher asks students to pay attention how to pronounce text and gives instruction how to sing high notes. Comments are appropriate and professional. More inspiring than teach- ing.
7	03:03	2	36:26			Students are playing the same melody on recorder. Teacher asks to play the whole song from the beginning and gives some advice on how to reach better phrasing and correct rhythmic pattern.
8	04:39	3	41:35			Listening: The same melody (J. S. Bach, “Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet”) played by the Hei- de-Bass-Trio – Goal: listen to the music – to introduce how the same melody can be per- formed by guitars in different style.

7. Developing social skills – singing and playing together (communication, evaluating the process of practicing).
8. The changing role of the teacher (directing, instructing).



Fig. 3: Music lesson conducted as a choir rehearsal

California-Lesson – Between Knowledge and Entertainment

The Californian-lesson took place in a different context:

1. Music is an elective course.
2. Students are more interested in music.
3. The recorded lesson was the last one before the final exam.
4. The music lesson was conducted as a choir rehearsal.
5. An additional teacher (pianist) was used.
6. A large number of students were in the class.

The California-Lesson was dedicated to the last preparations for the final exam and the choice of topics based on students' questions. The teacher was working as a choir conductor in order to draw parallels and build bridges between music, science and musicianship: "... they come to hear you live because live music has something that you can't get from a CD. You know what it's called? Human contact! I saw this post on my Facebook or something and that it's like it was Albert Einstein. He said, 'I fear the day the technology will take over our world and have a world full of idiots.' Yeah. In fact, did you know that Einstein was actually a really good musician? He was ac-

Fig. 4: Tabular Presentation of the Complementary Information for ASF-2, California-Lesson

Between Knowledge and Entertainment /California

Cut No	Time	Angle	Source	Special Effects	Reminder	Point of Quality
1	00:00	----	Final cut		Title+Info	ASF-2 Kangron
2	05:05	2	09:30		The first finals with me!	Introduction, explaining the following activities.
3	06:07	1	37:33		Students asking theoretical questions.	Answers and instructions how to prepare for the Final exam. Teacher using slang.
4	06:24	1	37:50		Human contact	Music is an expressing art. Importance of written score – composer's right. Musicianship.
5	07:27	2	48:40		Warm-up-singing	Vocal exercises
6	07:47	2	49:00		Comments	Teacher's comments – shows the wrong way to sing, students laugh.
7	08:00	3	49:31		Working with the rhythm, students are standing.	<i>Say it in rhythm – ja-ja- jaa!</i> Students standing. Teacher as a conductor.
8	09:04	2	1:21:16		Repeating the song, students are sitting.	Students sitting, start to sing with the piano accompaniment. Stopping on one complicated chord and correcting it.
9	09:40	2	1:21:52		Practicing the song (standing)	Vocal advice – how to sing different vocals. Rehearsing the song with the piano accompaniment.

tually a pretty good violinist and actually wrote ... things about music, books about music. He was a good violinist.“

Social skills were developed by singing and playing together (communication, evaluating the process of practicing and musicianship – vocal technique, breathing): “You know, the last thing I want to do is create singers. You know, I want to elevate musicians ...” (T-Interviews I, Line 21)

The teacher gave comments using the slang: “... So ... ok. You know. I can speak as teacher you know, but I ... the kids ...you know I find that ... if ... it’s not ... kids want realness. Sometimes I’m gonna ... sometimes I speak in their language sometimes I speak in my language sometimes I speak ... you know ... it all depends where do I want to access the kids? Where is the door today? How am I gonna get in that door? And if I can get in that door ... success! Then the level of rehearsal rises, the music rises, the art rises.”(T-Interviews II, Lines 105–110)

Conclusion

As long as there are teachers guiding the learning processes in schools, it is their education and pedagogical thinking that shapes the nature of the schooling of our children. The written documents are just not “alive” but need the wisdom, love and professionalism of the teachers to be put into practice.

Music can immensely contribute to individual identity building cohesion in society and sustainability of national culture. This makes the comprehensive school music education a much more serious matter and confirms that every child deserves to get the best possible guiding when acquiring knowledge and skills provided by general music education (Anu Sepp, 2014).

Music education philosopher Estelle Jorgensen writes that “our role as a teacher arises out of our knowledge of the particular subject matter at the center of our attention. This expertise gives our teaching authority in the sense that our words and actions are to be taken seriously by the student” (Estelle Jorgensen, 2008). She emphasizes the idea that music teachers need to be *musicians* to work successfully as music teachers and that it is not the *knowing* about music but actually *doing* it proficiently that matters.

References

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