

POLISH FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC CURRICULUM

The research which evaluates the state of music competence among members of Polish society¹ shows a huge gap between the achievements of the music elite and the average level of musical interest in the majority of society. The reason for this emerges from the creation of three-stage system of music education submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Art, and general compulsory education submitted to the Ministry of Education. In Poland we have professional music primary, secondary and high schools which, apart from general education, include professional music training with theory of music, individual instrumental training etc., and primary and secondary schools offering very limited music curriculum (approx. 1 hour a week). Concentrating matters connected with music into one department moved music teachers out of primary and grammar schools and placed them at music schools only, resulting in a dramatic decline in appreciation of music in society. Nowadays the interest in music among Poles is smaller than in neighbouring countries; the number of amateur bands and music groups has diminished, and finding an opportunity to sing in a group or choir is a difficult task.

We see an opportunity for improving the situation in Poland by educating two-subject teachers, with music as one of the subjects. It seems very logical to join music with primary-school and preschool pedagogy. For widespread adaptation of this system, the Ministries of Education and of Science and Higher Education must adopt this as a matter of policy. At the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz we have been providing such system of educating students since the 2004-05 academic year.

The fundamentals of the music curriculum being used are an interpretation of the Gordon Theory of Music Learning (GTML) in theoretical and practical aspects. The contents included are prepared for realisation in a process of music education for the general compulsory primary and secondary schools. Presented fundamentals of the music curriculum employ the GTML, which is understood as a method for the development of audiation; it is this element which makes it different from the fundamentals of other music curricula.

While developing their curriculum and designing their approach to music instruction, the teacher should: enable achievements of goals at every stage of instruction; expose students to a wide variety of musical content; lead each student to achievement of all standards stated in the fundamentals of music curriculum; and use 25% of teaching time according to students' needs, taking under consideration tradition and individual



potential. The author of the scheme should sustain the order of the content at every stage of education in a linear fashion, according to a predefined list of topics in a rigid hierarchical structure.

The Gordon Theory of Music Learning presents the development of thinking as a regular process of intellectual maturity and demonstrates it in a series of stages based on the concept of interaction between biological factors and experience. It fulfills the criteria of scientific correctness because it contains the following features:

- The prediction of qualitative changes that occurs with the passage of time and acquisition of experience;
- The invariable order of consecutive stages: their rate of appearance can be faster or slower, but the sequence is, in all circumstances, the same;
- The cohesion of structural stages, meaning that behaviour has a common notional base within any one stage;
- The hierarchic integration of structures among periods expressed by the fact that a later stage includes and extends structures from an earlier one. The most important ability that must be developed is audiation – the basis of three-component theory. The proficient teacher of music knows the nature of audiation, music aptitudes, and the theory of music-learning, and is able to apply this knowledge in practice (Zwolinska, 2007, p. 9).

The fundamental problem in Polish music pedagogy is the lack of relationship between theory and practice. The Gordon Theory of Learning Music (GTLM) and the concept of audiation development derived from it connects theory with practice, guarantees advantageous changes in children's development, uses valid methodology, and archives results according to obligatory techniques of stockpiling and data processing. Music education based on the Theory of Music Learning activates development

multilaterally in many aspects:

- Cognitive abilities: audiation enables usage of music material gained due to perception, memory and imagination;
- Self-control abilities: students have awareness about their abilities and are therefore able to adjust themselves to presented challenges;
- Communicative abilities: students are able to use music material freely;
- Abilities of reading and writing, using audiation of notation;
- Creative abilities, demonstrated in creativity and improvisation activities;
- Music expression: using music as a language;
- Theoretical knowledge: understanding and naming owned already abilities according to music principles (Zwolinska, 2007, p. 11).

The fundamentals of a music curriculum based on GTLM are aimed toward students of music education, who, in their course of study, thoroughly learn all subsequent operations generated by the GTLM. In the future they become music teachers at preschools and primary schools, and will educate non-professionals. It can also be useful for reflective teachers of

Figure 1:

- Six stages of music curriculum fundamentals:*
- Stage I (ages 0-3) introduces a child into music culture: it supplies diverse tonal and rhythmic aural material and is a primary condition for understanding of transfer which is expressed by music language;
 - Stage II (3-5) forms abilities: imitation which leads to motion and voice reactions for tonal and metre changes; assimilation expressed by recognition of difference between personal performance (singing and declamation) and performances presented by others and by being aware of lack of coordination between performance of tonal and rhythm motives and body movements and breathing;
 - Stage III (primary school, classes 0-3) develops musicality (music skills) where the support is enculturation, imitation and assimilation, making aural, audiation and performance vocabularies important to development of music language;
 - Stage IV (primary school, classes 4-6) develops music activity: stimulates individual music interest, forms critical approach towards music;
 - Stage V (junior high school, classes I-III) intensifies audiation abilities: perfecting the chosen form of music activity, active participation in ensemble performances;
 - Stage VI (secondary school, classes I-III) develops the understanding of theory of music; appreciating and evaluating of music; conscious participation in music culture.

music those who have already been working at music schools. Many publications by Edwin E. Gordon, their Polish editions and many Polish books on this issue can improve understanding for the nature of individual music development.

Structure of the project

Music education through audiation includes informal unstructured interactions (Stage I), informal structured interactions (Stage II) and formal structured interactions (Stage III through Stage VI) (see Figure 1), which enable for development of music aptitudes and general aptitudes as well as music interest, which are essential in contact with music. The fundamentals of the curriculum enclose contents and actions possible to achieve at Stages I and II (informal education) and 75% of obligatory teaching hours allocated for the subject in general school syllabus for stages III through VI (formal structured education); the remaining 25% of the time can be realised according to student's proposals.

At all stages goals of education, contents, models and demanded standards are facilitated. Contents placed in "Action-Practice Units" are divided into three parts: 1. *Listening, Perception, Differentiating and Concluding* - basic abilities at all stages of education stipulating development of music vocabulary, this process begins before birth and continues throughout life; 2. *Presentation and Performance* - ability important for creativity, intermediary period, skill different from creativity but very important in achieving it; and 3. *Creativity* - ability to form and perform own music utterances (Zwolinska, 2007, p. 15-33).

Teaching focuses

The accepted concept of music education focused on the following matters:

1. Audiation development as ability to

operate on aural material received from perception, imagination and memory. Audiation abilities are essential for functions of listening, playing and creating music with comprehension.

2. Provide all students with wide range of music experience and competency which allow their awaking of music understanding and interests and deployment of innate music aptitudes stipulating abilities: conscious perception of music, awareness of music values, distinguishing of tone structure, usage of music language. All these factors make possible music self-expression.

3. Supply students with basic music knowledge and introduce them to world of music notation and symbols that makes them familiar with their native as well as foreign history of music.

4. Give students particularly interested and gifted the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and skills through taking up miscellaneous music activities and studying the subject "Music" in such range that in future they can take "A" levels at the subject "Culture Studies".

5. Use music's potential for intellectual and spiritual development and for intensifying general humanistic culture (knowledge) through cognition of music works in connection with other domains of art and in contexts of historical background.

6. Form social attitudes based on idea of integration and cooperation with other people, nature and culture. Through students' activity we introduce meaning of such categories as responsibility, subjectivity, self-realization, imagination, creation, tolerance and freedom; we develop sense of

comradeship, discipline, habit of work and valuable use of leisure as well as using music for purposes of preventive maintenance and therapy.

The way we formulate our educational purposes designates the educational path. It is a very difficult task that requires attentive choices and compromises due to many antinomies. Some of the important issues to keep in mind are: keeping a balance between the goals of continuous development of knowledge and abilities by the students; concordance of general, professional, theoretical, practical and methodical education needs; the union of educational purposes in teachers' and students' awareness; and the education of gifted students in an educational mainstream.

¹*The Expertise of Polish Music Board and the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw: Basic conditions of access to music culture by children and youth (1984); Department Research Programme of the Ministry of Culture and Art entitled "Music education in Poland (1990); this research project was commissioned by the Committee of Science Research and referred to models of teachers' education (1997)*

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