

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILDREN'S FOLK DANCES ACCOMPANIED BY SINGING IN THE PROCESS OF MUSIC TRADITION CONSERVATION AND FOSTERING

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Abstract. *The crucial point this thesis is trying to answer is what concrete and practical possibilities there are nowadays in contemporary music culture teaching in the lower classes of primary school in order to implement and use children's folk dances accompanied by singing, as well as what the aims, tasks and procedures are in the process of conservation and fostering of this form of national tradition. Teachers as leaders of the whole teaching process should tend to provoke joy, willingness and wish in their pupils to learn and practice children's folk dances accompanied by singing, which can have an important impact on establishing a positive attitude to the values of traditional culture and art.*

Key words: *dances accompanied by singing, music culture teaching, national tradition, teacher's role*

1. MUSICAL DANCES

Musical dances are such a kind of dances where 'a musical thought is a driving force and carrier of all the activities happening in the dance' (Đurković – Pantelić, 1998: 139). In musical dances, a harmonious matching of movements with music, children in the lower classes of primary school are given the opportunity to react in a natural way to musical content and musical patterns.

In that way, a musical dance motivated by pleasure can have direct and considerable impact on the development of various musicality components: sense of rhythm and melodic phrase, expressiveness in tempo and dynamics, musical memory, the ability to listen actively, experience, observe and express music. Musical dances are important for the development of not only children's voice volume but also sense for beautiful and expressive singing (Stojanović, 1996: 52). Furthermore, in musical dances accompanied

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by singing melody and words of a song are matched to certain movements, which represents a remarkable aesthetic form contributing to pupils' oral, musical and physical abilities development (Bratić and Filipović, 2001: 107).

Performing these dances creates opportunities for children to express and develop musical abilities with regard to their individual maximum capacities, and it allows teachers to notice their musical predispositions and monitor their progress, once again taking into consideration the individual maximum of each child.

Children's musical dances are many and varied in contents, theme and performance. The classification is very different and depends on age, number of participants in a dance, dance tasks as well as on the abilities they develop in children.

However, Stojanović (1996) divides all musical dances according to their purpose and primary aim achieved by their performance into:

- Dances accompanied by singing
- Dances to instrumental accompaniment
- Musical dramatizations
- Didactic dances.

2. CHILDREN'S FOLK DANCES ACCOMPANIED BY SINGING

The largest group of children's musical dances is made of dances accompanied by singing and all the songs that provide a possibility for music and movement's synchronization can be designed as a dance accompanied by singing.

Children's folk dances accompanied by singing are also part of this group, starting from the simplest ones, based on simple dance steps and mimic movements illustrating the text, to the more complicated dances performed by choreography-determined movements that represent a valuable experience in designing and performing dance forms. Their performance does not only contribute to musicality and sense of rhythm development in children but also to aesthetics refinement by improving motor skills and synchronizing dance movements (Stojanović, 1996: 53). The structure of children's folk dances accompanied by singing is dominated by legs' movements followed by entire body and arms movements, with a melody on certain literary text. Similar to other dance forms that are common in lower grades, children's folk dances also make use of simple dance steps while standing in one place, walking and running, dance steps with coming closer and crossing forwards, backwards and aside and various hops or jumps. Dance steps performed while singing children's folk dances are of simple rhythm and in a strictly defined manner (Kragujević, 1987: 133).

МИТКУ НОГЕ ЗАБОЛЕШЕ

Умерено брзо Народна

Миг - ку но - ге за - бо - ле - ше, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн.
Од иг - ра - ња и ри - па - ња, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн.

Миг - ку но - ге за - бо - ле - ше, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн.
Од иг - ра - ња и ри - па - ња, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн, дрн.

The Folk Song: "*Mitku Noge Zaboleše*"; Tempo: allegretto, written in 2/4 time; Dynamics: mf ("half loud").

Dance Description: It is danced in a heterogeneous group arranged in a closed circle (called "kolo") while holding hands down. The direction of movement is anticlockwise.

Dance Units:

1st part, (1st – 2nd bar (or measure)) "*Mitku noge zaboleše*" (the original title in Serbian Cyrillic) 2 steps to the right with a right leg while drawing left leg closer, (3rd bar) "дрн, дрн, дрн," stamping right feet to the rhythm, (4th bar) "дрн, дрн, дрн," clapping hands to the rhythm.

Starting from the fifth (5th) bar "kolo" starts moving to the left.

2nd part, (5th – 6th bar) "*Mitku noge zaboleše*" 2 steps with a left leg to the left while drawing right leg closer, (7th bar) "дрн, дрн, дрн," stamping left feet to the rhythm, (8th bar or measure) "дрн, дрн, дрн." clapping hands to the rhythm.

In the second stanza (starting from "*Од играња и рипања...*") everything repeats in the same way.

3. AIM AND TASKS OF WORK WITH CHILDREN'S FOLK DANCES ACCOMPANIED BY SINGING

The aim of cultivating children's folk dances accompanied by singing is, first of all, social and aesthetic education of children, then developing appreciation for their homeland and nation, and, finally, enriching their social life and fun time.

Expert and pedagogical guidance of children in the lower classes of primary school is one form of educational and pedagogical work that enables children to acquire knowledge about their nation, tradition, culture, history and art, developing, at the same time, their awareness of belonging to the nation, with an appropriate attitude and relation to cultural heritage of other nations and nationalities.

Therefore, main objectives in working with children's folk dances accompanied by singing would be children getting familiar with national tradition and works and art of their nation. In that respect, children in the lower classes of primary school should be acquainted with: national oral tradition such as counting rhymes, tongue twisters and cradlesongs; children's folk dances performed in 'kolo' (a Serbian folk dance performed by a group arranged in a circle); 'orske igre' (literally 'oro' games) - ritual children's dances in the past performed by adults that have lost their original purpose and are now used for fun and feast; dances performed to singing or music accompaniment; national instruments starting from the simplest ones that children can make on their own using materials from nature to various traditional pipe forms and all the others that can be found in our region; national costumes and folk arts and handicraft and occupations.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILDREN'S FOLK DANCES ACCOMPANIED BY SINGING

In children's folk dances accompanied by singing melody and words of a song are combined with particular movements, which represents a specific aesthetic form contributing to the development of students' oral, musical and physical abilities. They are a successful tool for complex development of students' capacities, their musical hearing and sense of musical rhythm, rhythmic utterance, development of musical memory, harmonizing movements and musical components of a dance.

The use of national music dances accompanied by singing has a significant effect on forming a healthy, moral and cheerful personality of a child through fostering patriotic feelings, developing sense for social life and work, friendship, forming working habits, practicing patience and persistence, building up self-confidence and belief in own abilities and qualities.

By bringing as much as it is possible of games, cheerfulness and joy in children's lives and by offering them certain activities, in this case children's folk dances accompanied by singing, we meet their constant need for new interests and gaining knowledge, helping, at the same time, their intellectual, physical, emotional and social development.

Considering the fact that children's folk dances are collective, every child, without being aware of it, can be brought into and kept in the dance and permanently bound for the rest of the group if we make them interested, which results in the process of socialization and their fitting into the group. Children will be forced to change some of their bad habits such as being selfish, aggressive, spoilt and others in favor of socially acceptable behavior. This especially refers to boys who, in the very beginning, show serious resistance to children's folk dances accompanied by singing. Girls accept them better, which does not mean we should give up on using them with boys. Boys should get used to them despite the difficulties and resistance they show to cooperating with girls in the process of learning dance steps. However, later on that kind of work is usually accepted through provoking positive emotions.

It can be said for certain that a child coming from a pre-school institution to primary school already possesses certain knowledge in this area, and the problem of socializing and accepting children's folk dances at that age is solved. Moreover, the experience the child has should be used and upgraded with a new one. Children's folk dances accompanied by singing enrich every child in a cognitive and emotional way by putting into action all their available musical, physical and mental abilities. By learning new elements of some folk dance accompanied by singing, children often, even a little bit, recognize some previously learned elements, which gives them self-confidence, strength and willingness to persist in work and dance. Because of this, it is convenient to guide them to become fond of folk dances, songs and music in an active way. For all the mentioned reasons, children's folk dances accompanied by singing should be available to all children and fostered both in nursery and primary schools as a collective form of work.

5. SELECTION AND WORK ON TEACHING CHILDREN'S FOLK DANCES ACCOMPANIED BY SINGING

In the process of selecting children's folk dances accompanied by singing we should start with an authentic base, the contents, patterns and rhythms of which match psychological and physical abilities of children. In addition, the base should be studied for pedagogical purposes and passed on in unaltered form. Dances should be taught one by one, without changing their patterns, steps, movements and forms, with appropriate vocal and instrumental accompaniment.

Taking dancing style and technique into consideration, we should notice all significant characteristics of the region the dance comes from or the zone or area it belongs to because it adds to the beauty and peculiarity of the folk dance itself.

Teachers should always in their work bring dancing closer to children, supply all the necessary information about the life style, customs and other peculiarities of the region related to the dance, which indicates the fact that the role of teachers in using children's folk dances is crucial.

The work on teaching children's folk dances accompanied by singing requires completely conceived and in advance planned approach and procedure, where no improvisations are possible.

Teachers should be prepared for the work and, therefore, they should completely master the knowledge of dances they want to teach. Furthermore, they should be familiar with pedagogical principles and rules of working with children in the lower classes. If all this fails to happen, the effect of children's dances accompanied by singing as well as children's interest in learning and performing them will be reduced, and the teacher's authority will be brought into question (Višnjić, 2004: 258). Children's folk dances accompanied by singing should bring maximum of pleasure and benefit to children. The teacher's activity should have both encouraging and corrective function. In a folk dance, the teacher is not only a participant but also an organizer and a leader, especially when children encounter the dance for the first time. Of course, afterwards children perform on their own the dances they have learned, while the role of the teacher is to advise, instruct and direct. If the work is carried out properly and continuously, it will affect the children's aesthetic taste and cultivate their true attitude to the lasting values of traditional culture and art.

6. CONCLUSION

Children's folk dances accompanied by singing in the lower classes of primary school should have their place in every child's life, and if they are presented to children in the right way and if they are thematically related to children's lives, they can improve and elevate their lives and fill them with joy. Outside school children do not have an opportunity to get familiar with this kind of music works. In exchange for that, awareness of a modern child is loaded with inappropriate musical forms transmitted through different media. In contemporary living conditions of the children who live in cities, even of the children from small towns and villages, damaging impact of inappropriate musical programmes and forms cannot be mechanically removed. Teachers can make changes in that area if they offer children valuable pieces of folk music works.

Inside and outside a family there are no favorable conditions for education, and in many cases teachers cannot rely on the support of social community, both in a wider and narrow sense, in the implementation of their ideas and plans in the process of folk music tradition conservation and fostering.

Due to all these circumstances, the teacher acts as a fighter for folk music tradition conservation. Many cultural changes in our country are the result of not only mass media overflow and open-mindedness to the world, but also of our unwillingness to fight against negative phenomena on all levels of social life that the open-mindedness brings. By instructing students in positive and negative sides of the mass media contents, we enable them to create a critical attitude towards the contents broadcast or transmitted in that way. In order to achieve those aims we need teachers of wide personal culture and excellent fundamental education. Without such staff, we will not be able to change in the foreseeable future the conditions in which music teaching work is carried out in primary schools.

It is true that music culture is an ideal ground for fostering folk tradition, but in our schools, it is in most cases reduced to only singing folk songs in classes. The lack of work in fostering national folk tradition in music classes at school causes the use of outdated forms and ways in presenting the tradition to pupils (Plavša, 1989: 30-34).

Each period has its own characteristics, which is an ordinary process. The current period of time is characterized by losing connection with the past times, and fostering national tradition, which is of vital importance for maintaining national identity of each nation, begins to vanish. It should not be a usual process. Therefore, the understanding of the importance of traditional culture and art must help to protect and save those precious threads and, if the need arises, arrange the string again (Đurić and Janković, 1991: 9). Bearing in mind this fact, we arrive at the conclusion that although children's folk dances accompanied by singing originated in the distant past, it is our duty to pass their flame on and instill it into the hearts of young people of today.

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ZNAČAJ DEČJIH NARODNIH IGARA SA PEVANJEM U OČUVANJU I NEGOVANJU MUZIČKE TRADICIJE

Suštinsko pitanje na koje rad pokušava da odgovori je kakve se konkretne i praktične mogućnosti pružaju danas, u savremenoj nastavi muzičke kulture u mlađim razredima osnovne škole, za ostvarivanje i primenu dečjih narodnih igara sa pevanjem, kao i koji su ciljevi, zadaci i postupci u radu na negovanju i očuvanju ovog vida narodne tradicije? Učitelj kao rukovodilac celokupnog nastavnog procesa, treba da nastoji da kod učenika izazove radost, volju i želju za usvajanjem i praktikovanjem dečjih narodnih igara sa pevanjem, što može uticati na formiranje pozitivnih odnosa prema vrednostima tradicionalne kulture i umetnosti.

Ključne reči: igre sa pevanjem, nastava muzičke kulture, narodna tradicija, uloga učitelja.