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## **VIEWS ON THE ELEMENTARY MUSIC EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO AND SLOVENIA**

### **Abstract**

Music education system in Montenegro is similar to those in the neighboring countries from this region, which we inherited from the former Yugoslavia. As the general educational system was changed and reformed, a need for redefining elementary music schools to introduce some innovative solutions into its plans and programs, emerged over the past period. In Montenegro, this primarily referred to transition from a six-year to a nine-year music school, considering that education system reform brought with it a nine-year duration of the general education school. Numerous debates concerning the new concept of the music school took place in the academic community, where many stood by the "old" system which, according to them, didn't have significant shortcomings. However, Bureau for Education Services of Montenegro, as an institution responsible for music schools too, initiated procedures of developing new curricula to be implemented starting with academic year 2016/2017. In this work, we will show some of the basic characteristics introduced by the reform and try to make a comparison with music school system in Slovenia, having in mind that it was also a key guidance for the reform processes in general education schools which were started in 2001. The question is what the extent of the similarities and differences found is and have our experiences in practice been really oriented on students and their needs. An increasing number of children have been dropping out of music schools in Montenegro in the previous years, or after completing the elementary music education they stop engaging in music, even at the amateur level. Therefore, a question is raised as to what needs to be changed, improved and done so that our schools go hand in hand with time and provide a good educational basis both to future professional musicians that will continue with secondary music education and to those who will make up a musically educated audience?

**Keywords:** music school, curriculum, Montenegro, Slovenia, education reform.

### **Izveček**

#### **Pogledi na osnovno glasbeno izobraževanje v Črni gori in Sloveniji**

V Črni gori je glasbeno-izobraževalni sistem podoben sistemom drugih držav z območja nekdanje Jugoslavije. V zadnjem času se je ob reformi splošnega vzgojno-izobraževalnega sistema pojavila potreba po inovativnih spremembah programov v osnovnem glasbenem izobraževanju. V Črni gori je bila prva sprememba podaljšanje izobraževanja v glasbeni šoli s šestih na devet let. Bila je povezana z uvedbo obveznega devetletnega splošnega šolanja. V strokovni javnosti so se sprožile številne razprave o novih zasnovah glasbenega izobraževanja. V njih so mnogi izražali podporo "staremu" sistemu, ki po njihovem mnenju ni imel večjih pomanjkljivosti. Kakorkoli, Zavod za šolstvo Črne gore je kot institucija, odgovorna tudi za glasbene šole, začel s postopki oblikovanja novih učnih načrtov in programov, z namenom uveljavitve v šolskem letu 2016/17. V prispevku bomo prikazali nekatere osnovne značilnosti, ki jih je prinesla reforma. Primerjali jih bomo s sistemom slovenskih glasbenih šol, upoštevajoč, da je bil slovenski model uporabljen kot vodilo šolskih reform, začelih leta 2001. Katere podobnosti in razlike najdemo med sistemoma in ali je praksa resnično orientirana k učencu in njegovim potrebam? V Črni gori v zadnjih letih opazamo naraščajoče število otrok, ki predčasno zaključijo osnovno glasbeno izobraževanje ali pa se po končanem šolanju preneha ukvarjati z glasbo tudi na amaterski ravni. Iz teh razlogov je treba vzbuditi vprašanja, kaj je treba spremeniti, izboljšati in narediti tako, da bodo glasbene šole stopile v korak s časom, zagotovile dobro izobrazbeno osnovno tako prihodnjim profesionalnim

glasbenikom, ki bodo nadaljevali šolanje na srednji stopnji, kot tudi tistim, ki bodo postali del izobraženega glasbenega občinstva.

**Ključne besede:** glasbena šola, učni načrt, Črna gora, Slovenija, izobraževalna reforma

## Introduction

In this work we will present certain characteristics of the ongoing reform of elementary music education in Montenegro and of dilemmas one has to go through in the process, along with the analysis of the curriculum for the nine year music school and the comparative review of the curriculum<sup>1</sup> for the elementary music schools in the Republic of Slovenia. Even though the present system of music education has numerous advantages, the issue of having a more intense correlation between the course Solfeggio with Theory of Music and instrument courses should be addressed, as well as unburdening the existing programs and greater implementation of the listening and creation activities in the teaching practice. In carrying out a reform of music education, should we have spent more time thinking of plans and programs that are more flexible, open and purposeful, that would stimulate the averagely talented children too? There is also a question of which competences and skills are acquired by students after graduating from the music school, and how much are they being used? Why does a significant number of students give up on music education? All questions are open for discussion with a view to creating a school that will be a place of development of music abilities and skills in a way which will provide the students with a higher degree of independence and music expression both in and out of school.

## Brief Historical Overview

If we briefly look at historical overview of important facts related to development of music education on the territory of Montenegro as we know it today, we will notice that the first influence dates from the nineteenth century, and from the time when Kotor Bay was under Austrian jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup> Military music was founded in that period in Kotor, and in 1839 the first amateur singing society called *Unity* was established, which then forms an orchestra three decades later, conducted by an organist and composer of church music Jeronim Fiorelli (Jerkov, 2011). The education institution of a boarding school type for educating younger female population, “Female Institute of Empress Marija” was founded in 1869 in Cetinje, the Capital of the Principality of Montenegro, where a lot of attention was given to music education: singing, music theory, violin and piano. Music educators were the Montenegrin composer Špiro (Spiridon) Ognjenović (1842–1914), Czech music educators: Robert Tolinger (1859–1911) and Anton Šulc. The Institute operated under patronage of Russian Empress Marija Alexandrovna (1853–1920). All classes were done according to the plans and programs that were valid in similar institutes in Russia of that period (Marković, 2012). The Institute stopped working in 1913.

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<sup>1</sup> *Izobraževalni program Glasba. Predmetnik.* (2009).

<sup>2</sup> More on development of music life in Kotor Bay in the book *Music Themes and Portraits* by M. Milošević (1983).

The first music school was founded in Cetinje in 1936. After World War II, Secondary Music School “Njegoš” was founded in Cetinje, and it continued working in Kotor since 1947. At that time, the elementary music school merges with private music school of Vida Matjan. Slovenian Vida Matjan (born Hribar, 1896–1993), dedicated a large part of her life to development of music education in Kotor. After completing studies at Glasbena Matica in 1914, she enrolled in the Music Academy in Vienna, and she was prepared for it by pianist and music pedagogue Anton Trost. Unfortunately, World War I prevented her to finish her studies. She goes back to Ljubljana, and in 1930 she moves to Belgrade with her husband Alojz Matjan where she completes the highest degree at Belgrade school “Stanković” under Prof. Emil Hajek. In that period, this level of education was equivalent to a music academy which was still not founded in Belgrade. After the World War II, Matjan family permanently moves to Kotor (Milošević, 1983). The influence that this talented woman, full of enthusiasm, had on development of music education was invaluable, and she received many recognitions and awards during her lifetime. Today, the music school in Kotor carries her name.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1: Vida Matjan (born Hribar, 1896–1993)<sup>4</sup>**



Podgorica got a music school in 1946, and a secondary music school in 1958. Since 2005, the school is called Public Institution *Art School for Music and Ballet Vasa Pavić*,<sup>5</sup> which in its organization has the elementary and secondary music school, as well as elementary ballet school. Slovenian music pedagogue Rudolf Zakrajšek (1915–1994) was one of the long serving directors during whose mandate the school accomplished many successes.

<sup>3</sup> Vida Matjan. Škola za osnovno in srednje muzičkoobrazovanje Kotor. <http://www.vidamatjan.me/> (1. 11. 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Matjan Vida. [montenegrina.net/pages/pages1/muzika/vida\\_matjan.htm](http://montenegrina.net/pages/pages1/muzika/vida_matjan.htm) (1. 11. 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Umetnjička škola za muziko i balet “Vasa Pavić” " <http://vasapavic.me/> (10. 11. 2016).

Music Academy was founded in 1980 with an aim of intensifying development of professional personnel pool that was previously educated in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo.

Today, 80 years after the first music school was founded, there are fourteen state music schools and one private music school<sup>6</sup> in Montenegro. Even though, there could be more music schools in Montenegro, children have access to music education in most of the towns. There are also five secondary music schools that belong to the system of secondary vocational education.

### **System of Elementary Music Education in Montenegro**

System of music schools in Montenegro and neighboring countries implies that they are part of the education system funded from the state budget, and that they are accessible, as such, for everyone who shows elementary music abilities and desire to attend a music school. Students attend classes of all courses envisaged by the plan, and at the end of the academic year they take the final exam. As interest of children dropped in recent years when it comes to practicing on instruments, schools took the initiative to introduce preliminary exams for checking knowledge, twice in the first semester and once in the second semester. Public performances and competitions at the national and international level for talented children are also an integral part of the music education process. Music Festival of the Youth of Montenegro<sup>7</sup> organized by the Community of Music Schools, and that will be held for the 44<sup>th</sup> time this year, is an important tradition in providing encouragement for talented children. Students from elementary and secondary music schools, as well as Music Academy students, participate in this competitive festival in different categories. In the last ten years, many multidisciplinary projects which stimulate students' participation in different forms of music activities were intensified.

### **Reform Processes of the Education System and Influence on Reform of the Music Schools**

Elementary and secondary music school curricula were done over decades based on the example of other former Yugoslav countries, primarily the neighboring Serbia. On the initiative of solfeggio educators, the programming section of the Ministry of Education launched the writing of the curriculum for this program in 1996/1997. The authors wrote them looking at methods used in France, where classes were held in the framework of a course *Formation musical*, which implied a global approach by connecting different music contents: classic solfeggio, development of the harmonic ear, recognition of simple music forms, listening to music and development of critical opinion, as well as introduction of basic information from the history of music.<sup>8</sup> Our opinion is that such a conceived course contributes to a better understanding of music and a more productive

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6 MACG.Muzička asosiacija Crne Gore..[http://www.macg.me/muzicke\\_skole.php](http://www.macg.me/muzicke_skole.php) (1. 11. 2016).

7 Umetnička škola za muziko i balet "Vasa Pavić". XLIII Muzički festival mladih Crne Gore (25.-28.4.2016)

8 Information taken from the web page: <http://www.emdjacquesibert.fr/ressourcesquestions-sur/la-formation-musicale/> (10. 5. 2014).

connecting of acquired knowledge at instrument classes. In accordance with operational objectives of the curriculum, the course *Music Science* has a similar concept: beside elements of solfeggio, the students also perform and interpret examples from music literature, they create, they listen to the music analytically, and learn by adopting, understanding and using the music theory knowledge and skills (*Curriculum*, 2009).

Reforms of the music education system followed the general education reform that was initiated in 2000, during which the international cooperation and professional support was also achieved with the Republic of Slovenia with a general education system that served as a model for introducing a nine year elementary school. A necessity to bring the nine year elementary school into harmony with the elementary music school was one of the reasons for current reforms of music education. Bureau for Education Services of Montenegro as an institution responsible for development of curricula started this initiative. Proposal of the new syllabus for elementary music schools and elementary ballet schools was adopted on April 13, 2007.

### **Curriculum for Elementary Music Schools and Comparison with the Curriculum in the Republic of Slovenia**

Curriculum for the elementary music schools is still a subject of discussion among music pedagogues. Its revision is ongoing, in order to complete the reform process by adopting new curricula which was supposed to be done by the beginning of the academic year 2016/2017. The syllabus is presented in the table below.

**Table 1: Curricula for elementary music schools in Montenegro**

Title of the Education Program: Education Program of Elementary Music and Ballet School											
CURRICULUM OF THE ELEMENTARY MUSIC SCHOOL											
<i>A1 Mandatory Part Courses</i>	Grade and Weekly Number of Classes										
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	To tal	%
<i>Music Primer-Orff Instruments</i>	2									68	3,08
<i>Instrument</i>											
Piano		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	538	24,37
Accordion											
Violin											
Cello											
Guitar											
Harp											
Viol				2	2	2	2	2	2	402	18,21
Double Bass											
Flute											
Oboe											
Clarinet											
Bassoon											
Saxophone											
Horn											
Trumpet											
Trombone											
Percussion											
Tambura-Mandolin											
Organ							2	2	2	129	5,84
Singing											
<i>Solfeggio with Music Theory</i>		1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	470	21,29
<i>autoGroup Music</i>				2	2	2	3	3	3	501	22,70
<i>Elective Course</i>							1	1	1	99	4,48

Source: Bureau for Education Services of Montenegro, 2007

**Montenegro:** According to the new Curriculum, the music school is planned to last nine years and to be divided into three cycles, each 3 years long. Students that enroll in the music school, starting with the first grade, receive a certificate of completion after the second cycle (6th grade), while the talented students continue - as potential candidates for

a secondary music school. The six year olds enroll in the first grade that consists of one course *Music Primer*, and those classes are held two times a week, 68 hours per year.

**Slovenia:** Elementary music schools in Slovenia are not divided into cycles, instead, they are divided into lower and higher degrees. Lower degrees last until the 6th grade and higher degree contains the 7th and 8th grade, or the 5th and 6th for those who enroll in the music school later. There is a special remark about the age of the students, depending on the instrument they take. The first two years of preschool music education are divided into *Pre-school Music Education (Predšolska glasbena vzgoja)* for 5 year olds which consists of one class per week, and *Music Preparatory (Glasbena pripravnica)* for 6 years old children with 1.33 classes per week. The first grade starts after the *Music Preparatory* meaning with the second grade of the elementary school. Children that haven't completed music preschool education can enroll too, however, the research has shown (Zadnik, 2011) that children who have completed pre-school education show a higher level of music abilities, skills and knowledge. It is specified that the course *Music Theory (Nauk o glasbi)* has an A and B program for students that enroll in the music school at the age of 7 to 9, and those who enroll being 10 years old or older. A weekly number of classes for this course is 1.33 (small groups) and 2 classes (larger groups of students).

**Montenegro:** In Montenegro, an individual instrument class is 45 minutes long and many educators disagree with this believing that classes should last 30 minutes for the first grade. During the entire elementary music education, students have instrument classes twice a week. There is one class (45 minutes) of Solfeggio with Music Theory in the second grade, and two classes in other grades.

**Slovenia:** An individual instrument class is held twice a week with duration of 30 minutes, according to the Rules of Teaching in Music Schools (Pravilnik o izvajanju pouka v glasbenih šolah, 2003)<sup>9</sup>, but it can be prolonged by 0.67, as additional teaching. Teaching of choir singing is planned as 2 classes a week, like in Montenegrin schools, while classes of orchestra are held in 3 or 2 classes, depending on the dynamics and the scope of work of the orchestra. It is determined that chamber music starts in different grades, usually in the 5th grade, depending on the instrument, and, according to the plan, it takes place once a week. Piano students in higher grades can rehearse with students in lower grades.

**Montenegro:** Third cycle is conceived as preparation for the secondary music school, so the number of classes of a course Group Music (orchestra, choir) is increased from the two classes in the second cycle to three classes in the third cycle. A new elective course is introduced with one class a week. The real question is, is it realistic to expect students of the third cycle to follow eight classes a week in a music school, beside their duties of regular education in the elementary school? Should teaching an instrument be the main focus and unburdening the students by reducing the number of classes so that the goals envisaged by the program are better achieved? These are the questions that will inevitably

<sup>9</sup> Pravilnik o izvajanju pouka v glasbenih šolah (2003).  
<http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlurid=20033934> (1. 11. 2016).



appear in the analysis of the curriculum and these questions triggered the need for a revision of the curriculum.

If we compare these two curricula, a numerous substantial similarities will be noticed, while Slovenian curriculum is significantly more precise. The issue of burdening the students with the number of classes in the higher grades can be raised too, as well as the issue of higher focus on the potential professional musicians.

### **Characteristics of the New Course Program for the Music Primer and Program for the Initial Piano Classes**

Course program for the first grade in elementary music school called *Music Primer – Orff's Instrumentarium* (*Muzička početnica – Orffov instrumentarijum*, 2009) has been approved for school use on March 31, 2009. The objectives of this program are to develop music skills in students while working on all of the components of musicality. The teaching of this course is done through three activities: performing, creating and listening. The program does not provide music literacy, but the emphasis is rather on developing music memory, learning the songs by the ear, developing rhythmic skills through rhymes, riddles and tongue twisters, developing a sense of improvisation, adopting basic music concepts, instruments, vocal and instrumental ensembles, as well as playing Orff instruments in a group.

The textbook *Music Steps 1*, by Vedrana Markovic and Andree Čoso Pamer (2016), was created in accordance with this program, and published by the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids in cooperation with the Music Academy, as part of the project *Identity Elements in the Montenegrin Music as a Basis for Development of Multiculturalism and Interculturalism*. Miodrag Vasiljevic's functional method for setting up pitches is used here, among other things, and authors adapted it to the Montenegrin folklore. There is a dedicated composed example for each basic tonal pitch. The textbook set also includes the material on CD with arrangements of songs and matrices, and also a methodological manual for teachers.

Teaching piano starts in the first half of the second grade, when the systematic acquisition of music literacy by the students has started in solffeggio classes. In these classes this approach creates the possibility to examine music skills in instrument classes through various forms of playing well known melodies by ear, through their transposition and various forms of improvisation. This teaching method requires more active teachers and 'higher level of creative will' (Ščapov, 1963). Given the length of time, the age of students and the concentration, it can be recommended that the teacher works with two students in one class. Many piano teachers recommend this kind of work in the primary classes because it improves the dynamics of class, concentration and attention, which is hard to keep at a high level for 45 minutes of an individual work. In many systems, a beginner has two 30 minute long classes per week, which is the case in Slovenia. If all of the planned activities were performed: playing, listening to music, making music - it would justify the length of a class. But the question is how well are classrooms equipped with music equipment, how long do teachers play music to students in the class and do students



improvise, play songs by the ear and other elements of what is describes in the program as creativity? The realistic picture would be the one where the teachers practice the program with students, and playing an instrument is the only activity that takes place in the class.

## Conclusion

Music education in the countries of Eastern Europe is more focused on professional music education. Even though a proportionately small number of students enroll in secondary music schools, this concept is maintained as very strict. While giving suggestions for writing curricula and programs, Prof. Pavel Rojko from Zagreb Music Academy is considering the situation in Croatia, comparing it to some European countries, notably Austria and Germany, and he asks the question: "Has the time come to abandon the rigid concept of students enrolling in the whole system, and is an alternative program possible with facilitating ways to learn" (Rojko, 2006, p. 49). The example he gives is *Music School Elly Bašić* in Zagreb where they had the so called double track - A and B program, one intended for gifted children with strong music dispositions, and the other for those of modest capabilities who are, in this way, able to meet slightly lower criteria, but will still go through music training, they will learn to play an instrument at a certain level, and after completion of school they could potentially become an educated music audience. Should these changes be considered as realistic solutions? A question that also emerges is the one concerning the motivation of students to enroll in music schools, which is not sufficiently present due to a rather traditional approach in teaching music, an approach primarily focused on development of performing abilities, without enough presence of creativity in teaching. All of these issues are worth serious consideration when creating new course programs.

Different needs of students emerge with the modern age and those should be placed at the center of all reform processes of a certain educational system. A repertoire performed in schools comes from Western European classical music tradition and standout students are performing it at a high interpretative level (*Music Schools in Europe*, 2010). Schools are funded by the state (in Slovenia state's share is 80%, while in Montenegro it is 100%) which indicates that they are important for national policy of development of education and culture. However, the question is how much are schools productive and how much is love for music art developed in students at schools, as well as the creative potential and the possibility of different music art manifestations, to include improvising and composing in elementary music schools. For students that want to gain an elementary music education and learn to play an instrument, a 'double track' could be considered. The advantages of this system in Montenegro, should be a good start for effective and justified innovations.

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## **Povzetek**

Prispevek je osredinjen na potekajočo reformo osnovnega glasbenega izobraževanja v Črni gori. Devetletno šolanje v glasbeni šoli je spodbudilo številne spremembe v predmetniku in učnih načrtih za posamezne predmete. Zaradi podobnih kurikularnih izhodišč je narejena komparativna primerjava s slovenskimi učnimi načrti.

Avtorica uvodoma naredi kratek zgodovinski pregled, v katerem izpostavi kontekst nastajanja črnogorskega sistema glasbenega izobraževanja, pomembne posameznike in ustanove. Med njimi pozornost nameni Vidi Matjan (rojeni Hribar, 1896–1993), ki je po šolanju na ljubljanski Glasbeni matici in na Dunaju krajši čas delovala v Beogradu in nato pa v Kotorju. Zaradi njenega izjemnega pedagoškega dela je danes po njej poimenovana glasbena šola v Kotorju.

V Črni gori je glasbeno izobraževanje sestavni del nacionalnega izobraževalnega sistema in financiran s strani države. Povezan je s sistemom osnovnošolskega izobraževanja. V prvem razredu učenci glasbene šole obiskujejo *Glasbeno pripravnico – Orffov inštrumentarij*. V višjih razredih obiskujejo individualni inštrumentalni pouk in skupinski pouk solfeggia z glasbeno teorijo. Od tretjega razreda naprej so vključeni tudi v komorno igranje. V zadnjih treh razredih imajo v predmetniku še izbirni predmet. Komparativna primerjava črnogorskih in slovenskih predmetnikov in učnih načrtov pokaže številne skupne značilnosti, pa tudi nekatere sistemske in vsebinske razlike. V tem pogledu je izpostavljena večja preciznost slovenskih učnih načrtov.

V Črni gori vsi učenci prvega razreda glasbene šole obiskujejo *Glasbeno pripravnico – Orffov inštrumentarij*. Pouk vključuje tri dejavnostna področja: izvajanje, ustvarjanje in poslušanje glasbe. Namenjen je razvijanju glasbenih sposobnosti in spretnosti, glasbenega spomina in elementarnih glasbenih znanj. Predmet še ne vključuje glasbenega opismenjevanja. Učitelji in učenci lahko pri pouku uporabljajo učbenik, ki sta ga napisala Vedrana Marković in Andree Čoso Pamer (2016).

Glasbeno opismenjevanje se intenzivno začne na začetku drugega razreda glasbene šole, ko začnejo učenci obiskovati skupinski pouk solfeggia z glasbeno teorijo in individualni pouk inštrumenta. Izpostavljen je začetni pouk klavirja, ki vključuje tudi igranje po posluhu, transpozicijo in improvizacijo. Vse to od učitelja zahteva kreativnost in angažiranost pri pouku.

V sklepu je izpostavljeno, da so vzhodnoevropski glasbeno-izobraževalni sistemi zelo usmerjeni k profesionalnemu glasbenemu izobraževanju. Zelo malo učencev pa se dejansko vpiše na srednješolsko raven glasbenega izobraževanja. Tako je tudi v primeru Črne gore, zato se avtorica sprašuje, ali se ne bi veljalo zgledovati po primerih, kot je Glasbena šola Elly Bašić v Zagrebu, ki za učence izvaja programa A in B. Prvi je namenjen učencem, ki so zelo glasbeno nadarjeni in motivirani za učenje inštrumenta. Drugi program je namenjen učencem, ki bo končani glasbeni šoli ne bodo nadaljevali šolanja na srednji glasbeni šoli. Različne potrebe in interesi učencev morajo biti upoštevane pri nadaljnjih korakih reformiranja črnogorskega glasbeno-izobraževalnega sistema.