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**THE TEXTBOOKS IN MUSIC EDUCATION AT ELEMENTARY
ART SCHOOLS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Abstract

The paper presents results of research conducted at elementary art schools in the field of using textbooks in teaching of music theory at these schools. It also focuses on the analysis of the latest methodological series of textbooks designed for current teaching of music theory at elementary art schools in the Czech Republic.

Key words: textbooks, research, music theory, using textbooks in education

Summary of basic information about czech elementary art education system:

1) In the Czech Republic, there is an established system of elementary art schools, which are focused on music field, art field, literary-dramatic field and dance field. Pupils and students aged 5 to 18 can attend elementary art schools after successful passing of talent exams. The teaching takes place in the afternoons and the schools are subsidized from the state budget.

2) The pupils attend the music field classes once a week where they focus on their specific musical instrument. The lesson takes 45 minutes. In addition to the subject of a musical instrument, pupils from the first to fifth grade are obliged to attend once a week music theory class which is usually taught as a mass subject. Music theory class organization is divided according to grades, the lesson takes 45 minutes as well and the class is attended by pupils who play various musical instruments.

3) The music theory aim is to get better knowledge for pupils in music theory, voice education, intonation, auditory analysis, history of music, musical instruments and aesthetics in general.

2. Research design and Methods

In 2017 doctoral students at our department (of Music Education, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University) made a research focused on quality,

methods and form of teaching Music Theory as a subject at elementary art schools in whole Czech Republic.

The research was realized by the form of open-ended questionnaires, distributed electronically to teachers at 493 elementary art schools, followed by test in paper distributed to randomly selected 40 basic art schools from 5 regions in Bohemia and Moravia, which tested appropriate knowledge of music theory of almost 700 4th grade pupils. (Results from the tests are subject of another paper).

3. Results from teachers' questionnaires:

a) 51 teachers did not answer the question "*What textbooks do you use in teaching Music Theory?*" at all.

b) The list of textbook titles mentioned in questionnaires was very varied.

c) Sixteen teachers stated that they use a combination of different textbooks,

d) Five of them wrote that they use „their own“ textbooks or apply inspiration from seminars

e) There are 3 most widespread titles of textbooks that teachers use in their pedagogical practice:

e1) *Hudební nauka pro ZUŠ (Music Theory for Elementary Art Schools)* by Martin Vozar,

e2) *Hudební nauka pro malé a větší muzikanty (Music Theory for Small and Bigger*

Musicians) by Dagmar Lisá

e3) *Hudební Hry (Music Games)*, publication by Rafaela Drgáčová and Cyril Kubiš.

f) Thanks to open-ended questions, teachers were able to list and freely write the pros and cons of used textbooks. And it was the last mentioned publication - *Hudební Hry (Music Games)* by Rafaela Drgáčová and Cyril Kubiš, in which the respondents agreed to have the most advantages.

4. Subsequent analysis of the new workbook series publication:

In the same year, when the above-mentioned research took place, was also released a new series of workbooks for Music Theory teaching from the authors of the above mentioned much-praised publication "*Hudební Hry*" (*Music Games*). As the workbooks called "*Receptář nápadů pro*

hudební nauku” (*Recipe Book of Ideas for Music Theory*) are one of the latest publications in this field, we decided to take a closer look at it and analyse the possible pros and cons. For a better and more concrete idea of the system and methodology of the textbook series, we chose a deeper analysis of the textbook intended for the first year of Music Theory studies. Other workbooks are based on the same principle of dividing chapters and work with the so-called cyclic method, where they repeat and deepen the subject matter, therefore were out of our interest.

5. Analysis results:

Title: **Rafaela Drgáčová / Cyril Kubiš –**

Receptář nápadů pro hudební nauku (Recipe Book of Ideas for Music Theory)

5.1 Workbooks are A5 in size and contain a colorful, cheerful design that will attract children at first sight.

5.2 In each workbook, there are several prominent pages on hardened paper that contain a thematic overview of the curriculum. The curriculum summarized in this way is highlighted in a color or pictorial thematically related background and students can return to it at any time and repeat the issue.

5.3 We observed the use of the cyclical method of teaching, which is clearly more suitable for a thorough understanding and comprehension of Music Theory.

5.4 The organization of work in workbooks is divided into sub-areas called “*Activity*”, “*Remember*” and “*I Create and practice*”. In the “*Activity*” section, the required activity is either directly described or the teacher is referred to the publication “*Hudební Hry*” (*Music Games*), in which specific activities are methodically described. The “*Remember*” area is used to alert the student to the importance of the content and its thorough memorization. The section “*I Create and practice*” guides students to specific tasks in a workbook leading to the practice of the subject matter.

5.5 The workbook: “Recipe Book of Ideas for Music Theory - student workbook 1st year” structure covers all major basic music theory fields: Notation, Stave, Treble clef and bass clef, Musical Alphabet, Names of Notes, Accidentals, Halftone and Whole Tone, Rhythm, Notes and their Rhythm, Basic Rests, Metre, Bars, Ligature and Fermata, Scale, Solmization - pentatonic / phonogestics, Intonation, Sound and Tone, and Tempo Markings and Dynamic Markings.

6. Conclusion

The presented publication is the first textbook of Music Theory, which is presented to the pupils with an interesting and engaging style. We appreciate creative ideas during practical exercises and frequent involvement of pupils in group or pair activities. We also evaluate very positively the methodical work with error, which in the first case teaches the pupil that making a mistake is natural, and in the second case the authors use an intentional error for a better and deeper knowledge of the issue. The textbook is the first publication of Music Theory that systematically teaches solmization to the pupils. This method is not generally and commonly used in the Czech Republic and it would be good to train teachers thoroughly. The publication is successful in design and pictures and the text speaks to the pupils in their natural and age-appropriate speech, without restricting technical terms. The recommended musical activities include methodological elements that specifically develop pupils with, for example, reading or writing disorders. Thanks to these means, we appreciate that the publication takes inclusion into account. We also see the connection of the textbook with the mobile application as a positive benefit, thanks to which pupils can practice the curriculum non-violently in the home environment with immediate feedback. In the age of lockdowns and distance learning, this model is especially advantageous.

Among the shortcomings of the publication is that there are a small number of included songs, the choice of which the authors probably left to the teachers. Furthermore, we lack a greater inclusion of listening activities in the publication. Listening activities are hardly worked on here. We also find problematic the insufficiently elaborated area focused on writing a music notation.

The pupils tend to have a problem with the written expression of the music notation and this area is minimally processed in the textbook.

The textbook of Music Theory "Receptář nápadů" (Recipe Book for Ideas) brings new, modern forms of Music Theory teaching in the Czech Republic and teaches pedagogues how to think differently about lessons, which we consider to be a very beneficial contribution to the contemporary music pedagogy. We believe that the textbook will find its place in teaching and that pupils and teachers will like it.

7. Bibliography

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