

# Perception of music in kindergarten and elementary school

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**ABSTRACT:** *The perception of music is one of the three musical activities that are realized in the situations and lessons of music in kindergarten and primary school in Bulgaria. The proposed article is an overview of the methodology for the perception of music in kindergarten and primary school, confirmed by scientists, researchers and practitioners - doyens of Bulgarian music education, who worked and created since the middle of the 20th century, and some of them up to the present time. Attention is paid to perception as a mental process; the essence of musical activity perception; the structuring and realization of the perception of music in preschool and primary school age - the common and the different in the two age groups; the sequence of familiarization with a new piece of music.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Perception of music, kindergarten, elementary school.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Perceiving music is a basic musical activity. It stimulates and develops the emotionality of the listener, their abstract thinking, their imagery. And in the education of future listeners - children and students - this activity develops musical hearing, memory, thinking, experience, fantasy, imagination. Musical education and upbringing of children in kindergarten and primary school through the activity of perceiving music is a way to discover new, invisible, but tangible worlds. "By listening to music, children become sensitive and immediate in experiencing something different. This contributes to the creation, confirmation and enhancement of musical perceptions and ideas, which is a very good basis for the development of their musical abilities." (Dimitrova, 2016)

The historical roots of music education in Bulgaria date back to the end of the 19th century. They are connected with the names of the first generation of Bulgarian composers, whose work is also closely involved with school activities: Boris Trichkov, Vasil Stoin, Dobri Hristov, Panayot Pipkov, Angel Bukureshtliev and many others. This generation has championed a national awareness and identity based on a primal belonging to folklore. The modern Bulgarian school gives its respect, recognition and adoration to the work and memory of these Bulgarian musicians, composers, teachers, through its respect for their timeless creativity, which is still studied today. The main musical activities underlying music education in preschool and primary school age are: perception (listening); reproduction (performance, interpretation); creativity (improvisation).

Taseva (2014) makes a retrospective of the activity of perceiving/listening to music in the Bulgarian school from the middle of the 20th century: "As a regulated main musical activity, the perception of music was introduced in the Bulgarian mass general education school in 1955. In 1960, the section "Listening to music" was removed from the music textbooks. In the educational content of the program since 1973, two sections have been distinguished - "Musical Perception" and "Listening to Music". The activity of listening to music in the program since 1981 is mainly aimed at forming skills for the comprehensive understanding and perception of musical works, for the active development of musical hearing, for the accumulation of musical-auditory experience, for the development of musical memory and imagination through the perception of various musical works. In the 1993 music curricula and guidelines, several new lines concerning the activity of listening to music are noticeable: developing the image-associative thinking of students when perceiving a musical work; parallel development of meaningful and emotional beginnings when listening to music; formation of a "conceptual apparatus" - including musical knowledge, concepts, terms and specific forms of expression of musical impressions; thematic-plot organization of the material; interculturality - getting to know the musical culture of different peoples. During the reform of Bulgarian education, which began in 2000, State Educational Requirements were imposed in all subjects, which for the first time set uniform standards for the educational content and the organization of the educational process.

## **II. PERCEPTION**

In its essence, perception is a "cognitive mental process in which separate objects and phenomena from objective reality are reflected in the human mind in their entirety and in their immediate impact on the sense organs." (Levy, 2006) The same author notes that, depending on the analysts involved, perceptions are pure (purely visual, purely auditory, etc.) or mixed (visual-olfactory-gustatory). He also defines another basis for the classification of perceptions - the activity of the subject. Based on it, they are divided into unintentional - an unexpected, accidental encounter with the impact of the object of perception, and intentional - with prior planning and directed attention - observation. (Levy, 2006) In this sense, the perception of music in preschool and elementary school age is mainly related to the auditory analyzer, i.e., it is pure. The subjective activity of children and students is in many cases unintentional, but organized in the situation or lesson by the teacher who poses appropriate and relevant questions, tasks or directions, it becomes intentional.

Peev and his team (1978) define indicators covering mental processes and personal qualities on which the strength of the musical impact depends: sensation and perception, attention, memory, imagination, thinking, speech, feelings, will; interests and inclinations, abilities and gifts, temperament and character.

Mincheva . (1994) characterizes the perception of music as a "relatively . activity." The author points out two main requirements imposed by the musical environment surrounding the individual: developed ability for orientation and selection ; ability to listen with "understanding" - to perceive the music in such a way that it maximally affects the listener.

Peev and his team define listening to music as "a kind of activity that gives children the opportunity to get to know the specific side of reality - the sound side." (Peev et al., 1978)

According to Mincheva, Peev et al., Jendova, the educational and educational tasks in the perception of music are related to: diverse in nature and content material that will provoke the interest of children and students; development and enrichment of musical and auditory representations; educating and creating the experience of listening to music - emotional experience, sensibility; distinguishing the elements of musical expressiveness; matching and comparing skills; development of taste, sensation and evaluation parameters; development of memory, attention, imagination; enrichment of musical and general culture, etc.

The listed tasks are closely related to the components of musical perception: emotional responsiveness, musical hearing, musical memory, image-associative thinking, imagination and active-creative participation. (according to Jendova, 2012) Fileva's ( 2020) opinion is also in this sense: "The perception of music includes the skills to "understand" the piece that has been played, to understand its emotional content, as well as to evaluate the qualities of the musical work and its performance. "

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

In cognitive-learning activities in kindergarten and in the music lesson in elementary school, listening to music takes place when:

- a specific piece of music is perceived in order for children to become familiar with it, learn it, know it, create a mood for them or give them pleasure, i.e. when the musical activity "perception of music" is realized;
- music is perceived before learning a new song, a new musical-rhythmic movement, a new musical-didactic game, etc., i.e. as an initial moment in executive activity;
- children/students perform or create music and need to hear the quality of their own or others' performance (what they sing, how they sing, do they play accurately; do they play as the music suggests, etc.), i.e. in the case of auditory self-control, which is mandatory for quality music performance. (Jendova, 2012)

Jendova differentiates the specifics of getting to know a new piece of music in preschool and primary school age:

Kindergarten

- use of visual non-musical images and associations;
- retention of children's attention by including in movements - illustrating the text, imitating the musical-artistic image;
- use of moving toys or movements of the teacher with toys;
- use of pictures and illustrations as hints and support;
- the word of the pedagogue – musical content marked with words;
- expressing the music through drawings.

Primary school

- no toys are used;
- there is no need to include movements for illustration;
- the use of pictures and illustrations is in the context of era, author, selection;
- the teacher sets questions-tasks with creative directions, and the students share, comment on personal emotions, experiences, images. (Jendova, 2012)

In relation to age specifics, the organization and conduct of music perception in a situation or lesson is determined.

Peev and collective note the following order of perception of music

1. Listening to entire musical works and getting to know musical creativity.
2. Listening to parts of musical works with the task of musical-auditory differentiation of musical elements. (Peev et al., 1978)

The complete hearing of musical works (instrumental and/or vocal) is necessary for: children's and students' understanding of the emotional impact of the work; completing, upgrading their knowledge of the work of a given composer, his style and the specific sound of the time in which he worked; asking questions and tasks, directing the thinking and attention of young listeners to a certain issue.

Partial listening is related to: understanding the elements of musical expressiveness; analysis and synthesis - from the small (motive, phrase, sentence) to the large (the whole); development of musical abilities, in particular the melodic ear – movement of the melodic line, reinforced, emphasized by the other means of musical expression; distinguishing similar moments of intonation in the same or different works.

Mincheva offers an interesting form of "thematic binding of the artistic material in the music lesson in the elementary course" - the so-called "collecting" of musical works", emphasizing its multifaceted effect:

1. In the lesson, an appropriate psychological attitude is created for a more comprehensive perception of musical works.

2. Observing works with similar or close imagery provides opportunities for comparison, in which not only common and different features are noted, but attention is also paid to details, shades and mood.

3. "Collecting" allows the same piece of music to end up in several different "collections", as they can be compiled on different grounds.

The author does not miss the opportunity to use works from different arts to stimulate visual thinking when listening to music. Mincheva's conclusion regarding the organization and conduct of the perception of music is: "In order to develop as a creative person, the student must first learn to perceive the whole, then separate the essential, the main, and then appreciate the details that distinguish the originality, the uniqueness of the artistic fact." (Mincheva, 1994)

Mincheva defines the following stages when getting acquainted with a new piece of music:

1. Creating an appropriate emotional atmosphere.
2. Learning basic musical themes.
3. Complete listening of the work in order to create a general idea about it and determine the emotional content.
4. Repeated audition with different tasks.
5. Attention to individual moments in the work.
6. Independent complete audition of the work.
7. Comments, discussion, expression of personal attitude. (Mincheva, 1994)

The author adds that the enrichment of children's musical culture can also be realized through collective visits to a concert, opera, ballet, or pre-specified television and radio broadcasts, or Internet sources. This also leads to a critical attitude and preferences of children and students towards different interpretations and performers.

Methodical steps in the initial perception of a new piece of music in kindergarten and elementary school can be expressed in the following sequence:

1. Creating an Attitude.
2. Asking an age-appropriate question/task.
3. Complete audition of the work.
4. Repetition of the set question/task.
5. Listening to the answers.
6. Summary (in kindergarten) / conversation (in elementary school).

In the kindergarten, the teacher, after listening to the children's opinions regarding the questions and tasks, summarizes them. In primary school, the teacher's role is reduced to guidelines for thinking, which students interpret, expressing their opinion, experience, feeling. The sharing move is an analysis-synthesis that the students begin to carry out themselves, through habits and skills created over time for a logical connection between the detail/element and its place in the whole.

"The activity of the teacher to form a cognitive and evaluative attitude in the students should be combined with the independent cognitive-practical activity and the active participation of the students...because when a person evaluates a given phenomenon, he realizes its meaning and values." (Krasteva, 2004)

Preliminary teacher training includes:

- the complete multiple audition of the work, with which the children and students will become familiar;
- analysis of the work, including the character and mood of the work, as well as the elements of musical expressiveness used and understanding their presence in the context of the content;

- consideration of the means and ways of introduction into the atmosphere;
- preparation of the necessary pictorial and visual materials;
- search for diverse, interesting, attractive musical works for children and students, outside the studied material, with which to enrich their musical culture, to illustrate the topic under consideration, to use as dance or background music, to stimulate imagination and creative thinking .

Based on this preparation, the teacher organizes the work with the group or class in the perception of a new musical work. From the teacher's correct analysis, understanding of the musical content, understanding of the elements of the musical language and his sensitivity to the sound work, both the provoking of children's interest and the creation of prerequisites for enlivening, spiritualizing the musical fabric and its mental and emotional experience by to the little listeners.

Using a concept from physics, Andreeva (2010) notes that "the teacher should be the main oscillator, instigator of the movement, but at the same time also a sensitive oscilloscope, which monitors and registers whether it takes place and to what extent."

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The perception of music in preschool and elementary school age is knowledge, culture, wisdom, useful and necessary for the education and upbringing of children and students. This musical activity provides an opportunity to open the door leading to the infinity and perfection of musical art.

The development of the auditory apparatus through the activity of music perception increases sensibility and sensitivity to sound, revealing new possibilities for intonational expression and sound modifications to stimulate rational and irrational thinking and perception of the surrounding world. Listening to music, instrumental and vocal, helps to get in touch and contact with the expressiveness of the musical language, meaning and building a personal understanding and opinion about the means and instrumentation of the musical art, prepares future listeners, educates and develops valuable habits and skills such as concentration, attention , patience.

The teacher is the conduit of knowledge to children and students. He is an example of behavior, upbringing, erudition, imitation. Shushulova-Pavlova (2017) formulates the work of a modern pedagogue with the following primary processes: to arouse interest; to teach the youth (in front of you) to think; to seek challenges for his intellectual potential; to have fun!

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