

## CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO MUSIC CONTENT AT THE PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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**Abstract:** *For decades, during the Yugoslav period, school courses held in the languages of ethnic communities used textbooks translated from Serbian (Serbo - Croatian). In the case of music textbooks, there was a possibility of introducing some texts and songs specific to the ethnic community in question. In the last decade, music textbooks aimed to be used by members of ethnic communities have been conceptualized so that they use content specific to the community and not translations from Serbian. This allows for a substantial enrichment of the musical repertoire with examples that are specific to the ethnic community in question. In the case of textbooks for primary grades, it means introducing a greater number of songs and musical examples from the Romanian folklore.*

**Keywords:** *textbooks, folkloric content, folk-musical skills, music education.*

A highly visible feature of the music textbook for grade four of elementary school, also mentioned by its author in the preface, is the emphasis on acquiring knowledge related to the culture of music itself, as the discipline is called<sup>1</sup>. In the preface, professor Ion Lelea indicates the elements that the class will revise and those that are new for the students, available to students and teachers. As was indicated by the author, the textbook focuses on the following:

- Folk music and the art music;
- Musical rhythm and melody;
- Properties of the musical sound;
- Notes, pauses, the linear system;
- Measure, the bar line, signs of repetition;
- Writing and reading notes;
- Melodic and rhythmic instruments;
- Improving the reading and the writing of the musical alphabet;
- Singing and listening to new music compositions;
- Acquisition of musical sound durations;

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<sup>1</sup>Translator's note: The full name of the discipline is "Musical culture".

- The measure of four times;
- Gama C A major, tone, semitone, stage;
- Singing in two voices;
- Recognition of fragments of music and musical instruments;
- Analysis of melody;
- Learning of musical genres; (Lelea, 2010).

Referring to the repertoire of folk variety included in the manual for grade four, which draws our attention to its teaching potential, we can say that this is indeed used with the aim to achieve the mentioned objectives. So, in order to revise the measures of 3/4 and 4/4, the author uses a Serbian Banat folk song entitled 'Lepo ti je rano uraniti' (meaning: "It's nice to get up early") that combines the two measures into a success heterometrics in terms of artistic and didactic value. The song is widely known, which facilitates achieving the objective. Also, the emergence of dotted quarter notes, followed by eights in the two 2/4 measures appearing in this song, leads to the consolidation of these difficult rhythmic formulas during several stages of musical development. Doing solfeggio and marking the strokes of this song, the students can very successfully learn or revise those two types of measures.

Another known song of folk variety, namely, 'U livadi pod jasenom' is used for recapitulating the measure 4/4. This song has an accentuated melodicity and is accompanied by the advent of dotted quarter notes and eighth notes, without too big melodic leaps (the only leap being the quint D1 - A1 in measure 6-7), with an age-appropriate ambitus (the song is placed into modal structure of the type ionic D1-A1, having as its basis the sound C and as its final sound the sound D), can be used both as an instrumental piece (played on the piano, block-flute or other instrument) as well as for voice reproduction. The author indicates the availability of all levels of musical development of children (T.N. - all levels). The song may very easily be used when practicing solfeggio because it is characterized by a progressive and a mixed melodic contour and can be very useful for practicing the marking of strokes of the measure 4/4. In short, the example is very well chosen to cover a broader range of objectives proposed by this school discipline for the fourth grade of primary school.

*U livadi pod jasenom*

T.N.  
Repetiție

Cântec popular din Serbia

U - li - va - di pod ja - se - nom, vo - da iz - vi - re, vo - da iz - vi - re.

U - li - va - di pod ja - se - nom, haj, vo - da iz - vi - re.

Following other examples of folk music from the pages of the textbook, we note that they were skillfully chosen by the author in order to help achieve the operational objectives. So, for example, the song 'Adă, lupe, oile' (meaning: "Wolf, bring the sheep"), which emerged from children's folklore, is used to revise the signs of repetition. The mentioned song consists of two simple melodic lines, the first having two measures and the second having four measures. The repetition sign appears after the first melodic line. Although it is simple in terms of melody (its structure is a hemitonic pentachord, with the sound D1 being the basis and the final sound), with a mainly descending melodic contour, it may help to acquire the objective. It can be sung by a soloist after a frontal approach of the lesson, so that the singer sings the first two measures (those that repeat) and the other children sing the second melodic line.

For introducing the symbol of corona or fermata, the prolongation of the sound, the author again uses a popular song (following T. Popović, as the author notes). The song in question is 'Cucule, pană galbenă' found on page 35. Originating in folklore, the song introduces the corona in the place of caesuras, which is not always placed at the end of the melodic line, but sometimes after its first sound. That way, the rhythmic structure of eights with sporadic subdivisions of sixteenths, close to the giusto – syllabic rhythmic system, marks the text fragments or syllables considered important. This is done in an expressive way by using caesuras.

The song 'Cucule, pană galbenă' has four sharps (F# - C# - G# - D#) and obviously a tendency toward the sonorous structure with the sound E. This can be considered to be an ionic structure with E as the basic sound, having the final sound on the sixth sound of the sonorous structure (C#), which does not occur often in Romanian folklore. Ambitus of the song is age-appropriate (C#1 - D#1 - E1 - F#1 - G#1 - B1).

'Furnicile' is a song originating in the children's folklore found on page 41 of the textbook. It is indicated that all students in the class can play it, that is, it is intended for all levels of musical development. Understandably, since it originates in children's folklore, it is not particularly difficult in terms of its rhythmic and metrics and it can even be used with children younger than

primary-school fourth grade children. However, the author's idea was for it to be used for instrumental performance. In support of this claim is the fact that there are indications preceding the song about the basic rules of the order of finger when playing an instrument with keyboards. The ambitus of the song oscillates between C1 and G1, which does not necessitate a highly advanced technique (or a change in the position of the right hand). This makes it easy to play it on a keyboard instrument. The song can also very easily be played on another instrument (block - flute or xylophone), but above all, it is meant for vocal reproduction, given its origin deep in the children's folklore. The song 'Furnicile' can be seen in other music textbooks authored by Professor Lelea, but with another teaching objective. Using the same song at different ages for different purposes is no exception and no novelty in the textbooks used in Romanian schools in Serbia. Using the same song several times at different ages is actually strongly recommended, since some new elements will be much more easily learnt if the text of the song is already well known. However, this practice should not be used to exaggeration (Stojanović, G., Protić V.: 2004).

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Furnicile' (The Ants). At the top, there is a diagram of a hand with fingers numbered 1 to 5, and a piano keyboard with notes DO, RE, MI, FA, SOL. Below the keyboard, there is a diagram of the notes on a staff. The title 'Furnicile' is written in red. The score is in 2/4 time, marked 'T.N. Allegro'. The lyrics are: 'Măi co-pii, ve - niți a - ici, Ia pri - viți că - te fur - niel! Cum a - lear - gă, vin, se duc, Toa - te ca - ră, toa - te - a - duc. Fi - re, boa - be, vier - mi - șori. Ce mai gra - bă, ce mai zor!' The source is cited as 'Din folclorul copiilor'.

In order for fourth-grade students to get important insight about the dynamic elements and to successfully revise them, the author proposes a folk song entitled 'Ecoul'.

It is already known from the teaching practice that the perception of nuances is best achieved when the same melodic and rhythmic fragment is contrasted in relation to the different dynamic nuances. In order to describe this effect for children, the most useful way is to invoke the idea of an echo. In this respect, the song that is found on page 57 is very useful. This song, which has two measures and which occurs as an identical rhythmic and melodic repetition of the previous two measures, having the same literary text, creates a full effect. The author indicates the nuance of *mf* at the beginning of the song, the echo coming in a *pp* context. During the song, this echo effect appears once again in the last two measures. In fact, the song has only one

melodic line which is repeated twice, the last two measures having the effect of an echo. Its sonority is profoundly tonal, so we can talk about the sonorous structure of a C Major with its typical functionality. The vocal reproduction of the song can be accomplished frontally, followed by the reorganization of students into groups who would then emulate the echo and produce the text according to the given dynamic indicators. Of course, once learnt, these nuances can be enriched with other terms related to the dynamics, maintaining the idea of contrasting them.

On page 67 of the textbook, the author offers another piece of music with folk origin, this time originating in the children's folklore. This song encourages the vocal and instrumental reproduction in the classroom. 'Cîntă Mierla' is based on two voices and two percussion instruments. The parts designated for vocal reproduction can also be played on an instrument (Lelea, 2010).

Practicing the vocal - instrumental reproduction in the classroom is crucial for the musical development of students, and especially for developing their ability to notice nuances, as well as for developing the sense of rhythm and harmonic hearing.

The piece of music, that is the song, is not particularly difficult in terms of its melody and rhythm, even though its ambitus is an octave (C1 - C2). After the musical text is deciphered, as well as both voices by way of doing the solfeggio, and the corresponding strokes are marked, the example can be produced in more than one way since the students had already learnt the literary text. This can be done by reversing the roles of the students (the vocal reproduction of voices, the instrumental reproduction, the production of percussion elements etc.).

This song offers great potential when it comes to revising certain elements used in writing, which had already been learnt, such as signs of repetition, quarter rests or some terms related to tempo, demonstrating once again the great possibilities offered by the repertoire of folklore in terms of teaching music (Stojanović, G., Protić V.: 2004).

Another example we give is a song originating in the Serbian folklore entitled 'Ersko kolo', as presented by the author on page 72 of the music textbook for grade four of the elementary (primary) school. Although meant as a vocal performance, the song is a good example of adapting folk content in order to be used in achieving the teaching objectives. Also, the mentioned example, namely, 'Ersko kolo', can be reproduced both as a vocal and as an instrumental piece. With a reduced ambitus situated between C1 and F1 and with the final sound of D1, i.e. the second sound of the sonorous structure (stage II), a termination specific for the Serbian folklore Serbian, this example poses no difficulty for vocal production. References of the author about the Serbian traditional music and the domination of the flute in the

Serbian folklore, is indicative of the desire for the song to be played on the block - flute, an instrument often present in schools in Serbia. However, the song 'Ersko kolo' can be played on a keyboard instrument without much finger-placing related trouble and it is also easy to play it on a xylophone or even guitar. The way of organizing the production of the song, the combination of vocal and instrumental elements, resorting to division into groups or solo reproduction with other children accompanying the song, very often depends on the involvement and skills of the teacher (Lelea, 2010).

The image shows a musical score for the Serbian folk song 'Ersko kolo'. At the top left, there is a small cartoon character and the initials 'T.N.'. The title 'Ersko kolo' is written in a stylized font with a decorative flourish above it. To the right of the title, it says 'Dans popular din Serbia'. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are for the voice, with the lyrics 'Ja br-dom, br-dom, br-dom, a de-voj-ka do-lom, do-lom.' written below the notes. The last two staves are for a melodic instrument, with the label 'Cântăm la instrumentele melodice' on the left. The music is written in a 2/4 time signature.

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