

ON THE CRISIS OF SYSTEMATISED CHILDREN EDUCATION IN ARTS AND HUMANITIES
AND ON THE NEED FOR AN “INTONATED MUSIC CULTURE”
IN THE EDUCATION CURRICULUM

I. All of us gathered at this conference one way or another are engaged in musical educational system. And I want to ask myself - but in public - a child's question: what is a purpose of this music education? If we speak about something like to train children to listen and understand music, then what kind of music? Today's or yesterday's? I do not sympathize with the so-called music being created today. Neither pop, rock, nor avant-garde or post-modern. Why so - is a separate question. A child of Bach era played modern popular music as his pedagogical repertoire. With Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev this situation was still in effect. In our time a child plays museum music. I have the impression that music as it was understood for several last centuries does not exist any more. Relatively speaking it happened on August 9, 1975, the day Shostakovich passed away. I was 28 years of age then, I grew up with the impression of eternally fruitful art, and it was very painful to leave this impression behind. This is not purely musical situation. About the same time in 70s something like that happened in European and American poetry. To a considerable extent Russian poetry was affected by this process too. One can enter culture through different gates - through music, poetry, painting. These gates can open one by one but they close simultaneously, and it is impossible to enter again. Hermann Hesse remarkably foresaw the situation in his novel “Glass Bead Game”. “The epoch of feature articles” had come, by the way much earlier than Hesse proposed. Whether it happened forever or if it is a temporary situation on a historical scale - we do not know. If forever, then the succeeding generations will not probably need the so-called cultural heritage.

That one who pays, he orders music. The adults paid for music before, and not everyone, but definitely prepared. We should not be under a delusion today with circulations of compact discs, packed concert halls, abundance of competitions and festivals. This is a magnificent funeral. Today millions of uneducated juveniles pay for music. They define the market, and not cultural prepared adults. It has never been like that before. Fundamentally different cultural paradigm can make its predecessor not properly understood. But if this situation is temporary, then by following same Hesse we need something like Castalia, the possibility to preserve and pass on our cultural heritage. I am talking at least about virtual Castalia, about something that we call “education in arts and humanities”. As music is concerned we speak about the intonational art of the past. We can consider musical art in two aspects - as a pure sonorous phenomenon and as a phenomenon sonorous-intonational. The latter allows deliberate or undeliberate vocal participation. I limit the course of the development of musical thinking in children by sonorous-intonational phenomena. Not because “Shostakovich is better than Xenakis”, but because my method could not be applied to pure sonorous phenomena. And even if we recognize this – “intonational”- priority, still we face a question how to allure young people to accept culture which is not actual from their point of view. It is not enough to advise young people to listen to classic music and to tell them the names and the place those take up in common world history. Intonational art could be emotionally adopted only through co-intonating.

II. The so-called systematised children education in arts and humanities reproduces the structure of ready knowledge in the educational process. However, the process of acquiring knowledge and knowledge itself - are two different things. Teachers of humanities gained their knowledge not

systematically at all. Before a teacher to be makes up his/her mind to go in for professional systematic education, he/she already has gotten a sufficient amount of knowledge through trial and error. Exact desire to make this knowledge deeper and systematic, to make it part of much wider informational context, and then to be able to pass the knowledge on others prompts a teacher to be to get professional education. At least it supposed to be so. We do not take into consideration a wide spread situation, when the desire to get professional education is stipulated by side motives; such as, for instance, being unable to enter another educational institution. It is impossible to impart knowledge mechanically; it is, on the other hand, possible to acquire knowledge. One seeks out and absorbs knowledge only if one is interested. Awakening that interest and giving direction to the search is the task of the teacher.

But the reproduction of the ready knowledge structure into unprepared consciousness cannot awake child's interest. The interest to systematize something is similar to that of the collector's. From the very beginning you are interested in every object of the collection, just by itself. Then there appears the desire to add these or those objects to "series", to find objects missing in your collection, but beyond all doubts existing in reality.

III. It is quite different - the systematised education in exact sciences. There exists an opportunity to deliver knowledge by moving from simple phenomena to complicated ones proceeding from some postulates and follow certain rules of the game, and this way as to reproduce ready knowledge structure. Is this kind of information absorbing possible in musical education? This comes true in studying musical theory. But musical theoretical knowledge turns out to be pointless if it does not have enough time to rest upon acoustical impressions. Thus, we have to talk at least not about theory itself, but about "heard theory". It means theoretically we have to summarize phenomena learnt intonationally. Something like that happens when you get introduced to musical literature. How does a course of musical literature usually get formed in Russian musical school (as well as a course of musical culture in school providing general education - at least in well familiar to me European gymnasium system)? Various musical-historical information is systematized chronologically or by genres. But students yet do not have that thesaurus, that stock of hearing impressions, the only ones that could be systematized, - until a certain time it is pointless to subject "unwired for sound" knowledge to systematization. And the interest will be able to arise only if music itself is internalized , "passed through yourself", heard by internal ear.

IV. Solmization underlies the suggested program in musical literature, i.e. singing and naming the steps of the sound-pitch system (and then with the syllabic names of the rhythmic figures), the fragments from musical compositions. The students (it is possible to begin with four-year-old age) learn the suggested fragments by heart. Then they have to recognize them in the whole composition, which they listen to on CD or audio-cassette. This recording consists of specially selected examples. The appropriate CDs or audio-cassettes have to be available at school as well as at home. This is accompanied by information about the composer, the epoch, the style, the country, and the piece, as well as, if necessary, by expositions of opera and ballet librettos revised by the author of this paper: everything in popularized form. However, these "literary tools" can only play an auxiliary role. It is evident that it does not lead to learning and thinking about music in terms of music, perceiving music as an "intoned process", not translatable into any other language. The didactic repertoire is not systematized chronologically or in genres. A chronological systematization starts after the accumulation of a corresponding thesaurus – in approximately the fifth-to-seventh year of instruction. Nevertheless, the material is systematized.

The principle of this systematization is *a gradual augmentation of the “intonation dictionary”*. Every musical fragment makes “an information field” around itself. After a few years of contact with many “fields”, empty spaces will be filled and the whole picture will be restructured like the “aha” experience of Gestalt psychology.

In Russian music schools for children, music literature is also taught starting with fifth grade. Students are acquainted with music in chronologically-historical order. My approach, however, differs from the one that is currently common practice in schools in the following way. First children are familiarized with the music (not necessarily in a historically-chronological order) in their solfeggio class, and only then do they learn the pieces in their music literature class. Children thus learn the relevant surrounding cultural and historical facts about the music (e.g. when and where the author was born) in their music literature class, while having already been exposed to the actual music. Hence my approach is serial and not parallel. Because my music culture course is embedded in the course on solfeggio, it does not require additional school hours. It therefore need not replace the traditional course on music literature, but can instead supplement it. In regular schools that do not specialise in music, this course can also be taught in its entirety (see the plenary report).