

*R. Maroziene*Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre
42 Gedimino prospekt, Vilnius, 01110, Lithuania**SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECT OF TEACHING
TO PLAY LITHUANIAN NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS**

The sociocultural aspect of teaching to play Lithuanian national music instruments is a neglected topic in terms of research. There are various folk instruments and forms of their promotion in the contemporary pedagogics and culture, therefore the author of the article conducts the research aiming at determining the most currently efficient methods of folk instruments expression, which could have a positive effect on the entire development of pedagogics in this area. The article discusses international contests, festivals and scientific conferences bringing together folk instruments performers, taken place in Lithuania and in Europe, analyses the influence of such events on pedagogics of national instruments.

The aim of the research: to analyse and to define the sociocultural peculiarities of teaching to play Lithuanian national music instruments.

Tasks of the research: to describe the role and significance of the ethnic music in the contemporary music education in Lithuania; to analyse the opportunities for spreading sociocultural pedagogics of Lithuanian national music instruments and the role thereof in the contemporary global culture.

Research methods: observation, comparison, interview, review of scientific and methodological papers, analysis of legislations and guiding documents on education.

Keywords: ethnic music, music education, national music instrument

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Music education is an integral part of comprehensive cultural and social education, presumption of life quality and of success in labour knowledge society [8, 6]. This education has deep historic roots in the States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. For centuries music education was based on folk education: by passing on folk songs and traditional instrument melodies from lips to lips, from hands to hands, and so on from one generation to another [2, 8]. Along with ongoing processes of globalization, the global society becomes more open, the use of the terms “culture”, “socialization”, “socioculture” expands and becomes more clear, more opportunities for getting to know non-traditional cultures present themselves and, under the impact of major integration processes, preservation of uniqueness, customs, and live traditions of our nation becomes more complicated

[3, 20]. Cultural uniqueness is the distinctive feature of every nation, and folk music, as a part of such originality, can be a powerful tool in national policy of every country.

Perception of positive impact of ethnic and cultural values in education of young people has existed in Lithuania at all times, even when studies of ethnoculture were under strict regulations of authorities [9, 48]. One of the objectives of the contemporary independent and sovereign State of Lithuania is “to convey the basics of national and ethnic culture, traditions and values of European and global humanist culture to a person, to ensure conditions for formation of a mature national self-consciousness, moral, aesthetic, scientific culture, worldview of a person, as well as to guarantee continuity of the national and regional culture, preservation of its identity, continu-

ous creation of its values, to foster openness and dialog of the region” [17].

At the very beginning of the XXth century, when the basics of music education had just started forming in Lithuania, national education of youth has become a matter of particular interest: pioneers of national music pedagogics, such as Juozas Karosas (1890–1981), Juozas Žilevičius (1891–1985), Domas Andrusis (1896–1973), Antanas Budriūnas (1902–1966), Vladas Jakubėnas (1904–1976), Juozas Banaitis (1908–1967), Jonas Švedas (1908–1971), etc., have made a major contribution in this area. It was clear even then just as it is clear today that preservation of Lithuanian national self-consciousness, accessibility and spread of positive traditions and folklore mostly depended on teaching of the ethnic culture at comprehensive schools.

During the last decade of the XXth century, after Lithuania fought back its independence, a major upsurge of the national spirit could be felt, not leaving behind the comprehensive education system of the state, including music education. Significant attention to folk music is paid in music education systems based on realism developed by Vida Krakauskaitė (born in 1924), Eduardas Balčytis (born in 1937), Zenonas Marcinkevičius (born in 1935) as well as in the research papers based on idealistic realism by such educators as Albina Katinienė (1930–2016), Albertas Piličiauskas (1936–2011), Zenonas Rinkevičius (born in 1939), Jonas Kievišas (born in 1941), Lolita Piličiauskaitė-Navickienė (born in 1963), Rūta Girdzijauskienė (born in 1964), and Eirimas Velička (born in 1965).

Lithuanian music educators believed that a folk song had been and still was the most archaic pioneer of all other music genres formed during the later periods in history, thus eventually cognition of its melos, rhythmic and other peculiarities of the musical language during music lessons had become a natural and irreplaceable educational tool. The systems of playing music (engaging in music) during the comprehensive education music lessons developed by scholars E. Balčytis and E. Velička should be distinguished. E. Balčytis is considered to be the pioneer of the aforementioned system. According to the scholar, engaging in music is closely associated to rhythmic, vocal activity, and, in individual cases, even to listening to music. E. Balčytis specified that, at school practice it was best engaging in music with an already tried out “class orchestra” (*skudučiai* (panpipes,

Lithuanian wind music instrument), fifes, xylophones, rhythm instruments). The scholar is confident that “playing the panpipes has a unique ethnic and pedagogic value like nowhere else in the world — as it was transferred from the folk itself to the contemporary school and music lessons. Ethnographic *kanklės* (Lithuanian plucked string instrument) is particularly suitable for accompaniment to folk songs” [14, 67]. The methodology of playing music during music lessons initiated by E. Balčytis was complemented and continued by educator E. Velička, who claimed that music instruments (including folk music instruments) were an efficient tool which stimulated children’s interest in music [14, 198]. Scholar Diana Strakšienė also supported the idea of playing live music during comprehensive music education lessons and emphasized the importance of playing live music by the teacher. According to the scholar, playing live music by the teacher during the lesson reflects pupils’ interests and expectations, helps focusing pupils’ attention, encourages various discussions, helps to reveal pupils’ emotional experiences, encourages pupils to play music, reduces discipline-related problems, etc. [11, 178–179].

Let us take a little break from pedagogical theories and try to review the role of ethnic music in the contemporary education system of Lithuania.

Development of the native country’s heritage, the European and other global cultures as well as cognition of the importance of arts in various areas of contemporary work and life are identified as one of the tasks of the comprehensive programme of basic education (artistic education: music) [19]. Theoretically, this task also includes cognition and nurturance of music of our own nation as well as of other nations, however, practice indicates that not enough attention is paid to folk music and folk music instruments during music lessons at comprehensive education schools, this often is influenced by educator’s and their pupils’ negative attitude towards engaging in ethnic music as a non-progressive and outdated phenomenon.

A similar situation is found during research of the subject of ethnic culture at comprehensive education schools. When comparing the survey of educators of ethnic culture conducted by scholar Gaila Kirdienė 14 years ago [5, 83] and the situation of teaching ethnic culture at comprehensive education schools presented by scholar Inija Trinkūnienė 7 years ago [12, 21–29], we may conclude, that after the wave

of national revival started running low, the situation of ethnic culture at comprehensive education establishments may be referred to as merely satisfactory.

PEDAGOGICS OF LITHUANIAN NATIONAL MUSIC INSTRUMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, which classifies education in Lithuania as formal and informal (optional), regulates teaching to play folk instruments [18]. Formal education includes music programmes of comprehensive education within the course of which the youth is generally introduced to folk music and folk music instruments. Informal (optional) education consists of education supplementing the formal education, which is implemented in accordance with long-term education programmes at music/art schools, while the purpose of informal education is the development of child's life skills, personal, social and other general competences. The latter education may be implemented in the form of extracurricular activities (groups, studies, etc.). Formal education establishments (art gymnasiums, conservatories) working in accordance with specialized target-oriented education programmes (education in the areas of fine arts and/or music), where playing folk instruments is also taught, operate in Lithuania as well. Higher non-university level (colleges) and higher university level (art academies, universities) education establishments engage in professional training of educators and performers specializing in folk instruments in Lithuania.

Nowadays, thanks to systematic and long-term fostering of the ethnic culture, both ethnographic and refined national music instruments exist in Lithuania. They are used for playing both solo and at ensembles within various structures.

Ethnographic instruments are used for playing music at most formal and informal education establishments in Lithuania. Teaching to play ethnographic music instruments is combined with cognition of the traditional music instruments at Lithuanian music and art schools. Besides the concert *kanklės* (Lithuanian plucked string instrument), *birbynė* (reed-pipes), *lamzdelis* (a kind of whistle), *skrabalai* (wooden bells) pupils also have a chance to play the traditional *kanklės* from *Aukštaitija* (Upper Lithuania), *Žemaitija* (Samogitia),

and *Suvalkija* (Sudovia), blow *skudučiai* (pan-pipes), horns and other instruments. Ensembles of ethnographic instruments (*kanklės*, *skudučiai*) operated. However, the surveyed educators noted that during the recent years no academic hours were reserved for the study of ethnographic instruments and musical folklore due to economic reasons, teachers do all this on account of academic hours reserved for cognition of refined instruments [1, 45].

Refined folk music instruments are most often taught to play at informal education establishments (music/art schools, cultural/educational centres) as well as higher education institutions (colleges, universities, Academy of Music and Theatre), formal education establishments (comprehensive education schools, art gymnasiums, conservatories working in accordance with special artistic education programmes). Playing these music instruments is taught at 78 out of 110 music/art schools in the country¹. Most of the teachers playing refined music instruments are graduates of higher education institutions, professional experts of their subject (most of them have a qualification of the educator of their subject, others are qualified as performers who play the instrument they teach to play).

Major need for sociocultural expression of pupils may be seen when observing pedagogic processes of Lithuanian national music instruments. Science acknowledges that the environment, which manifests on the level of activity context, social or even macrosocial situations, is a very important factor for modelling of education and for maturity of a personality. The environmental culture and the development thereof are integrated into the process of maturity of a personality and becomes the identity of a person — individual culture. While acting in the environment, the person acquires the experience of expression, abilities, new interests, learns to express himself in a more productive manner, his activity becomes more significant to himself and others. This whole process could be referred to as sociocultural integration [4, 16]. Artistic (musical) activities are one of the most efficient means contributing to development of this integration.

Nowadays the youth playing Lithuanian ethnographic or refined music instruments has a chance to participate in a wide range of

¹ Data of the survey conducted at the Department of Folk Instruments of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in 2006–2007.

cultural events, starting with public performances — concerts at local educational establishments or town festivals and ending with mass events of a national (Song Festivals) or even international level (contests, festivals, etc.). Based on the results of the survey of the graduates of the *kanklės* speciality of the country's music schools, residing in Lithuania and abroad, who later selected an occupation other than a musician, conducted in 2004, the experience of playing the *kanklės* at a music school was an important factor of personal development. Answers included the followings:

- “Music school and playing the *kanklės* first of all gave self-confidence, musical education, purposeful extracurricular activities, which developed creativity and formed certain characteristics of personality (responsibility, thoroughness, diligence)”;

- “I developed communication skills, because I welcomed sincere, nice, and open communication, comprehension from warm people who surrounded me at that time during my participation in various concerts, rehearsals of the orchestra, or speciality lesson”;

- “Playing the *kanklės* has brought me closer to the folk art, I have become familiar with Lithuanian folk instruments. This encouraged me to take interest in the world view of ancient Lithuanians”;

- “It enabled me to get to know the folk art, culture, traditions”;

- “Playing the *kanklės* has given me love and understanding of my region, ethnic culture” [10, 61–62].

An oral survey of pupils conducted by the author has shown that playing music with folk instruments gave unique characteristics to students in respect of other pupils, after all they plaid unique music instruments with no identical equivalents anywhere in the world. For this reason foreigners show interest in Lithuanian folk instruments, music plaid on them, national costumes and other ethnic relics of Lithuanian culture. Various international projects indicate that common grounds in terms of culture in Lithuania and the neighbouring countries are strengthened by cooperation of specialists of similar folk instruments in such countries as Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia, Austria, Germany, Japan, China, etc.

Nevertheless, lately globalization and its levelling processes have had a crucial impact on the development of national culture and education, which is not always so positive [16, 42–

43]. The processes of globalization have a direct impact on pedagogics of national instruments as well: folk instruments and teaching to play them are often overshadowed by popular music culture promoted by television, radio, internet and other contemporary media. For this reason specialists of national music instruments take various measures to fight for preservation of these instruments and of the entire ethnic culture in the global world full of diverse forms of cultural expression. To this end the musical content of refined national instruments [15, 5–6], definition of national playing the *kanklės* [13, 37–38], contemporary evaluation of the *kanklės* and their music [6, 253–266], etc. are analysed in the context of globalization.

More often it is paused to think that in the XXIst century, when it is becoming relevant to preserve the identity of our nation under the conditions of globalization, we should look back to the history and cultural heritage of our country, because only in this way the nation can remain unique and avoid cultural assimilation.

Naturally, Lithuanian musical instruments and the music played using them have changed, evolved throughout the short history of their development. Thanks to this development to this day Lithuanians have preserved authenticity and developed their own national music instruments, which are used for performances given by world-renowned performers with Lithuanian roots thanks to the elaborate and high quality music education system.

The fact that nowadays the movement of national instruments is especially active in Lithuania is proven by two events: Song Festival, which was included into the list of UNESCO World masterpieces — it is a theatrical evening concert of the ensembles in Kalnai Park in Vilnius with over 4000 participants (folk instrument orchestra, chapel artists, singers and dancers). Another event is the concert “Skamba skamba kankliai” (Ring, Kanklės), when 400 of youth and pedagogues play the *kanklės* simultaneously in Vilnius St. John's Church. In addition to these great events, regional song festivals, various festivals, contests, concerts and other similar projects take place in various cities of Lithuania.

Nowadays international cooperation of students, pupils and their pedagogues is one of the most important and the much needed measures, effectively ensuring creative development of performers playing folk instruments, spread of the good experience and pedagogical development. Organization and participation

in international contests can be considered as a significant representation of Lithuanian musical culture in the world, and it is a priceless experience for a young performer and an important step towards recognition [7, 117–120].

To this end the International Jonas Švedas Folk Instrument Performers Contest has been organized in Lithuania (Vilnius) since year 2000. It is a periodic international event of professional art organized by the Department of Folk Instruments of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and designated for commemoration of professor Jonas Švedas (1908–1971), composer, founder of Song and Dance Ensemble “Lietuva”, founder of the Department of Folk Instruments at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, patriarch and promoter of folk music. This is the only international contest of performers (soloists) of refined folk music instruments of this scope not only in Lithuania but in the whole Baltic Region.

The objectives of this Contest are to cultivate the professional instrumental folk music of the Baltic States, to promote playing music with similar concert folk music instruments of the Baltic States: Lithuanian *kanklės* (plucked string instrument), Latvian *kokles* (plucked string instrument), Estonian *kannels* (plucked string instrument), Finnish *kanteles* (plucked string instrument), to encourage creative activities of talented young performers of instrumental music, to cultivate the mastery of young performers. The tasks of the Contest are to evaluate the level of performance of instrumental folk music of the Baltic nations, to review the general means for refinement of instruments, formation of repertoire and of artistic education, definition of the prospects for further consolidated activities. The resonant meaning of the Contest is integration of national culture of the Baltic Region into the general flow of cultural life in the European Union. The event may be regarded as support for expression of mentality, cultural and artistic (musical) ideas of the Baltic Region.

The results of already held International Jonas Švedas Folk Instrument Performers Contests indicate that this Event initiated high-level cultural, professional, research cooperation of students/pupils of music schools in the Baltic Region and of their educators; contributed to international promotion activities of refined folk music instruments and their music, as well as to the spread of educational and concert repertoire for *kanklės* and instruments similar to them; defined general pros-

pects for further international cultural activities and cooperation of the States in the Baltic Region and other countries.

During these contests the International Research Conference is held in Juozas Karosas' Hall at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre where reports on pedagogics of folk instruments, evolution, musical performances, formation of repertoire and other topics are presented by well-established Lithuanian and foreign educators, scholars, performers, composers, instrument virtuosos from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. The Conference initiated productive and relevant exchange of research and educational information, which is very important for assurance of target-oriented and research-based development of the evolution of similar folk instruments in the future.

Since 2004 the International Instrumental Folk Music Festival has become the centrepiece of these two events. Three Festivals, which already had been held (in 2004, in 2006 and in 2008), were named after Jonas Švedas, composer, patriarch of folk instruments, and starting from 2013 the latter festival has a beautiful Lithuanian name “Rido”, which adds even more charm to it.

The objectives of the Festival: to take a look at the contemporary Baltic and other nations' instrumental folk music performance culture; to analyse its essence and the role in the context of the contemporary European music culture; to encourage development of the Baltic and other nations' instrumental folk music performance; to increase artists' excellence; to form positive attitude of the society towards instrumental folk music; to expand creative relations of artists in the Baltic States and other countries; to continue the traditions of folk culture; to encourage the development of artistic activities fostering them. The tasks of the Event: to determine the relations of the problems associated with instrumental music performance of the Baltic Region and other nations; to provide general solutions for them; to identify the prospects for further activities; to continue the traditions of folk culture; to summarize the experience of artistic activities; to establish conditions enabling performers and audience to share their experiences; to improve, to learn about the culture, customs and national cultural movement around the world.

The Festival is an arena for spreading and promotion of Lithuanian culture encouraging artists and art groups to participate in

international festivals as well as artists from around the world to participate in such events in Lithuania. The Event may be considered as support for expression of mentality, cultural and artistic (musical) ideas of the Baltic Region and other nations.

The list of participants in the held festivals included 31 solo performers playing refined folk music instruments of the top artistic level as well as 28 ensembles and orchestras of the chamber genre from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine.

The Festival enabled the audience to take interest in the European nations and learn about their culture. The Event contributed to the spread of Lithuanian national culture, to representation thereof in Lithuania and in the world, whereas the concerts given during the Festival gave continuity and perspective to the tradition of the instrumental folk music genre.

The International Pranas Stepulis' Contest-Festival of Chamber Instrumental Folk Music Ensembles has been taking place in Šiauliai (a city in the Northern Lithuania) since 2004. It is the only international contest in Lithuania giving a chance to compete folk instrumental ensembles consisting of 2–6 performers. The Contest-Festival welcomes guests from Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Germany and Austria. The objectives of the Project: to commemorate professor Pranas Stepulis (1913–2007), the famous *kanklės* player, educator, scholar, pioneer of playing the *kanklės* on a professional level; to introduce Lithuanian audience to professional Lithuanian instrumental folk music and the equivalents thereof in the Baltic States and neighbouring countries; to encourage talented performers of folk music, teachers, scholars, and pupils from Lithuania and abroad for productive creative collaboration; to encourage the creative initiative of pupils and their teachers; to bring the artistic intellect and joy of ensemble music to young performers; to raise popularity of Lithuanian instrumental folk music in Lithuania and abroad; to encourage the youth to take interest in the history of their national culture, to form the vision of fostering and preservation thereof; to include people living in social exclusion to artistic activities by promoting tolerance in the society and social responsibility of the youth; to develop opportunities for promotion and concentration of sociality.

Lately performers playing Lithuanian folk instruments (teachers and their students) more often travel to other countries in order to par-

ticipate in various international events. Some of the remarkable projects are the followings: International Contest-Festival of Performers of Multi-String Folk Instruments in Pskov-Saint-Petersburg (Russia), International *Kannel* Festival in Pärnu City (Estonia), International *Kokle* Festival “Solaris” in Riga (Latvia), International Vera Gorodovskaya's Contest of Multi-String Instruments in Moscow (Russia), International Contest-Festival of Musicians “Renaissance” in Gjumri City (Armenia), International Forum of Cembalo Players “Silver Sounds of Cembali” in Molodechn City (Belarus), International Contest of Academic Music of Multi-String Music Instruments in Jūrmala (Latvia), International Contest of Performers Playing Folk Instruments “Art-Dominanta” in Charkov (Ukraine), etc.

Students and educators of the Department of Folk Instruments of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre have opportunities to study at universities in Europe under study exchange programmes. Since 2002 the Department has been cooperating with J. Sibelius Academy (Finland), J. Vituols Music Academy (Latvia) and the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre.

Having analysed the role of ethnic music in the contemporary pedagogics in Lithuania, we may draw a conclusion that lately a considerable gap can be felt between theory and practice. The author of the article believes that a specific relation of the teacher and his pupils to ethnic traditions and folk music is defined not by documents on education but rather by personal relation of these individuals to ethnic values. Such a relation must be formed by establishments training future educators as well as by various informal trainings, seminars, conferences and other events of a similar type, which encourage specialists to take interest in folk culture, music and other ethnic values.

Intercultural cooperation is an important stimulus for the activities of folk instrument specialists. Such cooperation projects analyse the relevant problems and seek out effective opportunities for folk instruments expression in the context of contemporary culture. Various concerts, contests, festivals, seminars, conferences, master classes and other national and international activities of Lithuanian national instrument specialists show that refined folk instruments and their modern expression have achieved extremely high results both in Lithuania and in Europe. Organization and partici-

pation in international projects are considered to be a significant representation of Lithuanian music culture and pedagogical achievements in Europe, representing not only a certain area of art, but also the culture and research image of the country, also ensuring the spread of valuable experience of educators, performers, and scholars in Lithuania and abroad.

It is noteworthy that nowadays fostering national instruments in a global, diverse, innovation driven community becomes increasingly difficult. Blinded by the shine of various information technologies, media and shows,

the world often overlooks the being of a modest national instrument. Folk instruments teachers often encounter the principle of the existential questions such as: where is the place of a national instrument in contemporary world; how to raise popularity of national instruments today without distancing from their origin and without neglecting their uniqueness.

We sincerely want to believe that global nations would not forget that the national culture and its relics are the cornerstones holding cultural and historical foundations of every country.

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СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНЫЙ АСПЕКТ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИГРЕ НА ЛИТОВСКИХ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ ИНСТРУМЕНТАХ

Социокультурный аспект обучения игре на литовских национальных музыкальных инструментах представляет собой мало изученную тему. Народные инструменты являются частью современной культуры; существуют различные формы их популяризации и приемы преподавания игры на них. Автором было предпринято исследование, направленное на определение таких методов преподавания игры на народных инструментах, которые, являясь наиболее эффективными, были бы способны оказывать положительное влияние на все развитие музыкальной педагогики в этой области. В статье приводятся сведения о международных конкурсах, фестивалях и научных конференциях, проводившихся в Литве и в Европе, в которых принимали участие исполнители на народных инструментах, анализируется влияние этих мероприятий на музыкальную педагогику этой области.

Цель исследования — определение социокультурных особенностей преподавания игры на литовских национальных музыкальных инструментах. В задачи настоящей статьи входит описание роли и значения этнической музыки в современном музыкальном образовании Литвы; анализ возможностей распространения социокультурной педагогики и методов преподавания игры на литовских музыкальных инструментах, а также их роль в современной культуре в целом.

Методы исследования: наблюдение, сравнение, обзор научной и методологической литературы, анализ законодательных актов и директивных документов, касающихся образования.

Ключевые слова: этническая музыка, музыкальное образование, национальный музыкальный инструмент

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