

# **The Role of Music Education in Preserving Traditions in a Multiethnic Society**

**Aida Islam, PhD**, University Ss Cyril and Methodius, Republic of Macedonia.

**Stefanija Leshkova – Zelenkovska, PhD**, University Goce Delchev, Republic of Macedonia.

**Abstract:** In the era of globalization and increasing migration trends, the coherent power of music is a tool used to promote the traditions of the nations in the world. In the Republic of Macedonia, which is a multiethnic community, the study of music takes various institutional and non-institutional forms, such as: cultural and art societies -CASs, choirs, study of instruments and so on. Particularly interesting for observation is the role that music education plays in preservation of traditions of the Turkish population. Despite the mass migration of the Turks in the 1950s, which significantly reduced the population of this ethnic community, their music tradition continues to be cherished. In 2010, we carried out a research in Skopje, namely, in the elementary school “Tefejuz” and the cultural and art society "Yeni Yol", which are the only forms of education teaching the syllabus in Turkish. The music activities there include instrumental, vocal and dance ensembles. These activities have in common values of paramount importance such as the use of traditional instruments, repertoire that is both traditional and specific to the local community and use of an original tonal system. In terms of the sociological aspect, we would like to highlight the significance of the public music performances which present the repertoire to a wider audience and take place several times a year. Moreover, promotion of music traditions is imperative, mainly because of the undergoing process of modification of this music, due to the import of music culture from the Republic of Turkey and the Western provenance.

**Keywords:** music education, tradition, education forms, dissemination

## **1. Introduction**

In the era of globalization and increasing migration trends, the coherent power of music is a tool used to promote the traditions of many nations in the world. This applies to both the secular and the spiritual music. Education is the fundamental segment in which music can perform this function.

In the Republic of Macedonia, which is a multiethnic community, the study of music takes various institutional and non-institutional forms, including: cultural and art societies -CASs, choirs, study of instruments and so on. The official music education in elementary and high schools is carried out in accordance with the National Program of the Ministry of Education (2005) and the Law on Primary Education with Amendments (2007). The subject itself includes music theory, history of music, singing and listening to music repertoire, playing instruments – pieces by both west European and local

composers. The study of folklore traditions and the facultative music activities are an opportunity to preserve the local music heritage. In addition, non-official institutions, especially CASs – are the only societies in which folk music of all ethnicities is studied. They are, hence, the symbols of the cultural and musical identity of the ethnic communities in the country.

In order to meet the needs of the ethnic communities living in the Republic of Macedonia, the education in elementary and high schools is carried out in the languages of the ethnicities: Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Romani and Serbian. Particularly worth noting is the role that music education plays in preservation of the Turkish tradition. Despite the mass migration of the Turks in the 1950ties, which significantly reduced the population of this ethnic community, their music tradition continues to be cherished. In 2010, a research was conducted in the city of Skopje, a multiethnic center of culture and music and a city that is populated by all ethnic communities. The research was conducted in the elementary school of “Tefejuz” and the CAS “Yeni Yol”, as the only education forms using Turkish language.

The implemented research strategy included: an analysis of the music educational curriculum and syllabus, interviews with the staff, attendance of their music classes and presence at the public performances.

Our research method is based on an in-depth evaluation of a group. In this case study we use a systematic assessment of events, collection of data, analyses of information and reporting the results, as a basis for more extensive future researches.

## **2. Institutional education**

The issue of music education of the Turkish population in Macedonia refers to 1) the contribution of the educational institutions to the preservation of the music tradition 2) the harmonization between the music education and the music reality in the society 3) the level of music competence vis-à-vis the general need for music education in the country and abroad

Elementary schools are defined as institutions in which students gain general education in all segments of culture and science. Hence, the elementary school is not an institution which specializes and streamlines students' knowledge of music and its disciplines. Nevertheless, the elementary school is a unique and irreplaceable educational institution in which students form a personal approach towards music as one segment of fine arts and culture. This is where love, interest and musical criteria are defined and refined, where music tradition starts to be appreciated and where future professional dedication to music may start to sprout. Children start participating in school choirs and bands; attend specialized music schools, children's or youth musical or dancing ensembles.

## **2.1. Music in class teaching and subject teaching**

Following the policy of the Ministry of Education, an identical music curriculum is taught in all schools in the country, irrespective of the teaching language. This curriculum stipulates a five-year study of the following units 1) Singing songs 2) Playing children's musical instruments (CMI) 3) Listening to music 4) Basic music literacy 5) Music and beat 6) Children's music expression and creativity. The difference in the curriculum appears only in the integration of folklore musical works in the units mentioned above.

Between the 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the primary task of the music curriculum is to expand the knowledge of music theory and music history through 1) Singing 2) Music literacy 3) Listening to music 4) Playing CMI 5) Basic musical forms 6) Folklore music. Teachers hold B.A degrees from the Faculties of Music with Macedonian or Albanian curricula. Teachers working in the schools teaching in the Turkish language use textbooks which have been translated from the Macedonian language, with a few integrated examples of folklore music.

### **Summary:**

There are 13 teachers in the elementary school of "Tefejuz" who teach music to 489 pupils. Since no music textbooks exist in their mother tongue exist, they teach children's songs from the textbooks used in the Republic of Turkey and songs which were made by the local ethnic population. This repertoire is fully studied at the Faculty of Pedagogy which has study programs in the languages of the minorities (Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish).

Musical instruments used in the 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade in "Tefejuz" are: piano, synthesizer, orphic instruments. In the past, children used to study string instruments, namely mandolins. For the last two decades following a teacher's initiative, mandolins have been replaced by the Turkish traditional instrument –the saz. This activity had begun before the subject of traditional music was even introduced. Ever since then, a school saz orchestra with 20 sazes has been very active and is the only traditional ensemble in the formal education system in Skopje. Numerous awards and acknowledgment speak of the professionalism of this orchestra. The saz plays a fundamental role in the presentation, acknowledgment and dissemination of the authentic repertoire of this instrument.

Young people have the opportunity to study their folklore in other units as well, such as singing and playing music. In this way, authentic music folklore can be genuinely appreciated. Based on these facts we can say that music education in the schools teaching in the Turkish language in Skopje is practiced in a manner that makes a balance between the continuity of the music tradition and global developments of music culture.

## **3. Non-institutional forms of music education in the Turkish community in Macedonia**

In addition to the institutional forms of traditional music expressions, there are other forms of education in secular and spiritual music.

### **3.1. Secular music – Cultural and art societies (CASs)**

The main owners of the non-institutional music education in secular music are the cultural and art societies (CASs). They are the core ensembles in which the members are of different age groups, (from 7 to 65 years of age) and have the common aim of promoting their cultural identity –presenting and preserving the traditional music heritage.

The cultural and art societies of the Turkish community in Macedonia exist both in urban and rural areas. The oldest and the most active society is “Yeni Yol” from Skopje.

The origin of this group dates back from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but it was officially registered in 1947. Three types of societies have been active for decades: dance, instrumental and vocal societies. Folk dances are accompanied with instrumental sets of *saz*, *tarabouka*, *ut*, *drums*, *tambourines* and *kanun*.

Instruments used in the preparation and presentation of the repertoire vary, depending on the occasion and the type of event in which the society takes part. Following the requirements of the festivals in which it takes part, the ensemble is most frequently accompanied by traditional acoustic instruments. On solo concerts and performances, the CAS uses a wider range of musical instruments, mostly combining the traditional and west European ones.

Our research showed that the repertoire of the CASs is a combination of *Rumelian*, *local* and *imported* repertoire from the Republic of Turkey, which is understandable given the ties with the fatherland culture. The playing of instruments and the repertoire are mastered thanks to the oral tradition.

CAS equally cherishes spiritual music. Spiritual music repertoire is primarily performed during the religious holidays of Ramadan and Bajram.

Public performances always include public presentation of the national folk costume, authentic for the region in which the KUD operates, thus contributing to the preservation of other values of the cultural tradition.

### **3.2. Spiritual music**

In addition to studying the spiritual repertoire at the spiritual educational institutions (the Medresa and the Faculty of Theology), some forms of spiritual music are studied in most of the mosques in Macedonia.

The classes are taught by haf'zs, who conduct religious services in the mosques. The age of the students who attend these classes ranges between 9 to 13 years old.

If we were to single out some of the forms of studying spiritual music, the most important is the study of *Tilavet – chanting of the Qur'an*. The study itself takes a year or two. In addition to the chanting of the Qur'an, these classes include forms such as *Salat-uummije*, *Tekbir*, and many *ilahis*. Having in mind the fact that the composition of the students is multiethnic, *ilahis* are studied in several languages – Turkish, Albanian and Bosnian. Depending on the approach of the haf'z, the courses are collective or individual. The transmission of the spiritual music repertoire is based on the oral tradition. Some of the haf'zs in the mosques integrate spiritual poetry into the teaching of the forms of spiritual music. The poems are written by eminent poets originating from Macedonia, which is another way of preserving and disseminating spiritual music tradition among the Turkish population.

## 4. Conclusion

We can state that the role of the institutional and non-institutional forms of music education is essential for preserving the continuity of the music tradition, nowadays becoming a rarity among the Turkish population in R. Macedonia.

By this we confirm the thesis that music education can be an extremely constructive factor for the recognition of the traditions in multiethnic societies, just as it has an outstanding benefit for the personality building process of the youth.

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