

WOJCIECH BENEDYKT JANKOWSKI (Warszawa)

## *On the need for methodocentrism in music teachers training system*

**ABSTRACT:** The main idea of this paper, dedicated to Professor Andrzej Rakowski, is to emphasize that the pedagogy concentrated around the school curriculum and school subjects (eg. Music) has become more and more outdated. More useful seems to be a pedagogy oriented towards the so-called Great Author Concepts (Methods) of Music Education, eg. Dalcroze, Orff, Kodály, Gordon and others.

The author of the report provides a justification for his opinion, as well as specifying its purpose and the conditions under which it was formed. Primarily, the proposed approach involves combining the universality of the Methods with the individual preferences of both the teachers (representing the Method) and the students, providing the possibility of choice.

The author sees the special value of that point of view in the integrative character of these Methods – combining an active and creative approach to music with the students' perceptual and intellectual development. The report also highlights the requirement for a high level of teacher competence in the use of all the methods.

Taking into the consideration all of the above (discussed in more detail in this report), the author puts forward a proposal for the reform of the system of training music teachers. According to the author, the system ought to be founded on the Methods (e.g. on one of them, particularly where the Concept/Method is already well developed).

**KEYWORDS:** methodocentrism, curriculum, concept, training, pedagogy, Dalcroze, Orff, Kodály, Gordon, universality, integration, competences, qualifications, system

### General remarks

This article is dedicated to Professor Andrzej Rakowski on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Professor Rakowski is not only an outstanding musicologist, sound engineer and music psychologist, but also a warrior who has for many years successfully battled for music to be given its proper place in the school curriculum. The Professor's most important achievement in this field was, in my opinion, 'The Rakowski Expertise', produced between 1984 and 1986<sup>1</sup>, which laid

---

<sup>1</sup> *Podstawowe uwarunkowania dostępu dzieci i młodzieży do kultury muzycznej* [Basic conditions of children and young people access to musical culture], vol. 1: *Założenia, Eksper-*

the foundation for a very satisfactory provision of music teaching in the school curriculum, also in terms of number of hours and organization. Nowadays one can only dream of such arrangements, but Professor Rakowski and the Institute of School Curricula produced them at a time when Poland was The People's Republic of Poland (until 1989).

Today, in the new political and social conditions, the status of music in the school curriculum is again very poor, and Professor Rakowski again takes up the struggle to limit the damage. This time it is based on Rakowski's new expertise, prepared between 2007 and 2009 within the framework of the Music Education Professional Board of Polish Music Council, which is known as 'The Białkowski and Grusiewicz Report'.

Those 25 years of efforts to ensure a proper place for the subject of 'Music' at school, in which I had the privilege and pleasure to accompany the Professor, produced valuable scientific and journalistic contributions, and motivated the bodies responsible for the state of musical culture and music education in Poland to do their best to improve the situation and to bring music back to its rightful position.<sup>2</sup> The most significant symptoms of the appalling situation of music teaching were the compulsory introduction of music into the integrated education curriculum for primary school forms 1-3 (which eliminated music teachers) and the creation of a new subject of 'Art' (music and fine arts) instead of the independent subject of 'Music' in lower secondary and secondary schools.

I would now like to make some comments regarding the achievements, experiences and conclusions listed above.

Firstly, almost all discussion and effort, not only those of Professor Rakowski but also of a great many people to whom the state and fate of general music education is important, concentrated on the number of teaching hours of devoted to music at school. Of course, it is important how many hours of compulsory and additional lessons are given to a subject. This determines the chances and quality of contact with music for children and teenagers, and also plays a part in motivation. Are these lessons compulsory or optional? Does it create the opportunity of employing a qualified music teacher?

Until now, the efforts and discussions, especially about this topic, were predominantly devoted to the syllabus, but concerned themselves strictly with the choice and content of music education. Unfortunately, they almost completely lost from view the issue of the model of a qualification and the

---

*tyzy i raporty Zespołu Ekspertów* [Assumptions, Expertises and Expert Panel Reports], Scientific analysis produced by the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw with the cooperation of the Polish Music Board. (Warszawa, 1986). (Volume II – 1990).

<sup>2</sup> See Wojciech Jankowski, Viola Łabanow (eds.), *Powszechna edukacja muzyczna. Obowiązek czy szansa?*, [The universal music education. Obligation or chance?] (Warszawa, 2006).

employment opportunities for teachers. An exception is the idea, promoted by Rakowski, of including music specialists in the teaching of primary forms 1-3, and of training teachers of music to be what is known as double-specialists. However, this has not basically changed the general trend in discussion on the situation of music in general education, though no doubt it does foreshadow some improvement (the education authorities have agreed to include music-specialists in the so-called 'integrated education' and to separate music as a subject from the terrible, also integrated, 'Art'). I have described this tendency as 'syllabus centric' distinguishing it from 'methodocentrism', which in my opinion is a better and more modern trend.<sup>3</sup> It draws attention to music teaching as a type of qualification, giving music teachers more authority (even autonomy), and basing music education in school on competence, qualifications and even preferences, not just on the school syllabus. In other words, it allows one to understand the role of teachers as not only traditional 'school officials and executors of school curricula', officials mostly unprepared to perform this role, but authentic professionals. In the case of music education, as in artistic education, where there is the greatest degree of dependence on creative or expressive functions, as opposed to scientific subjects which rely more on cognitive functions, this is particularly important and real.

However, it is not only the character of the trend but also the conditions under which music education takes place that matter today. These are characterized by the existing outdated forms of schooling at all levels, as well as far too loose relationships between teachers and pupils. External factors are also extremely powerful, especially mass culture and the media (particularly the influence of the so-called 'show business'), the diminishing power of family and tradition, and the increasing influence of various kinds of addiction and depravity. The features that characterize the social and cultural context of education have an impact on content and efficiency, and they are also the reasons for music being regarded as a 'minor' subject. We are dealing with a violent decline of music teacher as a profession as well. However, this context in particular requires a different music and a different position of 'Music' as a subject, as well as a different kind of music teacher. The practice of other countries (English speaking, Scandinavian and partly Asian<sup>4</sup>) shows that music offers a chance for development and education in a contemporary school. Of course, this requires music that is of value and good, creative, even charismatic music teachers. That is why the key question of 'music at school' today, or 'school music', becomes a problem of how to equip music

---

<sup>3</sup> See Wojciech Jankowski, 'Uwagi dotyczące publikacji <Standardy edukacji kulturalnej>' [Comments on the publication <Standards of cultural education>], *Wychowanie Muzyczne w Szkole* 5 (2009), 56-61.

<sup>4</sup> See David J. Hargreaves and Adrian C. North (eds.), 'Musical Development and Learning. The International Perspective', *Continuum*, (London and New York, 2001).

teachers with the proper profile and competence. And certainly one of providing them with proper conditions of employment.

Above all, these would include giving teachers autonomy and allowing them to use their qualifications as well as their skills for the benefit of their students and music culture, as well as potentially bringing them personal development and satisfaction.

Secondly, it would involve the possibility of distinguishing authorial curriculum from the structure, standards and foundation of the syllabus or other similar plans. What should this principle, or even obligation of creating authorial curriculum, which has been promoted for so long, be based on?

I think, that this trend should dominate our further discussions and research into the model of a music teacher in a non-music school. It is evidently obvious to me that it cannot be a single and universal model. We dealt with such models during the interwar period, and this continued during the post-war period, practically until the 1990s. Our excellent musician, composer, conductor and solfège teacher, Stanisław Kazuro, had created and customized a model of teacher-conductor which was innovatory in those days, as has repeatedly been pointed out by Rakowski. A similar model had been created by the great Hungarian composer, scientist, ethnographer and teacher Zoltán Kodály, who was a contemporary of Stanisław Kazuro (both born in 1882). Kodály's model became not only the foundation for the whole system of music education in Hungary during the interwar period, but came to be known all over the world. It was not the 'one and only' model, but it was a very special one because of its own, distinct features of universality and, at the same time, entirety.<sup>5</sup> As a result it was employed 'not instead but together' with other models e.g. those of Dalcroze, Orff and Gordon.

Nevertheless, I would like to describe this model in more detail, along with its origin, referring to other models and the current situation. I would also like to indicate that in discussions and research regarding the position of music in general schools we should move from a 'syllabus centric' tendency to a 'methodocentric' one.

## Kodály's model and other models

Nowadays, Kodály's idea is taught by thousands of so-called 'Kodály teachers' all over the world, who in the profile of their education combine formal conducting training (but more a choirmaster training), a background in music theory and solfège skills. Especially the last element in this triad is very important for 'Kodály teachers', because it bonds knowledge and the 'external' skills with deeper and inner music thinking. 'Kodály teachers' are taught

---

<sup>5</sup> See Wojciech Jankowski, *Czemu Kodály?* [Why Kodály?] (Warszawa, 2005).

solfege, which is related (mainly though not only), or rather regarded as related, in essence to the structure of music, and from the historical point of view (consider the solmization method of Guido d'Arezzo) uses consistent names for the same relationships between pitches in a particular tonality. That is why some followers call it, in my opinion incorrectly, related rather than relative. However, this is not the place where we should characterize in detail the whole of Kodály's concept or its integrity.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, I would like to emphasize that, in Polish professional literature, the editorial series entitled *Music pedagogy by Zoltán Kodály. Sources and other works*, produced meticulously by The Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw with Mirosława Jankowska as its Editor-in-Chief,<sup>7</sup> is a very significant source for this subject. It consists of ten books and several additional volumes, not part of the series but connected with the topic and by the same authors. It is worth mentioning that Kodály's idea became, at the beginning of the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century, the foundation of Hungarian music pedagogy. This model of education was employed for professional musicians of different specialisms – instrumentalists, music teachers, musicologists and music teachers for general schools. It was believed in Hungary that a choirmaster, relative solfege and folklore education were crucial for professional musical culture, and needed even more for general, amateur music education. In those days the number of so called 'Kodály schools' increased rapidly. They were comprehensive schools with 'singing classes' which had one hour of choir a day. Students studied solfege and music theory. Finally it resulted in the existence of about 150 schools and thousands of 'singing classes', which strictly speaking were choirs. Kodály's initiative, begun by fine choral music output, was then continued by school authorities. On Kodály's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday the authorities presented him with a school in Kecskemét, his birthplace, where he could organize the syllabus according to his concept. One cannot overestimate the significance of this fact for Hungarian culture and music education.

It was also an important fact for music pedagogy in general. Soon Kodály's ideas and solutions became popular all over the world, which was demonstrated by the 1<sup>st</sup> International Symposium in the USA in 1972, and later in 1975 by the founding of the International Kodály Society with its head office in Budapest. I had the privilege and honour to participate in that convention,

---

<sup>6</sup> See monographic booklet dedicated to Kodály pedagogy *Wychowanie Muzyczne w Szkole 2* (2003).

<sup>7</sup> Mirosława Jankowska (ed.), *Zoltán Kodály i jego pedagogika muzyczna* [Zoltán Kodály and his music pedagogice] (Warszawa, 1990); Katarzyna J. Dadak-Kozicka, *Śpiewajże mi jako umiesz. Muzykowanie w szkole według koncepcji Kodály'a* [Let sing to me as you can. Playing music in school according to the Kodály concept] (Warszawa, 1992); Zoltán Kodály, *O edukacji muzycznej. Pisma wybrane* [On music education. Selected writings], Mirosława Jankowska (ed.), (Warszawa 2002).

and also witness the opening of the International Zoltán Kodály Pedagogical Institute of Music in Kecskemét, the Institute which is supposed to be, and really is, the worldwide centre for the education of Kodály teachers and for studies into the origin, development and distribution of Kodály aesthetic and pedagogical ideas.

Today, all over the world, we see the excellent results of putting these ideas into practice. Above all, we see it in the wide spread of choral singing, as the most accessible personal form and common practice of musical art of the highest quality. It is worth mentioning that Kodály choirs employ the principle of treating beautiful singing, excellent music literature and competent reading of music notation as an indivisible whole. Thus Kodály schools and singing classes became very special laboratories of education through music.<sup>8</sup>

Kodály's ideas also developed into a profession for music teachers, who, in their own independent ways, in concord with the students at their school and community, choose the type of music they want to use. Kodály teachers all over the world, each in an individual manner, have been able to organize themselves into nationwide organizations and societies.<sup>9</sup>

Music teacher education with the Kodály profile is provided not only at the International Zoltán Kodály Pedagogical Institute of Music in Kecskemét, or the Liszt Academy in Budapest, but in numerous American universities as degree courses. There are also various non-degree international or national courses, also available in Poland.<sup>10</sup>

Similar characteristics concerning the range, the way of training teachers and types of organizations relate to the quite popular concepts of music pedagogy of Emil Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) and Carl Orff (1895-1982), although there is an essential difference between them and the Kodály concept. The latter includes singing, folklore, classical music and relative solfege as a means of understanding music. Dalcroze's older model involves experiencing music through movement and improvisation, and uses slightly different solfege from that of Kodály. The Orff concept engages creative and improvisation approaches to music by using special instruments, voice, and relative solfege. Despite the differences between all these models, presented here in a greatly simplified form, the employment of these concepts has two common features.

---

<sup>8</sup> See Wojciech Jankowski, 'Kodályowska idea 'Szkół Śpiewających' jako zagadnienie ogólnego kształcenia i wychowania' [Kodály's idea of 'Singing Schools' as a matter of general education and upbringing], *Kwartalnik Polskiej Sekcji ISME 4* (1997).

<sup>9</sup> See Jankowski, *Czemu Kodály?*, 107-121.

<sup>10</sup> See Mirosława Jankowska (ed.), *Kodályowskie inspiracje* [Kodály's inspiration] (Warszawa, 2006); Wojciech Jankowski and Adam Zemła, *Kształcenie nauczycieli muzyki w wybranych krajach Europy i w USA. Raport z badań* [The training of music teachers in selected countries in Europe and the USA. Research Report] (Warszawa, 1999).

Firstly, they are not just ways of learning, but rather ways of practising music. Such practice allows one to study and understand music more deeply, to follow its structure, and to see its aesthetic value. It also provides a full range of skills and develops habits for engaging with music mainly for personal satisfaction. There are different factors used in these concepts. Singing (in groups), expressive movement of body, and special instruments provide a deeper, individual approach to music, based on improvisation and solfege. The primacy of practice over knowledge and theory, which usually is a deficiency of traditional music curricula, provides a total approach to music instead of illusory music activities (twanging not playing, voice exercise not singing, complicated movement exercises and not authentic performance of music through movement). It has to be admitted that also in Poland the employment of the concepts mentioned above is not free of these mistakes. They can be avoided only by employing the method in a full and competent manner. This creates an opportunity for making more and wider use of the competence and qualifications which characterize teachers trained in each of these concepts, employing them to teach common and standard music curricula. Evidence for this can be observed at almost all local and international seminars or conventions dedicated to particular music teaching conceptions.<sup>11</sup>

Another problem is caused by the predominance of a fragmented and selective approach. The conceptions described here were included in the existing models of teaching, and sometimes this created interesting results, but generally this was not always the case. Teachers had the excuse, or rather stimulus, in the shape of the Polish Conception of Music Education, which was the foundation of all compulsory syllabuses. It referred to the conceptions of Kodály, Dalcroze and Orff, but created a new quality which was not free of eclecticism.

The second common feature in the conditions and employment of these music concepts in many countries with the exception of Hungary is the fact that **they are distributed and efficiently used for music education of young generations, while at the same time the process of music education is less formal.** It is not a coincidence that in the USA, where school curricula and teacher training were standardized in the 1960s, this situation prevails to this day. The issue of education is left up to the educational market, professional associations and training curricula also in the area of music. Independent concepts are less popular in former communist countries, including Poland, where curricula, teacher training and degrees were selected and approved by education authorities.

---

<sup>11</sup> Wojciech Jankowski, 'Nareszcie u nas. Międzynarodowe Sympozjum Kodalyowskie' [Finally, with us. Kodaly's International Symposium], *Ruch Muzyczny* 25 (2009), 9-10.

We can now formulate some conclusions about the Polish efforts to implement the practice of the afore-mentioned concepts and methods on a larger and more efficient scale. This is possible, since the concepts of Dalcroze and Kodály are included in the education curricula at university degree courses in Poland.

1. The Kodály concept is represented by competent staff, systematic research, editorial output and practice of school music education in at least three music universities, located in Katowice, Cracow and Warsaw. They are in regular contact with the 'headquarters' of the Kodály Institute in Hungary, which helps to develop extensive and more specific syllabuses of degree courses for Kodály teachers. What do we need in this area? Mainly we have to fight for an understanding among local school authorities of such an approach towards music teaching, for different types of musical experiments, and we have to demonstrate the benefits of music education and 'education by music'. We have precedents,<sup>12</sup> but the constant difficulties and barriers of different types complicate the presentation of results and prevent approval for specific solutions. The problem exists not only in music education itself, but also at the universities that educate teachers, or could educate teachers as Kodály professionals.<sup>13</sup> It could be an excellent project for the Music Education Professional Board of the Polish Music Council and Professor Rakowski as its chairperson, but also for the Polish Zoltán Kodály Society, recently established in Katowice.

2. Regarding the Dalcroze concept, the situation is only outwardly easier. Poland has extended the network of Dalcroze centres at secondary music schools and even at the four music academies and Warsaw Music University, which train teachers on the basis of this concept. Eurhythmics is in use at kindergartens, music, ballet and theatre education, in culture centres, etc. **But it is not implemented, perhaps only with some exceptions, at the level of general education, which resisted the Dalcroze concept and its more detailed and qualified practice.** I am absolutely convinced that general education is the proper place for this concept, not just as sporadic employment or complementary practice, but to be practised in the mainstream of compulsory 'school music' and additional lessons. Action should be taken to inform the relevant authorities about the benefit of employing this method, and degree courses for Dalcroze teachers at music universities should be particularly active in developing this path. We can observe harbingers of such an approach in the shape of a Dalcroze periodical entitled

<sup>12</sup> See Mirosława Jankowska (ed.), *Kodályowskie inspiracje II. Doświadczenia polskie* [Kodály's inspiration II. Polish experience] (Warszawa, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> See Wojciech Jankowski, 'Kodály in Poland', *Kodály News. New South Wales. KMEIA* 36/3-4 (2009).

*Wychowanie Muzyczne w Szkole* (Music Education at School) no 4/2008, and the founding of the Society of Eurhythmics Pedagogues and Enthusiasts<sup>14</sup> in 2007. I hope that the support for this initiative by the Music Education Professional Board of the Polish Music Council and Professor Rakowski himself will be very helpful. In return, Professor Rakowski could expect the assistance of this association in his initiatives for the return of music to general schools, and also in his efforts to bring about a more modern and complete approach to music and its practice.

3. In this article, reference has also been made to the methods, or more accurately concepts, of Orff and Gordon. The Orff concept, in my view, is at the beginning of its struggle for independence, but it is not sufficiently developed to become a subject of degree courses. However, that should not diminish its capacity for being used at schools, and inhibit a search for the right syllabus, practice and organizational solutions.

The same could be said about the concept of Gordon. But there is also a difference. The Gordon concept is, primarily, also a music learning theory, as Professor Gordon used to emphasize.<sup>15</sup> This theory is full of practice examples and techniques available in school manuals, such as 'Jump Right In'. The book is a guide to learning and playing almost every instrument in an ensemble and in an orchestra. However, this does not mean that we can equate the Gordon theory with what happens, in a more or less creative or interesting way, under the aegis of this theory in Poland. This problem, which also includes the issue of teacher autonomy, requires much reflective and extensive discussion before the Gordon concept could be registered for wider use and professional training.

*Translated by Lucyna Paluch*

---

<sup>14</sup> Ewa Jakubowska, 'Komu zawdzięczamy SPiMR?' [To whom do we owe the Association of Teachers and Rhythmic Friends?] *Wychowanie Muzyczne w Szkole* 4 (2008), 79-80.

<sup>15</sup> See Ewa Zwolińska and Wojciech Jankowski (eds.), *Teoria uczenia się muzyki według Edwina E. Gordona. Materiały II Seminarium Gordonowskiego w Krynicy – 27 kwietnia – 3 maja 1995 roku*, [Music Learning Theory by Edwin E. Gordon. Materials from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gordon's seminar Krynica, 27<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1995] (Bydgoszcz-Warszawa, 1995).

