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Music Education in Russia

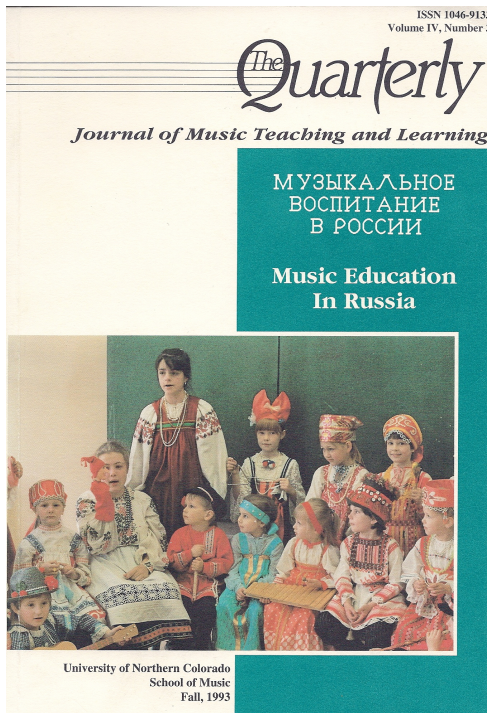
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It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning and continued until 1997. The journal contained articles on issues that were timely when they appeared and are now important for their historical relevance. For many authors, it was their first major publication. Visions of Research in Music Education will publish facsimiles of each issue as it originally appeared. Each article will be a separate pdf file. Jason D. Vodicka has accepted my invitation to serve as guest editor for the reprint project and will compose a new editorial to introduce each volume. Chad Keilman is the production manager. I express deepest thanks to Richard Colwell for granting VRME permission to re-publish The Quarterly in online format. He has graciously prepared an introduction to the reprint series.

Music Education in Russia

By Gennady Pozhidayev

Guest Co-Editor, Moscow, Russia

The radical changes that have taken place in Russia in recent years concerning social order and the economy have not altered our lives in the areas of culture and education. In our society, these are very stable structures that have developed over centuries of upsurge and decline.

Therefore, the fact that the Soviet Union no longer exists, and that the Commonwealth of Independent States has come into being, by no means changes our views of culture and education or the traditions of music education. Although the articles in this issue address the problems of music education specifically in Russia, these articles relate in many respects to all the republics of the former United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). These states have a long tradition of exchanging theoretical ideas and teaching experiences, thus integrating the practices of music education.

Music education has many facets, and the space allotted in this issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* is not sufficient to cover it in full. Therefore, the articles by Russian music educators are

limited to the topic of public education, leaving aside matters of professional music training such as educating composers, music scholars, and performers. The articles focus on music education in the general educational schools, which provide free public education for all children in grades 1 through 11; grades 1 through 9 are compulsory. Moreover, these articles are devoted mainly to the music education curriculum first adopted for use in the general educational schools of Russia some 20 years ago. The syllabus was written by Dmitry Kabalevsky (1904-1987), a well-known composer, teacher, and world-renowned music educator.

As a composer, Kabalevsky needs no introduction.

He wrote operas, concertos for young performers, four symphonies, a requiem that has been performed in a number of countries, several wonderful piano pieces, cantatas for children's choir, piano music for children, and many other compositions. Western music teachers may not know of Kabalevsky's involvement in music education, even though for many years he was a leading figure in the International Society for Music Education (ISME), serving as vice president and then as honorary president of the organization.

What remains relatively unknown are Kabalevsky's original concepts of public music education, although some of his work was published in the West. For example,

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Gennady Pozhidayev, musicologist and journalist, is the Editor-in-Chief of Art at School, the leading music education publication in Russia. He is also the author of The Land of Symphony; Tales About Music; Tchaikovsky in Rome; Spartacus: The Ballet by A. Khachaturian; D. Kabalevsky; and numerous articles.

It would be wrong to say that Kabalevsky's syllabus has been easily accepted by all school music teachers. Teachers who do not wish to surrender their old positions have seriously opposed the document, for they consider school music lessons to be, first and foremost, lessons in singing.

Music and Education: A Composer Writes About Musical Education, a book of selected pedagogical works by Kabalevsky, was published in four languages by UNESCO in 1988.

It took Kabalevsky several decades to develop his pedagogical theories. As early as the 1930s, he began teaching children and young people. He talked about music in concert halls, on the radio, and on TV. His talks with children were recorded, and the album became very popular. He wrote books about music and music education. One of them, an outstanding book about music for young children entitled *About the Three Whales and Many Other Things*, has been translated from Russian into many other languages. When music teachers began to use the book as an instructional aid in planning their lessons, Kabalevsky came to the conclusion that he had developed a new approach to music education for school children, and that the musical and pedagogical principles on which the book was founded could become the basis for a completely new syllabus for music lessons for the general schools. At age 69, the professor left the Moscow Conservatory, where he taught composition, and entered the public schools as a teacher in order to test his system in practice.

The success surpassed all his expectations. Progressive musicians here regard Kabalevsky's system as a revolution in music education. Once Kabalevsky said, "There are people who composed music better than mine. But the music syllabus is my life-work!" These words are very important, given his contributions to music education in the general schools.

In this issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning*, we offer to readers Kabalevsky's fundamental article, "The Main Principles and Methods of a Music Syllabus for General Educational Schools," abridged and translated. It is the introduc-

tion to the music syllabus for grades 1 through 7, elaborated by Kabalevsky. In addition to the syllabus proper, Kabalevsky also wrote detailed schemes of every lesson and explanatory notes to all the yearly programs and individual topics. It would take an entire book to publish these along with the lessons conducted by Kabalevsky that were taken down in shorthand—and they are worth publishing.

Then we offer our colleagues the article "Intonation in Music" by Tatyana Vendrova. The article focuses on frequently asked questions about intonation. The Russian word *intonazia* has little relationship to the English word "intonation," which is commonly used to refer to accuracy of pitch or ensemble tuning. *Intonazia* is similar in meaning to the English word "phrasing," though the Russian word seems far broader.

Vendrova points out that Kabalevsky's syllabus responds to Asafiev's theory: "... the writer, researcher, or critic should help listeners realize the process of their perception of music and in this way come to an understanding of music as a great cultural force." The author also discusses how the new syllabus emphasizes to students the importance of hearing the main body of a composition and feeling and comprehending the process of a music form comprised of different intonations and musical elements. Vendrova's article was first published in *Music at School*, a journal founded by Kabalevsky in 1983 and now renamed *Art at School*.

We also want to show the readers how Kabalevsky's system has been adopted by our scholars, and how they have developed his ideas. This can be seen in the article "Developing Children's Artistic Thinking with Images in Music Lessons" by L. Goryunova and L. Shkolyar.

The theory and practice in preschool music education has also been influenced by the new approach to music teaching. Evidence

of this can be found in the article "Music in Kindergarten" by E. Tsarkova and E. Serbina.

New trends can be observed in music teacher education, too. It is clear that teachers who work according to the new principles of artistic pedagogy should think about their profession in a new way. They should consider the music lesson to be a lesson in art and view their relationship with pupils as joint participation in creative activity with the aim of understanding the world and one's place in it. Aspects of music teacher education are discussed in I. Pigareva's article, "Training of Music Teachers in Russia."


It would be wrong to say that Kabalevsky's syllabus has been easily accepted by all school music teachers. Teachers who do not wish to surrender their old positions have seriously opposed the document, for they consider school music lessons to be, first and foremost, lessons in singing. They wish to continue the ways of the past, when students often learned songs to be performed at specific functions.

Yet it is not simple conservatism that formed the main obstacle to introducing the new syllabus; rather, it was the lack of administrative support of music education. About half our schools do not offer music lessons, for lack of qualified teachers. In addition, the professional competence of the working teachers is often very low, for few of them have graduated from an institution of higher education. These teachers also find

their work hindered by a lack of musical instruments, recordings, and other equipment.

Another obstacle is the traditional indifference to the subject of fine arts education on the part of school administrators, who still consider the arts second-rate subjects. For many years, the curriculum allocated too little time for music: one period of 45 minutes weekly in grades 1 to 7. (Now, schools can allocate more time to the subject and teach it in the upper grades as an elective). All these obstacles can ruin the best syllabus and the most sincere intentions.

It appears that Kabalevsky's system will be adopted by more schools in the future. His ideas may also become more popular and find followers in other countries where efficient teachers have adequate facilities and, most importantly, a clear understanding that students cannot be educated to distinguish the really beautiful in art and life from the banalities and imitations without fostering in those students a love for music—a love for classical and folk music as well as the best works of contemporary composers.

Of course, we don't consider Kabalevsky's system to be a panacea for every problem in teaching music to school children. We hope, however, that together with the well-known systems of Orff and Kodály, Kabalevsky's philosophy and syllabus can contribute to the world-wide experience of children learning about music as an art. 

Call for Manuscripts

The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning is now seeking manuscripts for review and possible publication in the following issue:

- Kaleidoscope III, a special issue featuring selected manuscripts on a variety of topics of interest to the music education profession

Advice to Contributors: TQ reviews manuscripts prepared in any scholarly style, such as Chicago or APA. The optimum length of papers is 15 to 20 typed, double-spaced pages. The author's name should not appear on any of the pages, but name, mailing address, and phone numbers should appear on the cover sheet. Four copies of the paper, along with a Mac disk if possible, should be sent to Doree N. Pitkin, Managing Editor, *The Quarterly*, 123 Frasier Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639. Questions? Call (303) 351-2254 during the morning hours or FAX (303) 351-1923 any time.