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## PERCEPTION OF MUSIC THROUGH TEXTBOOKS FOR 5TH, 6TH AND 7TH GRADE OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOL IN BULGARIA

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**Abstract:** The main musical activities are three - composing, performing, perception of music. All three are applied in music training at the general education school in Bulgaria, each activity having its own role in the education, upbringing and development of young people. The perception of music that is the subject of this study is an accessible and relatively easily practicable activity, and it is important for the development of emotional intelligence, education of aesthetic taste and formation of the general culture of students. However, to the full effect of the implementation of this meaningful activity in teaching in the general education school, the way in which the perception is organized is of great importance. I will analyze the successful examples of the technology of music perception in the general education school, created by Prof. Penka Mincheva and developed in the textbooks in which she is the head of the author collective (a series of textbooks of the Prosveta Plus publishing house).

Introducing a new work is preceded by learning its main themes. This is necessary because:

- Subsequently, the students are able to **detect each new sounding of a theme** when acquainting with the whole musical work. The students have no attempt to distinguish the elements of the musical tissue from one another, which makes acquaintance with a new work an ordeal for their hearing. Preliminary learning the themes draws the attention of the trainees, orienting them so that they are able to find themes when listening to the whole work or the intended for perception part.

- By learning the themes, students determine their **character**. This is especially beneficial in getting acquainted with a work in which subjects contrasts in character and is a valuable guide for understanding the musical form.

- Learning the themes is **memorizing** them, and thus, if memorizing is long enough, is added to the general culture of the learners. Subsequently, when a sufficient amount of musical intonation inherent in a particular author garners in the memory of the perceptrs, students become accustomed to recognizing not only the particular works but also the "musical utterance" - the style of the composer.

- Familiar thematic material helps to uncover the **form** of the work.

The approaches for presenting a musical work are very diverse. These are:

- Graphic representation of the musical structure. Both letter designations and depiction through schemes are used. Comparisons are also made with similar musical constructs studied previously;

- Comparison. In this approach, students are introduced to two works in one lesson. The course compares biographical information about composers, history of the creation of works, their genres, typical techniques of exposition of musical thought. All learning information is situated in a couple of consecutive pages of the textbook. After these various comparisons, the two works sound;

- References to musical pieces previously perceived;

- Perception of works of other arts in a similar emotional mood for insight into the emotional content of the work. For this purpose verses, excerpts of prose, paintings are shown, links to dances are made;

- Guiding questions and tasks. They are very diverse, but they are always related to directing the students' attention to the sounding musical example, understanding the nature of the artistic image, comprehending the information that is exemplified by the particular musical work.

**Keywords:** perception of music, music textbook, general education school, theme, musical work.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The main musical activities are three - composing, performing, perception of music. All three are applied in music training at the general education school in Bulgaria, each activity having its own role in the education, upbringing and development of young people. The perception of music that is the subject of this study is an accessible and relatively easily practicable activity, and it is important for the development of emotional intelligence, education of aesthetic taste and formation of the general culture of students. However, to the full effect of the implementation of this meaningful activity in teaching in the general education school, the way in which the perception is organized is of great importance. I will analyze the successful examples of the technology of music perception in the general education school, created by Prof. Penka Mincheva and developed in the textbooks in which she is the head of the author collective (a series of textbooks of the Prosveta Plus publishing house).

## 2. OBJECTIVE, AIMS, TASKS OF THE STUDY

The subject of this study is the music textbooks for the 5th and 7th grade of the general education school in Bulgaria of Prosveta Plus Publishing House and the author's team led by Prof. Penka Mincheva.

The object of analysis are the approaches applied to maximize the result of the learning activity perception of music. The aim of the study is to present effective means of insight into the character of the musical work in its perception and fuller mastering the educational information that is illustrated by the sounding work.

The tasks through which this goal must be achieved are:

- Study of the manner of presentation of the course material;
- Analysis of the means of illustrating the sound example;
- Exploration of the questions and tasks assigned to the students with the musical example.

## 3. THE NECESSITY OF PRELIMINARY LEARNING THE THEMES OF THE MUSICAL WORK

The perception of music in the textbooks of Mincheva and collective is a rich and colorful bouquet of new information, tasks, perceptions.

The presentation of a new work is preceded by learning of its main themes. This is necessary because:

- Subsequently, students are able to detect each new sounding of a theme while acquainting with the whole composition. The students have no attempt to distinguish the elements of the musical tissue from one another, which makes acquaintance with a new work an ordeal for their hearing. Preliminary learning the themes draws the attention of the trainees, orienting them so that they are able to distinguish the already familiar melody from the rest of the sound tissue. For example, in the textbooks for Grade 7 (Mincheva et al., 2018, p. 28) to the topic "Art music and dance" is provided the perception of the Minuet from Sonata for piano № 20 of L. van Beethoven. The initial theme is notated in the textbook, the students read the note text and learn the theme. The melody is not difficult to memorize, but is characterized by its dotted rhythm, laconic motifs, the movement of which is predominantly gradual (briefly, in the process of preparing the logical accent, ascending movement occurs in the chordal tones of the tonic triad, and later - a chromatic move), slender organization. All this makes it highlighted from the accompaniment voices and seventh-graders, remembering it, can easily detect it listening to the entire second part of the sonata.

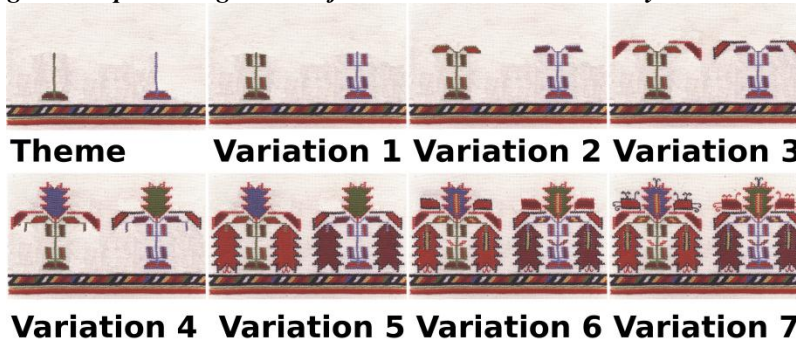
- By learning the themes, students determine their **character**. To the topic of the sonata form, intended for study according to the curriculum for the 7th grade ((Mincheva et al., 2018, p. 39)) and approved by the Ministry of Education, the author team of the textbook has chosen for listening the first part of Sonata No. 5 from V. A. Mozart. Both themes are written and students sing them, defining the character of each theme. Then they learn both themes. When listening to the entire first part, the class is assigned the task not only to discover and point the themes, but also to determine at what moment in the sounding music the character of the I theme, which dominates the beginning of the part, begins to change and when it passes in the character of theme II. Thus, from simply discovering themes and defining their character, listening to the first part of Mozart's Sonata No. 5 becomes something much more complicated, but also more intriguing - through tracking a gradual emotional change as one character changes to its opposite, it becomes an insight into the emotional world of the musical work. Since one of the aims of the subjects of aesthetic cycle is the development of emotional intelligence of adolescents, tasks such as this that turn music classes into a course of emotional responsiveness, contribute to the fulfillment of such a purpose.

- Learning the themes is **memorizing** them, and thus, if memorizing is long enough, is added to the general culture of the learners. The brightest samples of the world's music treasury are selected in the music textbooks. If the themes of a musical piece are memorized reliably, when they sound, even years later, the composition can be recognized. Thus, gathering 'essential' fragments of works by an author during the various years of the training course, the musical intonations inherent in that author are recorded in the memory of the students. Subsequently, students become accustomed to recognizing not only the particular works but also the "musical utterance" - the style of the composer. This is an important step towards upbringing a prepared, educated audience. For example, works by Mozart are perceived: 3 compositions in 6th grade, 1 in 7th grade; of Bach - 1 in 6th grade, 2 in 7th grade; of Beethoven - 3 in 5th grade and 3 in 7th grade; of Chopin - 1 in 5th grade, 2 in 6th grade. To all these works in the music lessons are provided various tasks, contributing to the higher interest, and on this basis - supporting the permanent preservation of the sounding information in the memory of the students.

- Familiar thematic material helps to uncover the **form** of the work. The information provided for mastering is distributed in such a way that by the end of the course all musical forms are taught, and the students are also offered the graphic presentation of the musical construction. As a result, in addition to the teacher's explication, the definition of the specific musical form and the sounding example, the students have another - graphic - support in understanding the tonal structure. An illustrative example of the usefulness of memorizing the theme for realization of the musical structure is "Theme with variations" by W. A. Mozart, studied in 6th grade (Mincheva et

al., 2017b, pp. 18 – 19). After the explication of the musical form, including that the theme usually has a simpler melody that allows it to be enriched and diversified, that there is no limit to the number of variations, and that some of the changes of the theme may affect its character, that creates a contrast, is placed the lettering of the structure "theme with variations". This is the first representation of the structure through signs. Then it's time for the mastering the theme by the class. In this activity, the sixth-graders are also assigned the question about the form of the theme of the variation cycle. Since they have the necessary experience to distinguish the three simple forms from each other, the answer is not difficult for them. Once the theme has been memorized, the whole work can be perceived as previously are assigned the questions about the number of variations, whether in a variation the meter is changed, or whether they find a variation that is contrasting in character to the theme. These questions further direct students to discover the differences - the way, the techniques for diversification, as well as the common - the familiar intonational moves of the theme. Tracking the common, ie. of what is preserved from the theme, in the perception of the entire work "leads" the young listeners, helps the class to orient in the developing over time tonal example, to discover the beginning, development and end of each variation. Without a secure memorization of the theme, it would be impossible to cope with this task. Another, additional visual reference for the musical construction "theme with variations" is offered to the students. This is an embroidery (figure 1), the first segment of which contains very few elements. This segment represents the basis on which details will be added, ie. the "theme". Each subsequent segment of the embroidery contains a new element, while in the last segment - eighth in a row or "Variation 7" the full, richest, finished look of the embroidery is reached.

*Figure 1 Representing musical form theme with variations'by an embroidery*



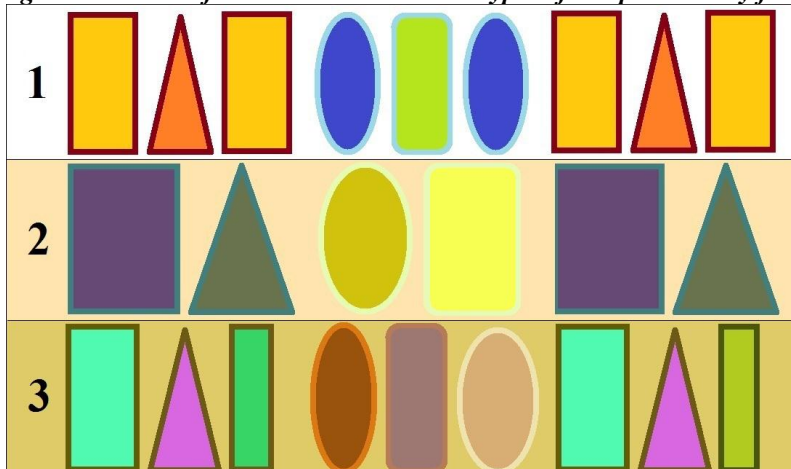
Additional questions for rationalization of the new information relate to that, which of the forming principles - unity, similarity, contrast - is leading in the musical structure, in which other musical forms this principle occurs. Such is also the task of composing variations on a given theme - a simple, schematic melody, which students must diversify by changing the meter (for example, by applying irregular meters, typical of Bulgarian folk dances), or use prepared by author team in advance and written in the textbook rhythmic groups.

#### **4. APPROACHES FOR PRESENTING EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION ILLUSTRATED BY A MUSICAL WORK**

A good solution was found in the textbook for 6th grade (Mincheva et al., 2017b, pp. 40 - 41) in the study of a complex ternary form and perception of Part III - Scherzo - from Sonata for piano № 2 by L. van Beethoven. Students were asked beforehand to recall the piece "Village Song" by R. Schumann so that they could clearly differentiate its simple ternary structure from the new complex ternary form taught in the particular lesson. Before introducing the Scherzo, the themes of its partitions are presented with their metrorhythm written. Since they are clearly different exactly in their rhythmic groups, the writing of the note values gives a clear picture of the inter-partitional differences and serves as a reliable guide in recognizing each new partition of the complex ternary form. The character of each of the small partitions, its contrast with the other small partitions within the large partition are also commented, as well as the more significant contrast between the large partitions. The letter designation and the color scheme of the complex ternary form are also placed in the textbook - the small partitions are written in small letters, and the large ones - in capital letters. In the color scheme, the three most common types of complex ternary form are depicted - with equal large partitions "A", contrasting medium large partition and simple ternary form "a b a" of large partitions; with literally repeated third large partition, but binary structure of the large partitions; with a third large partition that literally repeats the first large partition and a simple ternary structure "a b a1" of the three large partitions (figure 2). Since the last depicted construction corresponds to the form of the

musical example, an opportunity was sought for the geometric figures to have a connection with the character of the music. For the "A" partitions, due to the tight rhythm, the strongly broken melodic line, the predominant technic mark staccato, shapes with pronounced angles are selected, while the small partitions within the "B" partition, where the melody has a smooth movement and the predominant stroke is legato, are represented respectively with rounded shapes.

*Figure 2 Scheme of the three most common types of complex ternary form*



This simple and clear way of depicting the complex ternary structure provides sufficient visual information about the studied musical form, creates a direct and understandable connection with the character of the partitions of the perceived work-sound example and contributes to the rationalizing of new knowledge.

The information that students learn when perceiving a new work refers to the composer, his style, the genres in which he works, the era, the state of other arts during the specific historical period, information about the most famous works of the tonal artist. For example, the perception of the Toccata and Fugue d moll by J. S. Bach and "Hallelujah" from the oratorio "Messiah" by Fr. Handel in the textbook for 7th grade (Mincheva et al., 2018, pp. 34 - 35) is preceded by clear and concise information with beautiful illustrations of achievements in architecture during the period, but also of the state of science, art, literature. The narration about music in the particular era begins with the fact that proliferation of strings and clavier instruments is growing, the names of prominent master luthiers who created unsurpassed in their quality violins are mentioned. In a fascinating way, the narration continues with information about the new genres, describing in a few words the most characteristic features of the genres, samples of which are to be presented to the student audience. For a moment the narration is interrupted by a more detailed examination of the polyphonic type of multivoice texture, the types of polyphony, characteristic techniques of exposing the musical thought, as the polyphonic multivoice is compared with the opposite - the homophonic type. This is followed by several tasks related to distinguishing between polyphonic and homophonic multivoice. As one of the musical illustrations of genres typical of the era is selected "Coffee Cantata" by J. S. Bach. The next lesson begins with brief information about the life and works of J. S. Bach and G. Fr. Handel. It is extremely appropriate idea to compare the two great baroque artists by appearing on two consecutive pages of the textbook and formed in the same way biographical information, portraits of composers, photographs of buildings related to the work of each of them and their iconic musical works. Before the demonstration of these works, in the lesson is provided the students to get acquainted with brief information about the works they will hear, and the information is appropriately related to what has already been learned about the polyphonic techniques, about the genres characteristic of the epoch, there are also definitions of the toccata and fugue, as well as a brief description of the text of Handel's work. After this careful preparation, the two works through which the comparison will be completed - Toccata and Fugue in d moll by J. S. Bach and "Hallelujah" from the oratorio "Messiah" by Fr. Handel – sound.

##### **5. PARALLELS WITH SAMPLES OF VISUAL ARTS THAT HELP "EXPRESSING" THE PERCEIVED MUSICAL WORK**

The perception of the emotional content of a musical work is more complete when it is combined with the perception of works of other arts in a similar emotional mood. P. Mincheva (Mincheva, 1994, 2006, 2017a) for many years draws ingenious emotional parallels between works of different arts to reveal to students the world of feelings embedded in a musical composition. Numerous examples may be found in music textbooks, which are the subject of

this study. Poems, excerpts from prose, paintings are introduced, connections with dances are made. In the textbook for 5th grade (Mincheva et al. 2016, p. 65) the listening to "Hungarian Rhapsody" by F. Liszt and "Rural Dance" by M. Leveiev is accompanied by photographs of dancers in Hungarian folk costumes and in whirlwind Bulgarian dance in the picturesque folk costumes from the Pirin region. To "Gavotte" by W. A. Mozart in the textbook of 6 class (Mintcheva et al., 2017b, p. 14) is inserted antique engraving of dancing popular dance gavotte. The engraving is so beautiful, vivid and realistically performed that the perceiver gets an idea of the steps, the movements, the tempo of the dance, the clothes it is playing with. It is in the style of the author's team of the textbook to present the information in such a way as to create a basis for comparison, in which the characteristic features of the compared objects stand out even more clearly. Thus, on the same topic - "Music, movement, dance" - and on the same lesson, respectively - on the same page in the textbook (Mincheva et al., 2017b, p. 21) - "Minuet" by L. Bokerini was assigned for listening. As an illustration to this work is inserted another engraving - of dancing minuet. Thus, placed next to each other, the two engravings provide a very descriptive basis for comparing the dances, their character and intrinsic movements, thus adding a distinct impression to the sounding music with a dance character. The musical example of samba (Mincheva et al., 2017b, p. 14), in addition to brief information including character, tempo, typical rhythmic group, information about salon and sport dances, is illustrated with a real "visual feast" of spectacular photos of samba dancers at the carnival in Rio de Janeiro. To the considered example of listening to "Minuet" - Part II of Sonata № 20 by L. van Beethoven (Mincheva et al., 2018, p. 28) another successful comparison is made - next to each other are shown photos of dancing minuet in aristocratic salon and outdoors - as a folk dance, which is the prototype of the salon dance minuet.

#### **6. QUESTIONS AND TASKS ASSISTING INSIGHT IN THE CHARACTER OF THE WORK AND RATIONALIZATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION**

The questions and tasks that are assigned to the learners when perceiving music are very diverse, but always related to directing students' attention to the sounding musical example, insight into the character of the artistic image, rationalizing the information that is illustrated by the specific musical work. One of the tasks created to guide the student's attention is assigned in the textbook for 7th grade (Mincheva et al., 2018, p. 29). To the topic "Bulgarian composers and folklore" is initially offered a short text informing about some works by Bulgarian authors, created on the base of the folk music, and among the listed works are the suite "Thracian dances" by P. Staynov, "Seven symphonic dances" by P. Vladigerov and "Nestinarka" by M. Goleminov. After this introductory information, the class learns the folk song "Dimitro le". To the two musical excerpts - from "Thracian Dances" and "Seven Symphonic Dances", which are suggested for an audition, the authors of the textbook ask the question in whose work - P. Staynov or P. Vladigerov, the newly mastered folk song is used. This question engages the attention of seventh graders. In a question following the perception of the two sounding examples, students have to use their ingenuity - they must indicate a fragment of which part of "Thracian Dances" sounded, and in the textbook are listed the titles of the parts. This question can be answered, taking into account the meter specific to each of dances-parts of the symphonic suite. The third question makes a connection with the musical form "suite". The definition of the suite is quoted, which is familiar from previous lessons and is required to indicate which musical form it corresponds to. Thus, not only the most characteristic of the cyclical musical structure Suite is remembered, but also is consolidated information that "Thracian Dances" and "Seven Symphonic Dances" are suites. To the perception of Polonaise № 3 by Fr. Chopin in the textbook for 6th grade (Mincheva et al., 2017b, p. 17) the characteristic rhythm of the dance is indicated in advance, but the task is set to derive the repetitive rhythm and to measure. Since in the clavier piece the rhythmic group determining the type of dance does not sound constantly, but is summarized through its diverse variants, the indication of the main variant has its contribution to the development of a certain observation and ability to separate the essential from the unimportant. A new step in this direction is the task assigned in the same textbook when acquainting the sixth-graders with "Tango" by A. Piazzolla and "Waltz" from the ballet "Sleeping Beauty" by P. I. Tchaikovsky. The requirement of this task is to indicate the common features of waltz and tango dances, as well as their differences. In the textbook for 6th grade (Mincheva et al., 2017b, p. 17) is suggested the task to indicate in which of the works by Bulgarian authors folk songs are used as themes. Listed are: "Two rhythmic variations" by L. Pipkov and the familiar from previous classes works "Nestinarsko horo" from the dance drama "Nestinarka" by M. Goleminov and "Rano e Radka ranila" from "Seven symphonic dances" by P. Vladigerov. The task is misleading, because in all three works folk music is used, but only in two of them the themes are folk songs - "Nestinarsko horo" is based on an original dancing-on-embers *instrumental* melody, performed to this day on dancing-on-embers feasts. Through tasks of this type, both observation and the ability to concentrate attention are developed, as well as the ability of students to be confident in their own statements. In the textbook for 5th grade (Mincheva et al., 2016, p. 11) on the topic "Simple ternary form" and the musical example "Village song" by R. Schumann are assigned tasks aimed at insight into the character of the piece and mastering educational

information. In the textbook for 5th grade (Mincheva et al., 2016, p. 11) on the topic "Simple ternary form" and the musical example "Village song" by R. Schumann are assigned tasks aimed both at insight into the character of the piece and mastering educational information. The first of these tasks is to designate in letters the structure of "Village Song". Since the contrast between the partitions "a" and the middle partition in this piece is clearly perceptible and additionally highlighted through the performance (the recording of this piece was made especially for the music textbook), the fifth graders easily orient themselves in the musical structure. In the requirement of the task possible differences are listed - in the tempo; in the dynamics; in rhythm; in character. In order to fulfill this requirement, it is necessary to determine the character of each partition, as well as to compare the way of using the means of expression tempo, rhythm, dynamics.

In order to publish a textbook for the general education school in Bulgaria, it must pass reviewing and two stages of assessment, both stages of which are elimination – it is first examined by experts from the Ministry of Education and Science, after which the approved textbooks are evaluated by 1,800 teachers. Only after approval by the pedagogues, a textbook can be published and distributed. This means that the textbooks circulated and used in the Bulgarian education system, which I analyzed, have already passed the evaluation of both a reviewer and a commission of experts in music education, such as of users - music teachers.

### 7. CONCLUSIONS

1. The educational information is presented briefly, accurately, understandably. A commonly used approach is the comparison of objects, in which their common features and their differences clearly stand out.
2. The musical work is not auditioned directly, but with careful preparation - the themes are learned, in some cases the structure of the work is discussed beforehand, which is of great importance for rationalization of the development of musical images.
3. In the perception of music, appropriate parallels are made with works of other arts, which greatly supports and enriches the insight into the character of the musical work.
4. The questions and tasks assigned to the listening works are relevant, varied, aimed at revealing the emotional content of the musical piece and mastering the educational information.

In the textbooks a successful balance is found between terminological and factual strictness and fascinatingness of the narration, between information and illustrative material, between the amount of the suggested educational material and tasks for its comprehension and memorization.

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