

FOLK MUSIC INSTRUMENTS AND CHILDREN EDUCATION THROUGH THEIR RHYTHMIC

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Abstract

This topic aims to bring to the attention of the audience, the issue of developing rhythmic and melodic feeling to children of 7-11 years old, through the use of folk music instruments. The education of rhythmic and melodic sense to children and its development through playing with simple folk music instruments is very important. The music curricula help in cultivating and correcting this sense in primary education and beyond. Different materials, published by the Academy of Sciences, Institute of Folk Culture, as well as various publications brought by individuals within and outside the country, have been used to elaborate this topic. Rhythmic education of children of this age group is primarily developed through imitation rhythmic phenomena in nature, teaching rhythmic poetic contents, body kits and percussive instruments application, and through examples of simple rhythmic samples created by children themselves, or also through already known samples. Rhythmic speech, linking rhythmic musical phenomena with the poetry – metric ones, music interpretation through percussive music instruments or visual presentation through drawing rhythmic phenomena enable to have a connection of the sound with their appearance (of percussive music instruments). Knowing the geographic extent of popular music instruments, their classification according to the group they belong, and their usage by children in those environments where children study music, is very important for the school curricula. Knowledge and use of popular music instruments during singing, or just making music, helps children recognize simple popular music instruments; it helps specify the rhythmic accompaniment of songs, pay attention during music play or even during combination of different rhythms, complete musical satisfaction during singing of songs. Thus, the rhythmic phenomenon is experienced in concrete form through interpretation; it is achieved through its conscious and practical application.

Keywords: *popular music instruments, rhythm, melody, rhythmic education curriculum.*

Introduction

Education and cultivation of rhythmic and melodic sense to children, including through knowing and using simple folk music tools, is very important. To children of 7 to 11 years old, rhythmic education is developed primarily through imitating phenomena of nature, rhythmic reading of poetic contents, the usage of physical instruments during singing and percussion with instruments with the songs created for children and by children.

First of all, this paper seeks to reveal the indispensable role in the development of rhythmic and melodic sense to children through musical instruments. *Secondly*, it aims to provide information on several folk musical instruments that are primarily used by children in Albania. And *thirdly*, the concrete and conscious usage of folk instruments through various examples as used by children.

I. Role of musical instruments in developing the sense of rhythmic and melodic sense to children according to different age groups.

Children begin to have their first contacts with music through voice or musical instruments, and this may be one of the most exciting parts of their musical experience. They begin to become aware on musical instruments that they use and start experimenting with them, they also start getting aware of the sounds that these instruments emit understanding also their musical qualities. When working with children, we name musical instruments into two categories: rhythmic and melodic. Both these categories are diverse and accessible by children of young ages as they make them focus on the detection of sounds based on their composition and construction. Also, the musical instruments used by children are simple to use and children can run through them interesting musical rhythms. But often we ask ourselves: why do children need to learn to play musical instruments? Some of the main reasons for children to play musical instruments (folk) is that children are provided the opportunity to:

- get familiar with the musical instrument (folk), its appearance, material composition and its history;
- develop rhythmic and melodic sense through playing instruments;
- increase their focus and attention while playing the instrument, needed to keep the rhythm of the song or the music play ;
- meet its musical and aesthetic satisfaction while singing songs and or playing the musical play;
- assist in the development of their brain through playing the music instruments to cope with stress, as this activity significantly reduces the effects of stress on children.

Rhythmic education of children of 7-11 years takes place primarily through imitating the phenomena of nature, the rhythmic reading of poetic contents, the usage of physical instruments during singing and percussion with instruments with the songs created for children and by children

II. Folk Music Instruments, according to their clusters.

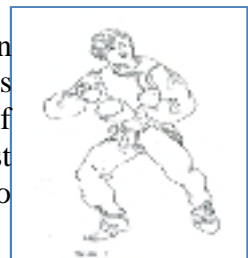
Folk musical instruments, like all the other our inherited folklore from generations, constitute one of the most precious treasures of the Albanian nation. During various scientific activities to detect cultural heritage of popular folklore, the historical study of the creation and development of our folk musical instruments, their use and their classification by sound, material composition and structure of their construction has had great importance.

Our people traditionally tried to teach children the use of musical instruments ranging from the simplest ones, created by nature and environment circumstantial means as for example *rrekëza*¹ (Sokoli R, Miso P, 1991, Tirana), *pipëza*, *poçi*, *bilbili*, *fyelli*, *shkopinjë (cinglat)*, to the most complicated ones. The knowledge and the use of folk musical instruments, develops in children their melodic and rhythmic sense even though they have changed and developed.

Idiophone and *membranophone* folk musical instruments are limited only through their rhythmic role when compared with their folk musical instruments of the *aerophone* and *choordophone* group that has encountered a greater development. At the same time, we note that some of the folk musical instruments of the *idiophone* group, consisting of metal composition, despite their rhythmic role, are further developed in terms of technology and their rankings in organology. A better knowledge on folk musical instruments adopted or not, and their grouping, would give us a clearer picture of the function that they play in the everyday life of children, this also brought through musical examples. The purpose of this paper is not to show in detail folk music instruments, because their diversity and variability from province to province is very big, the purpose of this paper is to bring to the attention the usage of those simple instruments that can be a very good basis for recognition and usage by children, what leads to the development and cultivation of their rhythmic and melodic sense.

Folk musical instruments are categorised in pre-musical instruments and folk music instruments *idiophone*, *membranophone*, *chordophone* and *aerophone*. In the group of *idiophone* instruments there are included those instruments that resonate from the vibrations of their rigid body through collision, friction, swinging, bites or corrosion. Construction of these instruments is quite simple as it can be used materials we find in nature like stones, and woods or other solid materials that are not not strained, or other household items of metal composition that are quite simple from technological standpoint because they have no other mechanism in their body. So they make a single sound and without developing a particular melody.

*Rocks*² (Sokoli R, Miso P, 1991, Tirana), are pre-musical instruments which can be called resonant idiophone instruments. The rhythmic flap of two rocks is generally used in children's games. One example out of this is the option of the blind-man's-buff game where children searching for something they lost they flap rocks, jumped on one feet and clashed them too, accompanying also with special verses.

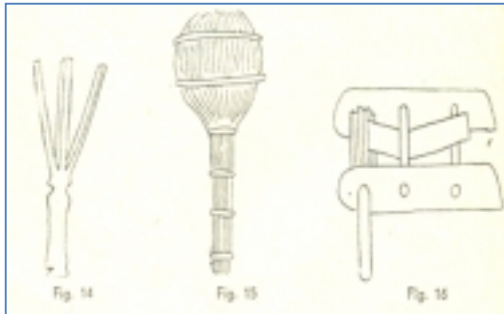


¹ Sokoli R, Miso P (1991) "Folk musical instruments of Albanian Nation" Academy of Sciences of Popular Republic of Albania, IKP, pg. 49, Tirana, Albania

² The same pg. picture 1, pg. 50



Cinglat ose *chopsticks*³ (Sokol R, Miso P, 1991), are also very simple pre-musical instruments, consisting of two pieces of straight chopsticks, or slightly curved ones. From their clash we receive undefined sounds, but they are also used to emphasise the rhythm during various music plays and rituals of children.



Rattles (fig 14⁴), (Sokoli R, Miso P, 1991, Tirana), is another idiophone instrument, which is created and used by children. It is made from fresh corn cob. Whenever rattles performs its movements, collisions cause dried and undefined reverberation. *Rrekëza* (fig 15), (Sokoli R, Miso P, 1991, Tirana) is an instrument that belongs to the group of idiophone instruments. It is formed with the help of fine twigs that are put in oval shape and gathered at their end. Within the oval space there are put different small gravels or other pieces to create different sounds/tones during the winging of the *rrekëza*. This instrument was built to entertain children. *Gërrgërrja* (fig 16), (Sokoli R, Miso P, 1991, Tirana), or otherwise called *gërrgërrja* is an idiophone instrument, which has a serrated wooden shaft ending with a handle at the end. In the shaft we note a placed square shape thin board that is interrupted by a crossed stick.

Membranophone instruments are those instruments that create their sounds from vibrations of the strained membranes and that are generated through: breaths, hitting,



hands, chopsticks, shaking or frictions. *Fyellzani*, or as called by *kallamzani*⁵ is one of the folk instrument for children that is part of this group. This pre-musical instrument is created by children through several ways: a) by a membrane taut between two fingers, b) through a paper foldered over the notches of a comb-tune, c) or by the rod of an elder, purified from bone marrow (i.e. drilled). This instrument may seem like an instrument that belongs to the aerophone, membranophone group of instruments, or to

physical instruments, because of the interaction of the voice and breath that cause harassment vibrations of the membrane.

Another instrument of the membranophone group is the *poçi*⁶ (Mullai K, Nikolla Gj, 1996, Tirana). This is a round instrument that has in its two round sides two cut segments where is placed a thin skin of cattle material, while in the other two sides there is a string with stoppers that create reverberation



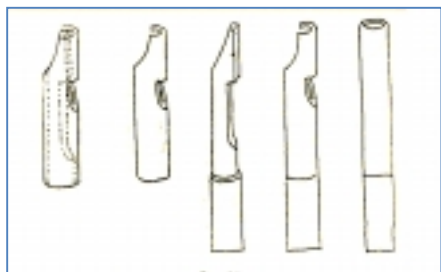
³ Sokoli R, Miso P (1991) "Folk musical instruments of Albanian Nation" Academy of Sciences of Popular Republic of Albania, IKP, picture 3, pg.51, Tirana, Albania

⁴ Sokoli R, (1975) "Albanian Musical Folklore", Publishing House of the School Book, picture 14, 15, pg 16, Tirana, Albania

⁵ Sokoli R, Miso P (1991) "Folk musical instruments of Albanian Nation" Academy of Sciences of Popular, page 9, pg. 65, Tirana, Albania

⁶ Mullai K, Nikolla Gj (1996) "Musical Education", 5th class book for 8th grade schools, SHBLSH, pg. 15, Tirana

during the vertical rotation of the stoppers. This instrument may be very well used by children while they sing or play children games.



Aerophone instruments, are all the instruments that generate sounds through vibrations of breath. Some of the aerophone instruments are quite simple tools created from plants, reeds or wood, and are widely used by children. Such instruments are: *picanga* (with blade of grass or leaf of green corn), *fuza* (light piece of wood or poplar cot), *bredhkacet* (are created from corn husks and pine hop), *fryza* (created from the nucleus of apricot). While *bilbili*⁷ (Sokoli R, 1975, Tirana),

who is built through various trees rod, whose skin is removed without being broken. One of the folk musical instruments mostly used by children is *fyelli*. It is a melodic instrument, which has different dimensions, constructions and names across the country. Their maintaining and usage varies according to the types and subtypes of this musical instrument.

Chordophone instruments are all those instruments that generate sounds from string vibrations. Instrument of *çifteli* is one of them, and it has a prevalence in the northern areas of Albania and in Kosovo, and in the villages of "Toske region in Macedonia". This instrument is also used by little children and helps develop their melodic sense. There are several types of this instrument: a) small *çiftelia*, which is also called *çifteli* of Dukagjini because this kind of instrument is used in the high register, b) average *çiftelia*, or also called *çiftelia* of Tirana, in some cases it is also called *çifteli* of Elbasanit c) the biggest *çifteli* is called *çifteli* of Dibra which is not combined with *sharki* due to its lower register that is similar to *sharki*. Two wires of the *çifteli* are allocated in different ways and on the wires it is played with feather pen made of cherry wood skin.

III. Awareness playing of folk musical instruments as the basic for the education and developing of the rhythmic and melodic sense in children

Knowledge and usage of folk musical instruments, by children alone or in groups, helps them in some aspects, as in a) recognising the folk musical tool b) developing the rhythmic and melodic sense c) matching the concentration while playing the instrument with the rhythm of the song or the musical play, d) fulfilling the children musical and aesthetic satisfaction during the play of songs of musical plays. Thus, the rhythmic and melodic phenomenon is developed and experienced in concrete forms, making children aware of those folk musical instruments that they are using, of their sound and making them be secure in maintaining the musical rhythms. Some of the forms of experiencing and developing rhythmic or melodic sense are developed through examples provided and prepared by the teachers depending on the purpose they have for their curriculum, class and or the age of the children. Songs and musical games play an important role especially in the classroom, where an excessive socializing with peers is being developed. In these games, rhythm and music pace are developed through moving and counting games. Children sing with pleasure many different poetry contents, especially through movement or while associating the games with rhythmic folk instruments. Songs recommended to develop games

⁷ Sokoli R, (1975) "Albanian Musical Folklore", Publishing House of the School Book, picture 36, pg. 32, Tirana.

differently because children do not always have fun activities stereotypes, but are reluctant to change them according to their imaginations, expressing their creativity. Song-games are always recommended to be performed with a diversity because children do not like stereotype activities, but like to change them according to their imagination by also expressing at the same time their creativity. Song-games are syncretic because at the same time children sing, accompany with folk musical instruments, move, act, etc.

The following poems are part of the rich folklore from the areas of Peshkopi and Tirana districts. They are brought here with the intention to give a possibility to use them in class with children through rhythmic teaching of verses, while associating them with folk instruments. Both are associated with *stones*. In both examples, it can be used different types and sizes of stones, which emit sounds with different resonances. Performance through reading and keeping pace with stones, making children:

- understand where the emphasis the rhythm and speech falls on,
- experience and execute short and long length of the sound that go parallel to the text of the songs, meaning in 1/4th and 1/8th length of the notes without the need for complex and theoretical explanations,
- experiencing the phenomenon of rest (2nd example, leave 1/8 and 1/4),
- compare the length of syllables with each other, knowing the length rhythmic accompaniment with stones,
- execute examples being divided into groups, each group sings and accompanies other with stones.

Example 1⁸ (Sokoli R, Miso P, 1991, Tirana)

<i>Oj hexhine, moj shejtane,</i>	XXX	χ χ	
<i>Qite xhonë për mejdane,</i>	χ		
<i>As për mou, as për to,</i>	χ		↓
<i>Për një fukara qatou.</i>			χ

Example 2

<i>O shejtan, o pelivan,</i>	7		7	
<i>Shloje, shloje gjon e huj.</i>			χ	
<i>Se do ta paguj</i>			χ	
<i>Me tre qypa uj.</i>			χ	

Until the year 1940 of the XX Century, when it was lost something, kids thought that a creature of folk mythology was hiding it, a mythology called "Rodheja" in southern Albania, or "Trashallka" in Middle Albania. There are many folk songs sang by children of different

⁸Sokoli R, Miso P (1991) "Folk musical instruments of Albanian Nation" Academy of Sciences of Popular Republic of Albania, pg. 49, Tirana, Albania

provinces of Albania that may be associated with rhythmic instruments. In many rhythmic songs that arise from childish fantasy and imagination through musical games, we meet the 2/4 rhythm. An example for it we find it in the song “*Rona Rona peperuna*”⁹ (Sokoli R, 1965, Tirana). This ritual songs sang by children in winter, may be associated with *cingla* (shkopinjtë) with the instrument of *rraketakes* ose *poçit*. Through this musical game children learn to:

- understand that each percussion accompanied by the music instrument corresponds to a certain syllable
- experience the value $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ of the note.
- compare values or length of syllables with notes, identifying those that are "long" and those that are "short".
- sing and play instruments in a group of children experiencing the feeling of music ensemble.



The other simple music game "Rosa rozina" is sang by children and could be associated with folk instrument for children, the rattles. Through playing this game children learn to:

- understand that each percussion accompanied by the instrument corresponds to a certain syllable.
- experience the value of $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ of the note.
- compare the values or lengths of syllables with notes, identifying those that are "long" in syllables of various measures of the song and those that are "short".
- sing and play instruments in group with children, experiencing a sense of the feeling of music ensemble.

⁹ Sokoli R (1965) "The Albanian musical folkore-morphology", Academy of Sciences of the Popular Republic of Albania, IKP, Example 69, 100, 105, pg. 49, Tirana, Albania

Ro - za ro - zi - na bjen dran - do - fi - le bashk me zam -
 ba - ke e - dhe lu - le tje - ra si - llu si - llu rrum - bu - llak
 s'ke - na ftoft' as - pak tui lujt e tui kër - ey ban by

Another very simple musical game "*Hu hu baba hu*", may be associated with two folk musical tools, *shkopinjë* or *lodër*. Through this musical game, the children learn to:

- understand that every persussion accompanied correspond to a certain syllable.
- learn to make rythm through body movements,
- learn the heighth of the sounds through singing,
- experience the value of $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ of the note.
- compare the values or lengths of syllables with notes, identifying those that are "long" in syllables of various measures of the song and thoshe tha are "short".
- play musical instruments in a grup with children, experiencing a sense of the feeling of music ensemble, where the first grup sinus the test, while the second clashes the hands, while the thirds grup accompanies with *shkopinjë* or *lodër*.

Hu! Hu! ba - ba hu! Me - re ka - lin shko për dru
 Pri - te pei - te se po vjen Bish - ti ka - lit po kër - cen
 hu hu një hu hu dy.

Conclusions:

Through this paper we conclude that getting to know folk musical instruments and their use through activities of the music curriculum provides:

- *rhythmic and melodic* education of children through:
 - experiencing the length of musical notes through the sang syllables, defining as "long" and as "short" in syllables with different measures of the song.
 - learning the rythm through body movements,
 - learning the height of the sounds through singing.
- *playing with awareness and correctly* the musical examples through folk musical instruments.
- playing in groups with folk musical nstruments and *experencing the feeling of music ensemble musical*.
- *strengthening the national identity* through the recognition and interpretation of song games for children, through their association with folk musical instruments that they use.

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