

THE MUSIC EDUCATION IN THE NORMAL SCHOOL OF ELBASAN

Eliona Lici

University of Arts, Boulevard “Dëshmorët e Kombit”, “Nënë Tereza” Square, Tirana, Albania ; Email: elionalici@live.com

Abstract

The object of this paper is concentrated in the representation of the Normal School of Elbasan, as the first school, which included in the curriculum of the general education the subject of Music. In this way this school became a crucial element for a special esthetical attitude. This paper will be preceded by a introduction of the musical activity held before the opening of the school and the specific circumstances that motivated the opening of the school, which contributed in developing in a productive way the artistic life of the country, cultivating and enriching the Albanian spiritual heritage. A special place in this paper will be given to shed light into the personalities and teachers of music which were distinguished for their major contribution in the creation of a cultural identity in the musical education in the Normal School of Elbasan. Special focus will be given to the analysis of the program of the Music subject, starting with the structural thematic form, trying to present an organized panorama of the characteristics of this school and also the musical activity of the Normalist. As prior said, the contribution of this school is very big since she became the most important cradle, where were educated thousands of teachers from Albania and Kosovo, but also for the fact that through its connection and collaboration with schools and other educational institution, became a carrier of the new contemporary educational methodologies, inspired by western psychologists and professors. This paper is based on the National Archive, specific bibliographies and “Normalisti” magazine. We hope that the paper will be of great help in creating an overall and consolidated panorama of the musical education in the Normal school of Elbasan and the spread in the whole country.

Keywords: *art, Normal School of Elbasan, music education .*

Introduction

This paper will have in focus of its treatment the reflection of the contribution of the Normale School of Elbasan as the first school that included in the corpus of the general education the subject of music education. In this way it became a crucial factor in the education of a class of half professional music teachers, whose instruments held the greatest burden of the all artistic activities inside and outside the city.

An overall historical look

In the first half of the XX century, the Normale School of Elbasan was known as the only school to educate teachers and this was as a result of the influence of a numbers of factors among which the economical , political, cultural, educational and psychological factors played

an important role. The archive resources and the impressions of the foreign travelers, like the case of the high official of the Ottoman empire, E. Celebi (he was in Elbasan in 1940), indicate that Elbasan was a big and developed center in the XVI-XVII century, becoming one of the most important cities of Albania during that time. As such, this city of tradition made important steps in the social, economical, educational and cultural development¹.

The facts that in the field of iconography as an expression of the cultivation of the visual art, are distinguished artists like Onufri, (XVII century), Konstandin Shpataraku, the sculptor Dhimitër Shpati as well as David Selenica, artistic values of whom were made known up to the Athos Mountain in Greece in the beginning of the XVIII century, are a significant indicator of the cultural development of the city.

Furthermore, in the encyclopedia of Elbasan are found data that the musical activity in this city started since the beginning of the XVII century.

Since the XVII century in Elbasan have existed small groups of travelling instrumentalists that played their musical instruments. Such group, Taifa, consisted of six players, who played the drum twice a day to please the people.

The traveler E. Celebi, who came in Elbasan in 1960, testifies that the art of playing the musical instruments twice a day was an old ritual, supported since a long time². The music of this period up to the beginning of the XX was conceived as an amateurish bar music far away from the professional music, entirely disconnected from the civilized European communication.

In the field of linguistics long time ago before the declaration of the independence, exactly in the city of Elbasan are made the first attempts to create and to start the series of Albanian alphabet, that greatly influenced the development of the education. The manuscript of Teodor Bogomillit³ in the Albanian language, which dates back approximately in 1690, the discovery of which was made by the scholar Dh.S Shuteriqi in 1949 titling it “The Anonimous of Elbasan”⁴ ... *is considered as as the ancient document of the written Albanian in the XVII⁵ century*. The manuscripts includes two original alphabets of the Albanian language, more specifically an albanian dialect spoken in the region between Shpati and Vërça. These attempts continued up to the end of the XVIII century, exactly in 1795,⁶ where they were followed by the contribution of Dh.Todri to the creation of an original Albanian alphabet as well as to the translation in the Albanian language of two fundamental religious books and they were culminated later with all the works of K. Kristoforidhi⁷ and especially with the with the most important ones; *The dictionary of the Albanian language*⁸ and the first *ABC Albanian book with pictures* in gegerisht and toskerisht dialect (*Alfavitar shqip*).

¹ K.Bevapi (1995)- Cultural and educational tradition of Elbasan up to the declare of the Independence pp.12. The tradition in Normale School Elbasan, Publishing house Elbasani.

² K.Bevapi k/red (2003) ORCHESTRA Encyclopedia ELBASAN, publishing house Sejko 2003. pp. 409

³ Dh.S.Shuteriqi (1949) *The Anonimous of Elbasan, Albanian Script in Elbasan in XVII century*; The bulletin of the scientific institution, Nr. 1, Tirana Albania

⁴ Dh.S.Shuteriqi (1949) *The Anonimous of Elbasan, Albanian Script in Elbasan in XVII century*; The bulletin of the scientific institution, Nr. 1, Tirana Albania,.

⁵ V.Ruka (1999) Elbasan and its territories as a historical contribution and cultural and educational value in the national level through documents and the resources of the time *Normale in focus of time*; Encyclopedia of Elbasan; Silver 1999,pp114

⁶ K.Bevapi (1995) The tradition in Normale School Cultural and educational tradition of Elbasan up to the declare of the Independence pp 12, The tradition in Normale School Elbasan, Publishing house Elbasani.

⁷ Dh.S.Shuteriqi (2012,21 Mars)Elbasan, the city of iconographers and alphabets, newspaper Panaorama.

⁸ K.Bevapi k/red (2003) Kristoforidhi Kostandin pp. 312;313 Encyclopedia of EBASAN .Sejko 2003.

The above factors intertwined with other economical, political phenomena definitely played an important role in the opening of the first Normale School in Elbasan, whose longevity made possible to have generation of teachers, spreaders of the knowledge and culture in and outside the borders of the Albanian settlements.

During the period of the National Renaissance Elbasan became the generating nucleus in the political, cultural and social emancipation, contributing by all means to the process of the movement for the spur and the shaping of the national consciousness, a situation which was crowned in 1912 with the declaration of the Independence of the country.

II- Facts and documents about the music education in the Normale school

By the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century, as in some of the most important cities of Albania even in Elbasan was noticed on overall mobilization to establish artistic societies and clubs. Such societies were “Aferdita” and “Ylli i mengjesit” that with their activities became the precursor of the Normal school preparing the terrain for a professional study of the music. During this period, renaissance patriots have brought from the abroad, along with ABC books even many patriotic songs adopted in the Albanian language like *For the Motherland, For the flag, For the Albanian alphabet* etc. Before these in Elbasan were known some orchestrations (ahengje) which executed old traditional dances in the weddings, parties and local feasts etc. The opening of the Normal school of Elbasan would offer the opportunity to form the bases of a music professional education in the theoretical and practical aspect of the teaching of songs and instruments. In this school were made attempts to integrate with the western didactic professional approaches, adapting methodologies from the pedagogical European institutions and being active in the dissemination of the western music tradition in the city environments. The music syllabus of the educational system in the beginning of Normale school aimed the intensive teaching of the songs, as answer to the historical circumstances in Albania in the beginning of the XX century. The first teacher of music would be Hasan Mezja⁹. After the declaration of the Independence in 1913 the music subject would be given by Ahmet Gashi¹⁰. According to the author Gani Ratkoceri, the teacher A. Gashi *in the Normal school taught the pupils not only History and Geography but also Musical theory and national songs of the time in Choral form with many voices*¹¹. In the following document, that dates back in 21. 11. 1925, extracted by the central state archive D.20 it is described the correspondence of the headmaster of the school A.Xhuvani with the ministry of Education. From this correspondence, we get some important information about the significant place that was given to the teaching of music during this period, almost equally important to the other school subject. Z. Ahmet Gashi besides giving 15 classes of history and geography gave also 12 classes of music.

⁹ K.Bevapi (1910) Normale and its echo the press of the time(1909-1940)”; nr.41, Liria newspaper, 17.4.1910 pp. 70

¹⁰ Aqsh Document from central state archive

¹¹ G.Ratkoceri (2005)Thw lost Renaissance , Prof.Gashi’s contribution in music in Elbasan”. pp..85 Albania ,Albana Esperando



¹² In these conditions, qualified teachers will serve the immediate scope dictated by the time: to spread in the whole the Albanian education the repertoire of the patriotic songs in function of the role that they would play in arousing the national conscience.

The correspondence of the elementary Normal school for the girls and boys with the ministry of education gives us information of the schedule of 1936. This document which informs us about the fact that the music education was not anymore only restricted to the teaching of the song, but it went further by supplying the pupils with music theoretical knowledge and the most important they were taught musical instrument; something really vanguard for the time.

Normal School for girls

- Grade I 2 classes in the week theory and songs, 2 cl musical instrument
- Grade II 1 class in the week theory and songs, 2 cl musical instrument
- Grade II 2 classes in the week theory and songs, 1 cl musical instrument
- Grade IV 2 classes in the week theory and songs, 2 cl musical instrument



¹³ Whereas in the Normal school for boys apart from the classes theory and song and musical instrument, it was let a space for facultative subjects, orchestra and choir, a fact which testified for the serious requirements and quite persistent for the realization of the subject program from the part of the music teachers.

¹² Central state Archive. Correspondence, file 195.d.20.1925



¹³ In another documents of (AQSh) CSA¹⁴, the importance of the teaching of songs in Normale was reinforced even more by the decision of the directorate to assign some extra classes. I am referring to a correspondence between school headmaster and the Ministry of Education where among other things, is written:

Besides the regular classes of song teaching, altogether 24, the professor of this subject z. Th. Falli are assigned three extra classes of choir, every Sunday afternoon, with pupils from all the classes. So the number of classes goes to 27 altogether; a class fewer than the maximum of classes decided by law and three classes more than the number decided in the schedule project of that Ministry. We formally request that choir is allowed to continue since its indispensable for many reasons¹⁵. In the pedagogic tradition of Normal is reflected a transparence by publishing in the magazine Normalisti practical classes and in the number 2 – 3 1939 we encounter a didactic material of the teaching of songs in Normale¹⁶ titled “ Teaching evidence of a song”

I. In the beginning are taught the notes and the lines of the songs separately from each other II. then the notes are substituted by words, III The teacher starts with a violin and the pupils accompany him. IV Then, after they play the line three or four times they go on like this with the other lines until is finished the whole song.

This procedure is detailed in a document saved in CSA¹⁷, were is described in details a “teaching evidence” carried out with three pupils. From the text given results that: the song is first written on the blackboard and is said by the pupils three of four times to inculcate it. Then the teacher begins to sing the song or to accompany the melody with the violin two or three times, depending on how much he considers necessary. During the time that the teacher plays the song, the pupils join to sing the song in a very low voice. After each repetition of the song, the teacher allows the pupils to raise the voice bit by bit while he himself lowers the voice bit by bit until lets the pupils to sing the song by themselves.

As was mentioned above, there is no evidence when this first was used as a method or who first brought this as a method in Normal School but we can say that reflects a rigorous didactic procedural organization. This method had productivity during the years and was assimilated and inherited in to our days. Parallel to the teaching of songs, in Normal of Elbasan were included other music subject too, about which, unfortunately, we still could not find an accurate information about the date and exact year when they were incorporated in the curriculum. It is

¹³ In the same document pp.3

¹⁴ Csa found 288.d. 175, year1938, pp. 11

¹⁵ Csa fund nr.288 .d.175. 1938. Normal School of Elbasan pp.1

¹⁶ Practice Lesson for singin (1939) Journal Normalisti vol 2-3 pp 21-22

¹⁷ AQSh , File 240, 1938, pp. 165-166, 170-171, 183-184.

about music subject (music theory) and violin. According to Hysni Myzyri, in the school year 1922-1923, “in the school schedule figured music subject , song and violin¹⁸. However, the author does not give any information about the teachers who taught these subjects. The only data that come from primary resources belong to a relatively late period, by the end of 30’s. So, in the documentation of the CSA, respectively of 1938, are reflected classes of the teaching of songs and violin. Moreover, it should be emphasized that beside the music teacher Myrteza Krasta who held a teaching load of 20 classes consisting of song and violin, the teacher Prokop Sorra gave 30 classes of song and violin, too. Although it results that the teaching of violin that figured in the teaching program, it was not officially obligatory¹⁹ According to a document from CSA²⁰, it results to have become obligatory Elbasan, on_ 1942-XIX Nr 328

DORMITORY RECTOR

Decree

We notify you that the teaching of violin is obligatory for all the pupils without any exception.

The Headmaster of Normale
(Prof. Ibrahim Babamusta)

The teacher who contributed in teaching music and violin were educated in professional school. So, Myrteza Keta , Luigj Filja have studied in Austria, Baki Kongoli in Italy, Filipeu in Greece and this fact indicates about the adaptation of western didactic methodologies through the books that they brought with themselves.

Thus, the activity and the contribution in raising the artistic level in the teaching of violin by the end of the 20’s and the beginning of 30’s, made possible the establishment of an orchestra consisting of selected pupils, who had assimilated better the play of the instrument. According to Zana Ikonomi²¹, orchestra was established by passionate teacher Ahmet Gashi. In that orchestra took part chosen pupils who have reached good result in the play of the instrument, among them Baki Kongoli, Mustafa Krantja, Sofokli Papparisto, Sofokli Carcani and many others, who later became respected names in the field of music education.

By the end of the 30’s the artistic level of that orchestra increased significantly as the result of the contribution of the new spirit brought by Baki Kongoli. Beside the didactic work with the pupils, he took care to enrich their information. During the teaching of violin and during the rehearsal of the orchestra he talked to them about the life of the composers and the content of the given parts, *preparing them emotionally for the execution of the partitures*²². Baki Kongli enriched the repertoire of the orchestra with famous works of classical and romantical literature, a good part of which had professional requirement that surpassed the opportunities of amateur musicians, as can be defined the pupils of Normale.

¹⁸ H.Myzyri (1996) Normale School Instead of closure : Thw Albanian national School pp.295 Enti i teksteve e mjeteve mësimore të Kosovës.

¹⁹ Csa . F.195.D.121 year 1938 pp, 15

²⁰ .CSA Fund.288 “ Normale School Elbasan” File 515 pp.1

²¹ Z.Ikonomi. The history and the activity of the orchestra of Normal of Elbasan. pp.10-11

²² Z.Ikonomi. The history and the activity of the orchestra of Normal of Elbasan. pp.11

The activity of Normalist extended including shows given for the ceremonies of the distribution of diploma to the graduates executing different musical parts of the Elbasan, concert shows and the alternation of the musical parts with the plays given outside the city. The musical activity under the guide of Baki Kongoli had a significant development, starting with the reformation of the orchestra and up to the adaptation of the concert repertoire from those of the patriotic type to those albanian traditional dance potpuris for the orchestra like- "Vetullat e zeza" suite with Elbasan wedding songs adopted for the orchestra by Baki Kongoli and up to the classics like Rondo capricious, Mendelson, intermezzo by Rustiakana Cavalry, Minuet in La+(Bokerini) etc.

Conclusions

From the issues treated above results that the importance of the shaping through the music education in the Normale of Elbasan, as the first institutionalised occurrence in the education of the new teachers, served in the same time to prepare the first musicians by laying in this way the foundation for the creation of professional orchestra which would give a spur to music activities in and out of the city. Secondly, the execution of the world musical literature served to cultivate the new esthetical taste. Third, the contribution of this school in the music education, especially in the teaching of songs, in the historical context, it values in the arousal of the feeling of the patriotism and patriotic conscience. Finally, in the didactic aspect were defined forms and methods that spurred the new pupils to assimilate details and advanced techniques in the artistic preparation.

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