TRADITIONAL FOLK DANCES OF SOUTH-WEST SERBIA IN TEACHING MUSICAL CULTURE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

(Professional paper)

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the traditional folk dances of Southwest Serbia, from the standpoint of teaching music culture and physical education in the elementary grades. Special attention is given to dances accompanied by singing from the regions of Raska, Novi Pazar and Sjenica. The aim is to establish their presence and importance in music and physical education. Analyzed are the curricula of music and physical education, as well as music culture textbooks, to determine which dances of this region have been proposed for inclusion in the classroom teaching. It is concluded that the dances of southwestern Serbia are insufficiently covered by the curriculum of these two subjects and that they were omitted from the textbooks of music culture. For this reason, this work’s tasks were to analyze the musical-pedagogical and ethno musicological literature that deals with the area of Southwest Serbia; to select suitable examples to work with students of junior school age; to determine their educational importance in teaching. Through highlighted examples, the students will be able to learn about the specifics of the traditional folk dances of Southwest Serbia, and to gain insight into the richness and beauty of folk musical creativity of this region.

Keywords: games with singing, musical capabilities, traditional folk dances of Southwest Serbia, elementary grades, music folklore, curricula of music culture, curricula of physical education, musical-pedagogical literature, ethno musicological literature

INTRODUCTION

This paper analyses traditional folk dances of Southwest Serbia, with reference to teaching of music culture and physical education. Special attention is given to dance tradition of Raska, Novi Pazar and Sjenica – the areas of Southwest Serbia. The incentive to work on this subject came from the observation that the traditional dances are neglected in the curriculum of music culture and physical education in the lower grades of elementary school. The aim of this paper is to gain insight into the richness and beauty of the traditional dancing musical heritage of Southwest Serbia, and its importance in achieving educational tasks in teaching. As the curriculum of the primary school asserts using of the contents rich with the music tradition from the surrounding area of a particular school, the choice of dances offered in this paper will be of great use to the teachers from the territory of Southwest Serbia. At the same time, these dances will also help the teachers from the other regions, through introducing the music folklore of this area to their pupils.

The first record about the Southwest Serbia folk dances can be found in the survey of the Ministry of Serbia from 1948. (Djukić (Ђукић), 1996). This document comprises of a large number of dances performed in the Raska area. Traditional folk dances of Southwest Serbia were also analyzed in the works of (Vasić, 1984), who was interested in the dances of Pester Plateau; (Djukić (Ђукић), (1996), who did a research on the dances of Raska and its surroundings. The folk dances from Novi Pazar were also partially depicted in the work of (Djukić (Ђукић), (1996). We consider them worth of a more detailed ethno musicological and ethno choreographic analysis. Plenty of melodies of dances with singing are recorded by (Vasiljević, 1953). Nevertheless, the focus of his research were the melodies, not the description or analysis of the dances. Ljubica and Danica Jankovic, who described a great number of folk dances from the territory of Serbia, Vojvodina, Kosovo and Metohija, Crna Gora, Bosna and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and certain parts of Slovenia, unfortunately did not do a detailed research of the dancing tradition of Southwest
Serbia. The musical-pedagogical literature which can be used for choosing the games from Southwest Serbia for teaching in primary school, is the collection of folk songs and dances Rasanski motivi (Motiv’s from Raska, 2004).

**Basic characteristics of the dancing musical heritage of southwest serbia**

The dances of Southwest Serbia belong to dinaric dancing zone. The main feature of dances of Raska area and Sjenica-Pester Plateau, as well as folk dances of Novi Pazar and its surroundings, is energetic dancing, with feet flat on the floor. The knees are firm, almost fixed. It is generally danced in half circle, than in the circle, and sometimes in pairs. The dancers hold each other by the hands which are positioned by their sides, or under their arms. Sometimes they hold each other by the waist (Djukić (Тука), 1996). On Pester plateau there is a dance called – silent circle dance – Klapara, which is performed without singing or instrumental background. According to the research of the ethnomusicologist Olivera Vasić, “these were dances for the opening of dancing gatherings. Today, they are performed only by the elderly people on family gatherings” (Vasić, 1984: 191). The dances of the Muslim people in Novi Pazar are performed softly, with the bodies and knees bend. While dancing, the arms are raised at shoulder height. Men sometimes hold each other by the shoulders. These dances are characterized by turns and squats with quite a lot of solo dancing (Djukić (Тука), 1996). In the past, the Muslim women and men used to dance separately. If occasionally a mixed circle dance was performed, the men and women used to hold each other by handkerchiefs. Today, men and women dance together in a circle dance.

The instrumental background music of Raska consists of various pipes – long and short, gajde (bagpipe), and lately goc (goch) and Klanet. Serbian dances from Novi Pazar and the surroundings are also accompanied by various pipes. In recent times the background music consisted of goc and Klanet. Muslim traditional dances from Novi Pazar, in the middle of 20th century, were accompanied by the tambura, accordion, def, darbuka and the violin. On the Pester Plateau, the dances go along with pipes – long and short, gajde and goc. The dances of Southwest Serbia which are followed by the singing only, are known as kolanjie. Their name comes from the first lines of the song Coban Mara (The Shepherdess Mara), Hajde kolo da skocimo (Let’s leap into the circle), Usijala sjajna mesecina (The moon shining bright) etc. Kolanje is present among both Serbs and Muslims. In Southwest Serbia, as well as in other parts of it, the reasons for dancing were various. In the villages people gathered and rejoiced after finishing moba (bee), during prelo (spinning), poselo (social evenings), on the occasion of a holiday or a custom. In towns, dances were performed on weddings, dancing parties and other celebrations.

**The importance of traditional folk dances in teaching of music culture and physical education**

In teaching of musical culture, traditional dances are important in many ways. First of all, they are significant in raising awareness of national affiliation. Then, they improve moral and aesthetic components of a pupil’s personality. They are also of great importance in improving musical capabilities of a pupil: a sense of rhythm and melodic phrase, voice, musical hearing, a sense of tempo and dynamics, musical memory, ability of active listening and experiencing music. Movements in accordance with a song entice creative potentials of a pupil.

A harmonious and group performance of traditional dances in teaching physical education develops aesthetic criteria and builds up motor skills. Pupils adopt the elements of walking and different tempos, acquire basic hands, legs and body movements, step hop and step and close, learn moving left and right, forward and backward. Traditional dances are also important for physical development and good posture, as well as an adequate function of internal organs, blood flow, heart and lungs. They also have a beneficial effect on nervous system (Djurić & Stijepović, 1976).

Throughout the primary education pupil should get introduced with the traditional dances, primarily of their own nation, and subsequently of the other ones. This process should be started with the dances pupils are familiar with, namely the dances from their own surroundings, and then gradually include the dances of the other areas of Serbia. Getting acquainted with the traditional dances of other nations and nationalities is of great significance for improving intercultural education.

**Presence of southwest serbia dances in the school curriculum of musical culture and physical education and in the music textbooks**

Music culture school curriculum for the first grade of elementary school comprises only four traditional dances with singing: Pod onom (Beneath that green hill), Ja posejah lan (I sew flax seed), Zetsko kolo (Zeta circle dance), Pesma u kolu (Circle dance song) (Regulations (Правилник), 2004). None of these songs is from the area of Southwest Serbia. The school curriculum for the second grade suggests eight traditional dances with singing: Ajd’na levo (Let’s go left), Dunje ranke (Early quinces), Ja posejah lubenice (I sew watermelon seed), Prolecono kolo (Spring circle dance), Razgranala grana jorgovana (The lilac branches branched out), Decija poskocica, Mitku noge zableze (Mitka’s legs hurt) (Regulations (Правилник), 2004). The dance Ajd’na levo brate Stevo comes from the Pester Plateau. The school curriculum for the third grade suggests only one dance with singing – Savila se bela loza vinova (White grapevine entwined), and one circle dance – Niski vez (Embroidery of Nis) (Regulations (Правилник), 2005) both of which do not belong to the Southwest Serbia area. The school curriculum for the fourth grade comprises only one dance with singing – Poduna mori poduna, and
two circle dances – Radmilino kolo (Radmila’s circle dance) and Narodno kolo (Folk circle dance) (Regulations (Правилник), 2006). These dances are not from the territory of Southwest Serbia.

By analyzing the music culture school curriculum, it has been determined that traditional dances with singing are not sufficiently present in teaching music culture, considering their significant educational value. Also, there is a considerable disproportion in the number of suggested dances through the grades, as well as a noticeable disregard of traditional dances from Southwest Serbia. Among the fourteen dances with singing suggested for all four grades, there is only one from the territory of Southwest Serbia, namely Hajd’ na levo brate Stevo. However, this dance is performed in the other parts of Serbia, so it cannot be a representative dance of this area.

Traditional dances with singing are also present in physical education school curriculum. The suggested traditional dance for the first grade is Ja posejahn lan, and one optional circle dance (Regulations (Правилник), 2004). The school curriculum for the second grade suggests one optional circle dance (Regulations (Правилник), 2004). The school curriculum for the third grade proposes the analysis of traditional dance Savila se bela loza vinova (Regulations (Правилник), 2005). The fourth grade school curriculum includes Srpsko kolo (Serbian circle dance), and one local circle dance (Regulations (Правилник), 2006). It is obvious that none of the mentioned dances is from the territory of the Southwest Serbia. Our opinion is that traditional dances in general deserve much more attention regarding teaching of physical education, especially in correlation with teaching of music culture.

**Music textbooks analysis**

The textbooks of the two following publishing houses were subject to the analysis: Institute for textbook publishing and teaching aids and Creative centre. The aim of the analysis was to determine the number of dances from Southwest Serbia in the textbooks.

The analysis of the textbooks published by Institute for textbook publishing and teaching aids, gave the following results: The textbook for the first grade includes one dance with singing which is performed on Pester plateau – Hajd’ na levo brate Stevo (Stojanović, Vasiljević & Drobnji (Стојановић, Василљевић & Дробни), 2005).

The textbook for the second grade does not contain traditional dances of Southwest Serbia (Stojanović & Vasiljević (Стојановић & Василљевић), 2008). The textbook for the third grade does not contain traditional dances of Southwest Serbia (Stojanović, (Стојановић), 2004). The textbook for the fourth grade does not contain traditional dances of Southwest Serbia (Stojanović & Protić (Стојановић & Протић), 2005).

The analysis of the music textbooks from the first to the fourth grade, published by the Institute for textbook publishing and teaching aids, showed that the area of Southwest Serbia is represented by one dance with singing only, in the first grade – Hajd’ na levo brate Stevo. The textbooks for the second, third and the fourth grade do not contain dances from this area.

The analysis of the music textbooks of the Creative centre:

The textbook for the first grade does not contain traditional dances of Southwest Serbia (Ilić (Илић), 2009). The textbook for the second grade does not contain traditional dances of Southwest Serbia (Ilić (Илић), 2008). The textbook for the third grade does not contain traditional dances of Southwest Serbia (Ilić (Илић), 2010). The textbook for the fourth grade does not contain traditional dances of Southwest Serbia (Ilić (Илић), 2006).

The analysis of the music textbooks published by

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**Example 1**

*Oj ružo, oj ružice*  
(Oh rose, my little rose)  
*Okolina Raške Veselje*  
Забележила: Б. Павловић

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**Notes:**
- Oj, ružo, oj, ružice, оj, ružo, оj, ružice - Oh rose, my little rose,
- Rumena, rumenice - Crimson, blushing,
- Procvetaj, procvetaj - Bloom, and blossom,
- Razo Rumena - The crimson rose
- Kraj poto, kraj potoka - Besides the stream
- Studeno, studenoga - The cold, cold stream.
the Creative centre showed that they do not contain traditional dances of Southwest Serbia. Regarding the insufficient presence of the traditional dances of this area in the school curriculum of music culture and physical education, and in the music culture textbooks, in the continuation of the paper we are going to suggest several examples of dances from the territory of Raska, Novi Pazar and Sjenica. The characteristics, lyrics and choreography of the following dances, are suitable for the pupils of lower grades.

**Example 2**

**Ugrijala sjajna mesečina**
(The moon is shining bright)

Novi Pazar

Умерено

Забележила: Б. Павловић

The moon is shining bright

Reveling, as far as Novi Pazar

Two bachelors fighting.

Do Novog Pazara.

Dva mlada beca, caj becara

Dva mlada becara.

**Example 3**

**Oj nevene šestopere**
(Oh, six-petaled marigold)

Selo Štaval, okolina Sjenice

Умерено

Забележила: Б. Павловић

Oh, six-petaled marigold

Why have you withered?

Has the sun scorched you?

Has the water uprooted you?

‘Neither the sun has scorched me

Nor the water has uprooted me,

But the two lovers,

Were leaning on me,

That’s why I have withered.
terminated which dances with singing from the territory of Raska, Novi Pazar and Sjenica could be used in the lower grades of the primary school. They are the following: "Hajde kolo da skoknemo" (Let’s leap into the circle dance) (Vasiljević, 1953: 16); "Smiljevo, cveće saren" (Immortelle, the colorful flower) (Vasiljević, 1953: 26); "Tri junaka, tri sokola" (Three heroes, three great men) (Vasiljević, 1953: 49); Sto no zvonce (Why is the jingle bell tingling?) (Vasiljević, 1953: 65); Oj, razice rumena (Oh, you crimson rose) (Vasiljević, 1953: 264); 1Ja posejhu proje (I sew a corn seed) (Vasiljević, 1953: 252); "Ovce pasla cobanica Mara" (The shepherdess Mara) (Pavlović (Павловић), 2004: 1). Mara is picking) (Vasiljević, 1953: 13); Kolo igra na livadi (Circle dance in a meadow) (Vasiljević, 1953: 53); Nevena, sestro moja rodjena (Nevena, my dear sister) (Vasiljević, 1953: 72); Adžina sceri (Aja’s daughter) (Vasiljević, 1953: 92); Ja sam stari radikal (I am a long time radical) (Vasić, 1984: 240); "Momak jede jabuku" (A boy eating an apple) (Vasić, 1984: 250); Oj Nevene (Oh, my marigold) (Pavlović (Павловић), 2004: 68); "Coban Mara" (The shepherdess Mara) (Pavlović (Павловић), 2004: 69). We present several examples with musical notes, recorded on file. There are performed in a half-circle, with simple steps of the teacher’s choice, bearing in mind the characteristic of the dances of Southwest Serbia. These are Oj ruzo, oj, razice (Oh, my rose), Ugrijala sjajna mesečina (The moon shining bright) and Oj nevene sestopere (Oh, my six-petaled marigold).

Methodical technique for analyzing traditional folk dances with singing would start with the analysis of the song by ear, in music culture class, followed by the analysis of the steps in physical education class. It is very important to acquaint pupils with the place of origin of the dance, on what occasion it was performed, is it a part of some kind of ritual or it was just entertainment. It would be desirable to show the folk costume of the area where the song was performed.

CONCLUSION

This paper reviewed traditional folk dances of Southwest Serbia regarding teaching of musical culture and physical education. The focus is on the dances from the area of Raska, Novi Pazar and Sjenica. The aim of the paper was to encourage interest in dancing music tradition of this area and to draw attention to their relevance in teaching music culture and physical education. It pointed out the literature which deals with traditional dances of Southwest Serbia. The conclusion is that the dances of this region should be analyzed in more details for analysis of traditional dances of Southwest Serbia. The conclusion is that due to their doubtless ethical and aesthetic values, the dances of Southwest Serbia should be more included in teaching music culture and physical education in primary school.

REFERENCES


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