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"Folk Music Culture" as an Academic Discipline in the System of Secondary Vocational Education: Problems and Perspectives*

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Abstract. Folk music culture is one of the significant disciplines within the system of intermediate professional education which at the present time does not have any scholarly-methodological support. The article examines the crucial issues connected with the actualization of the present training course, such as: the absence of contemporary training manuals and compilations of materials for demonstration and, most importantly, — a presently out-of-date methodological directive, according to which folk music culture is examined as the sum total of folk musical texts. The author substantiates the relevance of the working-out of a different culturological approach towards the study of a discipline that would provide the perception of its object as an integral multidimensional phenomenon. For the actualization of this initiative, a thematic plan is suggested, which is comprised on the basis of the author's own pedagogical initiative within the framework of the academic workload that is designated by the operative educational standards. Upon its formation, the students' requests and interests revealed as the result of the sociological survey of the student body of the Kaluga Region S.I. Taneyev Music College were taken into account. In the conclusion, the ways of solving the problem of the tutorial-methodological maintenance with the directedness on the opportunities of the contemporary digital education environment are determined.

Keywords: folk music culture, intermediate professional education, culturological approach, intercultural communication, training manual

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Учебная дисциплина «Народная музыкальная культура» в системе среднего профессионального образования: проблемы и перспективы

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Аннотация. Народная музыкальная культура — одна из значимых дисциплин в системе среднего профессионального образования, которая на сегодняшний день не имеет какой-либо научно-методической поддержки. В статье рассматриваются ключевые проблемы, связанные с реализацией данного учебного курса, такие как отсутствие современных учебных пособий и сборников демонстрационного материала, а главное — устаревшая на сегодняшний день методическая установка, согласно которой народная музыкальная культура рассматривается как сумма фольклорных текстов. Автором обосновывается актуальность выработки иного — культурологического — подхода к изучению дисциплины, который обеспечивал бы восприятие её объекта как целостного многомерного явления. Для реализации этой инициативы предлагается тематический план, составленный на основе собственного педагогического опыта в рамках учебной нагрузки, которая предусмотрена действующими образовательными стандартами. При его формировании учитывались запросы и интересы студентов, выявленные в результате социологического опроса учащихся Калужского областного музыкального колледжа имени С.И. Танеева. В заключение определяются пути решения проблемы учебно-методического обеспечения с ориентацией на возможности современной цифровой образовательной среды.

Ключевые слова: народная музыкальная культура, среднее профессиональное образование, культурологический подход, межкультурная коммуникация, учебное пособие

Introduction

The subject of Folk Music Culture has a special place within the framework of disciplines comprising the program of preparation of specialists of the intermediate level in the direction of “The Art of Music.” Unlike the majority of subjects, the names of which are connected with music, Folk Music Culture forms a part not of a professional, but a general educational academic division pertaining to its specialized sphere. Here it neighbors with the discipline of History of World Culture and General History, together with which it comprises the substantive block of subjects of a historical-culturological directedness. The subjects of History of World Culture and Folk Music Culture set two vectors

for the students’ comprehension of the human cultural heritage. In the first case, the students learn the various spheres of professional art, and in the second case — they master the sphere of unprofessional (folk, traditional) art. Since contemporary musical education is connected, first of all, with music of the professional tradition, the combination of musical disciplines proper with the history of world culture creates an integral cultural environment, forming in the students a complex perception of the sphere of their activities.

Folk Music Culture is addressed to another cultural sphere, moreover, with both the name of the discipline itself and its description within

the frameworks of the existing educational standards,¹ accentuates exclusively the musical component of the course. At the same time, for the overwhelming majority of students, the sphere of folk music is unfamiliar and difficult to comprehend. The author's longstanding pedagogical experience makes it possible to assert that folk melodies in their authentic sound are perceived by students with difficulty, and the singing of even simple specimens of songs from notes frequently causes significant trouble. Most likely, the main reason for such occurrences lies in the special musical language that is incomprehensible to a young man or woman brought up in a contemporary urban musical milieu. Strange as it may seem, comparable problems may be observed presently in the process of the students' mastery of classical music, which comprises the foundation of the tutorial program. Galina Taraeva explains the jejuneness of the cultural background of those who study there, because that music is absent in their daily life experience. [1, p. 200] Apparently, in order to solve such a problem, it becomes necessary to create new cultural settings to replace the lacking ones. Taraeva suggests generating them on the basis of emotional implication, making use of various forms of visualizing of the musical material. [Ibid., p. 202]

The emotional resonance as the basis of study of folk songs comprises one of the fundamental methodological directives of Soviet pedagogy.² However, contemporary ethnomusicology stems

from the fact that the essential quality of a piece of folk music is not its emotional background, but a certain cultural function that stipulates the structural parameters of the musical text.³ Correspondingly, in order to simplify the students' perception of folk music, it becomes necessary to arouse in them the perception of such functions and their suppositions. Thereby, not songs and tunes, as such, and not even the folk music genres that end up within the focus of the academic subject, but traditional culture as an integral and self-sufficient phenomenon, the foundation of which is comprised by a peculiar vision of the world. Such an approach makes it possible to familiarize the students with folk music, not postulating its "exoticness," but explaining it.

A Culturological Approach towards Instruction of the Folk Music Culture

At the present time, the culturological vector in studying the folk music culture must be acknowledged as being not only relevant, but also the only possible way. In addition, it is particularly such an approach that turns out to be on demand in the student milieu. This is testified by the results of an anonymous survey conducted by the author among the students of the Kaluga Region S.I. Taneyev Music College in February 2024. This survey was participated by 84 young people studying at various courses, including first-year students who are mastering the discipline at the present

¹ What are meant here are the Federal State Educational Standards of the Intermediary Professional Education along a number of directions of the group "The Art of Music" (2021).

² See: Popova T.V. The foundations of Russian folk music: tutorial manual. (Попова Т.В. *Основы русской народной музыки: учебное пособие*). Moscow: Muzyka Publ., 1977. P. 14.

³ For the first time, such an idea was expressed by the outstanding Russian ethnomusicologist Evgeny Gippius and crystallized in his definition of the genre of folk music, which is "the typification of musical structure under the impact of the social function and content." For more detail, see: Gippius E.V. The ritual instrumental tunes of the Bear Festivity of the Ugric peoples near the Ob river. In: Folk musical instruments and instrumental music: compilation of articles and materials. (Гиппиус Е.В. Ритуальные инструментальные наигрыши медвежьего праздника обских угров. В: *Народные музыкальные инструменты и инструментальная музыка: сб. статей и материалов*). In 2 Parts. Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor Publ., 1988. Part 2. P. 165.

time. The following question was asked, among others: “For what reason, in your opinion, is the discipline of Folk Music Culture needed?” and the following varieties of answers were proposed (with the possibility of choosing any combinations of them):

- a) it enhances the overall cultural level;
- b) it becomes a part of the formation of the musician’s professional competencies;
- c) there is no need for it at all;
- d) other (specify, what in particular is referred to).

The overwhelming majority of those who were questioned chose the first answer; moreover, while among the first-year students, the percentage of such answers comprised 75%, among the students of all the other courses (those who had already completed the course of Folk Music Culture) the percentage was 93–94%. It must be noted that among their numbers, half of those students considered the discipline to be redundant⁴ (three out of six). Most illustrative were the combinations of the answers “a” and “b” in the text letterforms. Thus, around 2/3 of the first- and second-year students presumed that familiarization with folk music culture is necessary for the formation of their professional competencies. Among the third- and fourth-year students, the quantity of such opinions became significantly reduced and comprised only 1/3 of those present. The demand for contact with the traditional cultural environment was also expressed in the numerous “other” answers to the posed question: “it provides a perception of the people,” “it makes it possible to understand the mentality better,” “it makes it possible to learn more and better about our country and its customs.”

The aspiration towards the understanding of the essence of the phenomena of the surrounding world, including the musical phenomena, is a distinctive feature of adolescent students, who comprise the main contingent of music high schools and music colleges. Having taught the course of Folk Music Culture from year to year, the author has answered numerous questions beginning with the word “why.” The students’ interest towards their native culture, which at the same time seems alien to them, is in line with intercultural communication, the demand for which is increasing in society, on the whole, as well as in the contemporary educational milieu. The experience of achieving comprehension of an “alien” culture, the study of the semantic foundation of its phenomena, may be conducive to the development of cultural and social tolerance within the students (for more detail about this, see: [2]), an openness-mindedness and perceptivity towards what is new, an aspiration not to reject, but to research the incomprehensible. [3, p. 31]

Unfortunately, the culturological approach towards teaching Folk Music Culture is in a state of considerable discrepancy with the requirements of the Federal Education Standard. It seems that one of the reasons of the current situation lies in the absence of any scholarly-methodological reflection in this field, as a result of which during the course of several recent decades, not a single (!) tutorial manual of Folk Music Culture or Folk Music Creativity for intermediate specialized educational institutions has been written.⁵ An exception to this may be seen in Vyacheslav Shchurov’s book *Zhanry russkogo fol'klora* [The Genres of Russian Folk Music],

⁴ In all possibility, upon such a combination of opinions, the “redundancy” must be evaluated as a lack of interest towards the subject, the significance of which is, nonetheless, accepted.

⁵ In addition to musical high schools and colleges, Folk Music Culture is also taught in high schools and colleges devoted to culture and the arts actualizing programs of preparation of middle-ranking specialists in the direction of “The Art of Music.”

published in 2007. [4] The work is meant as a textbook for musical higher educational institutions and music colleges, but it must be noted that it has not undergone any peer review (for more detail on the problem of peer review of study guides for intermediate professional education, particularly, about the absence of a legally formalized system of expertise and the negative consequences of the existing situation, see: [5, pp. 302–303]). In the description of the folk music genres, Shchurov adheres to a historical-stylistic approach derived from the presently known authors of textbooks and tutorial manuals, Nina Bachinskaya, Tatiana Popova, and Anna Rudneva.⁶ In all of these textbooks, the musical culture comes across as a certain selection of songs and tunes, the unification of which into genre groups is carried out, first of all, according to the content of their poetic texts and the circumstances of their performances. Besides the fact that such an approach does not provide an integrated perception of culture, both the musical criteria of differentiation according to genre and the functions of musical texts determining them remain to be beyond its framework. It must be said especially about the musical material with which the theoretical sections of the aforementioned tutorial manuals are illustrated: a considerable portion of them is comprised of examples of song compilations assembled in various years, starting from

the late 19th century (in Shchurov's textbook, most of the notations belong to the author). All of the provided examples lack any unified principle of notation that would have made it possible to compare them with each other according to any structural parameters. In addition, the songs from the compilations from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (such as those made by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Rubets, and others) are devoid of the authentic textures, which considerably devalues them in their role of illustrative material. An essential minus of the existent training manuals must be acknowledged in the almost entire ignoring of the regional specificity of Russian folk music, both in the theoretical sections and within the sections with the demonstrated printed music.

The Thematic Plan of the Course

Due to the out-of-date quality of the training manuals and the lack of a tutorial-methodological foundation, the problem of the content-based substance of the course of Folk Music Culture remains to be especially acute. Each educational institution solves it in its own way, developing its own course outlines.⁷ The principles of their formation and thematic content differ from each other, the lists of the offered literature are motley and heterogeneous. If such lists do include sources meant directly for students of intermediate educational institutions, they are no less than 30 years old.⁸ The capacity of the

⁶ See: Bachinskaya N.M., Popova T.V. Russian folk musical creativity: chrestomathy. (Бачинская Н.М., Попова Т.В. *Русское народное музыкальное творчество: хрестоматия*). Moscow: Muzyka Publ., 1973. 303 p.; Popova T.V. The foundations of Russian folk music: tutorial manual. (Попова Т.В. *Основы русской народной музыки: учебное пособие*). Moscow: Muzyka Publ., 1977. 224 p.; Rudneva A.V. Russian folk musical creativity: essays about the theory of folklore. (Руднева А.В. *Русское народное музыкальное творчество: очерки по теории фольклора*). Moscow: Kompozitor Publ., 1994. 224 p.

⁷ The course outlines in correspondence with which the discipline "Folk Music Culture" is actualized in any educational institution are available on websites in open access.

⁸ See, for example, the course outlines for "Folk Music Culture" on the websites of the Krasnoyarsk P.I. Ivanov-Radkevich College for the Arts, the Nizhny Novgorod M.A. Balakirev Music College, the Novosibirsk A.F. Murov College, the Sverdlovsk P.I. Tchaikovsky Music College, and other institutions.

instructional time assigned for the study of Folk Music Culture is determined by the teaching plans developed by high schools and colleges and in the overwhelming majority comprises 36 academic hours.⁹ Another important fact is the “sequenced-flow” principle of mastering the discipline, according to which mixed instructional groups, consisting of students of different fields of study, are formed. In these conditions, the most important goal turns out to be the creation of an optimal thematic plan, which,

considering all the enumerated conditions, would correspond to the culturological approach to studying Folk Music Culture. One of the variants of such a plan has been implemented by the author of this article over the last 10 years at the Kaluga Regional Music College. It relies to a considerable degree on the thematic outline of a textbook of Folk Music Creativity for higher educational institutions¹⁰ written by a group of authoritative ethnomusicologists (Olga Pashina, executive editor) [6]:

№	Content of Themes	Number of Instructional Hours
1	The Theoretical Foundations of Traditional Culture	9
1.1	Introduction. Folklore as a Special Type of Culture	1
1.2	The Russian Folk Music Culture: History and Geography	2
1.3	The Genre System of Russian Folk Music	1
1.4	The Regional Nature of Folk Culture	1
1.5	The Traditional Picture of the World	2
1.6	The Codes-Languages of Traditional Culture. The Musical Language	2
2	The Russian Folk Music Culture and Its Components	23
2.1	Rituals of the Natural Cycle	(7)
2.1.1	Calendar Rites and Songs	5
2.1.2	Khorovods (Round Dances)	2
2.2	Rituals of the Life Cycle	(8)
2.2.1	Celebrations of Births of Children and Christening	2
2.2.2	Wedding Rites	4
2.2.3	The Funereal-Commemorative Rite Complex	2
2.3	Non-Ritual Folklore	(3)
2.3.1	The Russian Epos	1,5
2.3.2	Lyrical Songs	1,5
2.4	Working Days and Holidays	1
2.5	The Russian Folk Instrumental Culture	4
	Tests and Exams	4
	Altogether	36

⁹ The minimal number of hours assigned for Folk Music Culture in course outlines presents a special problem. A considerable number of graduates of intermediate professional institutions do not continue their studies in specialized higher educational institutions, the latter, in their turn, provide for folklore studies only for several fields of study. Thereby, for the greater part of the pupils, studying in a musical college provides the sole opportunity for familiarizing themselves with folk music culture, which it becomes necessary to give a full-fledged and adequate quality.

¹⁰ Folk music creativity: a textbook. (*Народное музыкальное творчество: учебник*). Ex. Ed. O. Pashina. St. Petersburg: Kompozitor Publ., 2005. 586 p.

Unfortunately, the provided list does not include topics connected with the peculiarities of rhythmic and pitch organization of traditional tunes and melodies, since the overall number of hours allotted by the tutorial plan to the Folk Music Culture is extremely limited. It could be assumed that only two or three classes would suffice for the elucidation of such questions, however, the author's experience has shown that this would not be practical, since it would not make it possible to form any sturdy perceptions of the indicated parameters of the musical texts in the students' minds. Observations of the peculiar language of the folklore tradition may be included in the sections illuminating separate genres and conglomerations of rites. On the other hand, if the instructional plan of the educational institution would require wider time frameworks for Folk Music Culture, these themes, undoubtedly, must be present in the discipline's thematic plan.

The thematic plan's directedness on an integral perception of traditional culture is conducive to the formation of insightful interest endowed with different vectors in the students. Such a conclusion is instigated by the students' answers to the question, what they wished to find out about more in classes of Folk Music Culture set within the frameworks of the aforementioned survey. The following answers were offered as possible variants:

- a) about the psychology of the bearers of traditional culture;
- b) about rites and holidays;
- c) about the genres of folk music;
- d) about folk musical instruments;
- e) about the musical language of folklore — its rhythmical and pitch organization, polyphony;
- f) an original option.

The greatest amount of the attention on the part of the respondents was drawn by traditional instrumental culture — this answer was chosen

by 42% of the senior-class students and 53% of the first-year students (apparently, the latter may be explained by the fact that the corresponding section of the Folk Music Culture had not yet been covered in class). Equally high and stable was the students' interest towards rites and festivities (48% of those surveyed) in combination with the need for their psychological comprehension, which continuously arose: among the first-course students, the "a" variant was chosen by 33% of those surveyed, 40% of the second-course students and 45% of the elder students. A comparable tendency could also be traced in the surge of interest towards the elements of musical language of the folk music tradition — from 25% of the students during the first year of studies to 36% during the subsequent years. It becomes apparent that the wish to gain insight into how the studied phenomenon is organized becomes enhanced in proportion with the students' maturation. The combination of this process with the students' professional growth makes it possible to presume a greater amount of effectiveness of the mastery of Folk Music Culture during the elder courses of the high school/college, rather than during the first year, as it is prescribed by contemporary instructional plans.

One of the crucial problems of actualization of the suggested approach towards study of the discipline consists in correlating its content-based scope with the cognitive capabilities of the pupils at an adolescent age. Evaluation of the correctness of the chosen strategy became partly possible due to the students' answers to the question: "How difficult for you was/is the subject of Folk Music Culture?" It was suggested to measure the level of difficulty on a ten-point scale. In general, the overwhelming majority of those surveyed evaluated the difficulty of mastery of the folk music culture as less than average, having assigned to it 3–4 points.

At the same time, among the first-year students studying the discipline at present, many considered the discipline to be easy (33% of those surveyed chose the range of 1–2 points) and some of the representatives of the elder courses thought it to be moderately difficult (18% gave it 7–8 points). It must be noted that among the answers received, not a single one could be found that would indicate at a high complexity of the discipline.

Conclusion

The success of the students' mastery of the information within the framework of the declared conception, obviously, cannot be determined solely by the discipline's thematic plan. Having noted the absolute importance of an accessible exposition of the theoretical material, we must indicate two of the most important components of the course of Folk Music Culture indispensable for providing it with the status of a tutorial discipline. They are: contemporary training manuals, conducive for securing the obtained knowledge and making it possible to broaden their spectrum, as

well as numerous chrestomathies of audio and video materials. The absence of such textbooks within a centralized tutorial-methodological field comprises one of the most crucial problems in teaching not only Folk Music Culture, but also the disciplines contiguous to it, such as Folk Music Creativity, Decipherment of Folk Songs, Regional Singing Styles, and a number of others actualized in the programs of various major fields of study of intermediate professional education. The solution to this problem may lie in the traditional plane of the creation of a printed textbook. At the same time, at present, virtually every student or teacher has access to the contemporary digital medium, in itself endowed with broad educational capabilities. The use of internet resources makes it possible to find the needed information in a timely manner and in the required capacity, [7, p. 424] which is why the formation of a network demonstrational fund for Folk Music Culture must be acknowledged as demonstrating one of the optimal means for solving the problem of the tutorial-methodological provision for the course of Folk Music Culture.

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