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## IMPROVISATION IN ELEMENTARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL MUSICAL EDUCATION (PART 1)

**Импровизация в музыкальном образовании учащихся начальной и  
основной школы (Часть 1, начало; окончание в №1, 2019 г.)**

**Keywords:** musical education, modern school, creative development, improvisation, results of education, creative activity.

**Ключевые слова:** музыкальное образование, современная школа, творческое развитие, импровизация, результаты обучения, творческая деятельность.

**Abstract.** The article reveals the main problems and possibilities of using improvisation at modern school music lessons. The authors consider the process of improvisation in connection with the creative development and musical education of modern students; set forth principled positions with regard to the results of musical education at modern elementary and primary schools. In support of the folk pedagogy traditions, original methods of developing skills and improvisation skills («storytelling and creating music», etc.) are presented; specific examples of creative assignments for general education school students are given; the criteria for the students creative development in the improvisation of music process (the expressiveness of the musical language, the independence of the idea's embodiment, the originality of musical utterances, etc.); the problem's further research prospects are shown (the use of improvisation as a principle of teaching students and the fundamental component of the music teacher's pedagogical activity).

**Аннотация.** В статье раскрываются основные проблемы и возможности применения импровизации на уроках музыки в современной общеобразовательной школе. Авторы рассматривают процесс импровизации во взаимосвязи с творческим развитием и музыкальным

образованием современных школьников; излагают принципиальные позиции в отношении результатов обучения музыке в современной начальной и основной школе.

В опоре на традиции народной педагогики представлены оригинальные методы развития умений и навыков импровизации («сказывания и складывания музыки» и др.); приведены конкретные примеры творческих заданий для учащихся общеобразовательной школы; предложены критерии творческого развития учащихся в процессе импровизации музыки (выразительность музыкального языка, самостоятельность воплощения замысла, оригинальность музыкальных высказываний и т.д.); показаны перспективы дальнейшего исследования проблемы (применение импровизационности как принципа обучения школьников и основополагающего компонента педагогической деятельности учителя музыки).

*Результаты получены в рамках выполнения государственного задания Минобрнауки России  
(Номер для публикаций: 27.12918.2018/12.1)*

Improvisation as a kind of musical activity at modern school is a quite rare phenomenon. In scientific and pedagogical literature, the fact that musical improvisation in relation to other types of musical activity is creativity in a «pure form» is beyond doubt. In this regard, we can mention a number of works by Russian and foreign authors [3, 7, 10 and others]. As a rule, special opinions are expressed about the fact that these forms of creative activity are very difficult to implement in the practice of the general education school. This, in particular, was pointed out in his time by D.B. Kabalevsky, stipulating that improvisation and composing of music is absolutely undeveloped «layer» of the education of musical culture as part of the whole spiritual culture [5].

Conversations and interviews, as well as pedagogical observations conducted to identify the relationship of music teachers and teachers of additional musical education to this form of activity, and to include it in music lessons showed that the opinion of the Teachers' Majority is inclined all the same in favor of improvisation as part of the general educational process. In addition, a considerable number of creative works of music teachers and students (songs, instrumental pieces, choral works, etc.) testifies to a certain increase in creative activity in practice of modern general musical education. Existing theoretical literature on problem [9, 12, 13, 14, etc.] and the practical experience of music teachers lead to the conclusion that in the organization of children's creativity in the field of improvisation, there are many unresolved issues. Let us dwell only on the most important.

As a rule, in an educational practice, there is a substitution of concepts at the level of their content. For example, improvisation as a creative activity means all sorts of compilation, combinatorics, juxtaposition and variation by the intonation given by the teacher or chosen by the student, etc. That is, special cases of the creative process that go back to skills, as well as some entertaining-game actions with music. It can not be said that the above does not contain elements of creativity. But, with the absence of a genuine immersion in the essence of creativity as such, any activity is superficial, since the form of the manifestation of creativity ceases to answer its deep meaning.

Therefore, the proposed few «author's methods» of introducing improvisation in music lessons at school, are, as a rule, a set of any teacher's actions in formal

organization and sometimes logically unrelated actions of students. At the same time, the most important questions remain: «where and how to think», «what is artistry», «what is the logic of the development of one's own or already given thought and why?», etc. Teachers-practitioners, resorting to this sphere of creativity, very often deliberately limit themselves, it is possible to say, with an entertaining-gambling approach to improvisation. As objective reasons are expressed: inaccessibility of these types of creativity in the field of general musical education (we mean the age features); the limited time available for music lessons, and this is entirely true; the lack of proper methodological preparation for this work in the system of training a music teacher.

The situation with improvisation at music lessons at school is further aggravated by the fact that the creator of a fundamentally new model program, D.B. Kabalevsky, despite the work envisaged in it with intonation, showed caution in the introduction of these spheres of creativity in a mass school, referring to their methodological underdevelopment. So, he wrote:

«... improvisation can not be regarded as an obligatory part of the music school program and the absence of it can not be regarded as lack of music lessons» [6, p.25]. Since then, more than a decade has passed, but the situation with improvisation as one of the promising forms of musical creativity is still among the urgent problems of the general musical education of children.

However, modern educational practice strongly dictates the need to review this situation. This is facilitated by active the extension of the theory of developmental learning [8] with its demand for students to equip students with general methods of thought activity at the level of scientific and theoretical thinking. Add to this the latest achievements in the field of conceptual ideas, theory and methodology of music education [1,11, 15 and etc.], as well as an increase in the number of state and non-state schools with in-depth study of music. We will also talk about the broad opportunities associated with the development of information and communication technologies in the field of contemporary music education [8].

Determinative for the theory and methodology of this study were the works of L.S. Vygotsky, primarily the thought of the scientist about creative activity:

«We call any kind of activity of a person creative activity, which creates something new, whether it will be any creative thing created by the creative activity by some thing of the external world or by a well-known construction of the mind and feeling, living and revealing only in the person ... Apart from the reproducing activity, it is easy to notice in the behavior of a person another kind of activity, it is a combining or creative activity ... Any such activity of a person, the result of which is not the reproduction of impressions or actions in his experience, but the creation of new images or actions, and will belong to this second kind of creative or combining behavior. The brain is not only an organ that preserves or reproduces our previous experience, it also a combines, creatively reprocesses and creates from the elements of this former experience new positions and new behavior» [2, 3 – 5].

That is why for this study, the creative search of the students is much more important. Because the processing of the former experience «into new positions and new behavior» of the child is seen to be much more productive than the reproductive «creativity»,

proceeding on the basis of the «melodic stamps» that have developed in the children's musical experience (children «ingesting» elementary rhythmic and melodic formulas, intonation schemes and so forth). The impetus for the emergence of this process is improvisation by children of their own artistic meanings in music.

In the most general form, the basis of improvisation in the music education of modern schoolchildren is the idea of returning, or rather appeal to the figure of the musician-universals, in which it is the composer who integrates the well-known triad – composer, performer, listener. In fact, the musician-universal acts as a teacher, able to reveal the origins of musical art and show the way of the embodiment of man's ideas about the world in sounds. Traditionally, this was expressed as the mastery of improvisation, which in some periods of history was considered compulsory. This is due to the idea of improvisation as an embodiment of the nature of the nature of musical art, a fundamentally important foundation for the general musical education of primary and primary school students.

The main idea is that students, improvising, understand that basically the world history of music began from the improvisation and in fact they are put in the position of a man who is looking for an idea for writing. It is important not to simply list the forms of work, for example, improvisation for a certain mood, for a poetic text, in a given fret, per meter or rhythm, etc. The mechanism and content of the process, the inner motivation of the student and the main artistic problem, which organizes the entire space of the lesson and is in the center of attention of the teacher, are important.

It is not new that in this process the idea can suggest a *word, movement, genre beginnings, a game situation*. Let us single out another thing – *the artistically substantive essence of a word, movement, genre, situation* is revealed precisely in the process of musical intoning – that is, in the process of improvisation. For example, considering the problem of the birth of music and coming to the idea that man is the source and the main «instrument" of the birth, children naturally come to find music in themselves. The teacher is also called to create such an exploratory pretentious atmosphere, when schoolchildren begin to look for an occasion for a musical statement. And this occasion should be necessarily serious and mature.

The whole point of learning and further creative development in the process of improvisation is reduced to the «primary key», a kind of impulse: from the atmosphere created by the teacher, associated with an important moral and aesthetic problem (cradle with a child, protection of a weak being), one needs to extract sound. Schoolchildren are in a situation where the «life» of these first sounds depends on them: sounds, like a child, **must be raised, protected (cleaned** of the impurity of «bad» sounds inspired by the modern tastes of a low-standard mass culture). And the most important discovery for children is that these words-actions suddenly acquire a *specific musical meaning*. You can, for example, the sound to continue – to save (at least to repeat), after hearing twice repeated sound, to feel what kind of continuation it requires. Options for the continuation can be a huge amount, it all depends on the state that is present at the moment in the soul of the child who creates music.

The teacher, of course, must in every possible way support this state, whose name is creative tension, so that music *flows, moves, spreads, «acts»*, etc. For this he from the

whole variety of possible continuations encourages the most determined in meaning, in order to summarize the most expressive samples, then show to students. For example, one continuation is a symbol of concentration of will and determination, the energy of creation, the other – evokes a sense of reflection, a lyrical experience, the third – can liberate cheerful energy in a person, humor, and the fourth continuation «visually» indicates indecisiveness, uncertainty, etc. Students find themselves only as «managers» of the life of music, on whose will depends what music will we have. And the task for the teacher in this context is to cause the schoolchildren to have a substantiated motive for their choice of the continuation of music.

It is possible to assume in advance that the model of volitional musical impulse will lead to some kind of march, lyrical intonations will lead to the song, cheerful energy will get its expression – an embodiment in some dance music, and indecision and uncertainty can result in some transformation of its intonations into any of these three spheres. But the born intonation in general can simply not become music, and therefore the awakening of the creative will of schoolchildren for the performance of a specific «musical act» is directly related to the pedagogical skill of the teacher himself.

We emphasize, that the main thing in this case is not only the achievement of the result of learning improvisation in the form of a certain formed musical whole – the result may not materialize into a specific «product of creativity». At the stage of school instruction, children's creativity is understood, first of all, to be «pre-prepared for creativity». This is a special state of the child's soul, where the child's inner work is a condition and proceeds as a mental and real (if possible) experiment with the means necessary to express the intention. This approach to improvisation is what gives amazing results that are integral, organic in form and individual, personally colored musical expressions. A promising result of improvisation as a process of creative development in the system of general musical education can be considered the introduction of «the breath of creativity» in any sphere of activity of a growing person.

To use improvisation in music lessons in a modern school, it is of fundamental importance to rely on the values of popular pedagogy, its artistic images, cultural traditions and experience. This means, first and foremost, the schoolchildren's development of various samples of folk musical and poetic creativity, including round-robin, riddles and sayings, songs and jokes. For the gradual introduction, introduction of children to musical and poetic creativity, *a methodical improvisational method of «storytelling and creating» music* was specially developed. The origins of this reception lie in the very people's creativity and cover all its forms.

The result of using the developed improvisation technique, its culmination becomes a special performing manner in the epic genre. «Genuineness» as an artistic phenomenon, through which you can feel the time in a different way, reflects the very spirit of «folk tales» by its gradual leisurely pace, allows children to penetrate everything that the collective artistic and creative activity of the people invested in the concept of «poetic». This special poetry of improvisational intonation determines how the appearance of certain musical works in the classroom, as well as a specific performing manner. The effectiveness of the application of «say-folding» lies not only in mastering works of folk

art and Russian classics based on folk intonations, but also in any chamber-vocal miniature, in the opera stage, in a musical performance.

The use of improvisation in music lessons implies the re-creation of any of the parties of creative work and permeates all kinds of musical activity and all forms of familiarizing with music. That is why the vocal-choral performance of children, the playing of musical instruments, the performance of music in motion and her listening do not as «kinds» of musical activity, namely as forms of familiarizing with it, becoming only a special case in relation to performance as a category of a more general order. As the actual types of musical activity is the activity of the composer – performer – listener. In the course of the research, original methods were also used to develop children's free and independent, meaningful «musical speech» (intonations, melodic phrases and phrases, expressive remarks, etc.).

*The method of «composing the composed»* is aimed at maintaining a special state of creative tension [16, 199 – 217]. It presupposes the disclosure to schoolchildren of the fact that man himself is the source and main «instrument» of the birth of music – everything that appears in music is the embodiment of the *complexity and richness* of his spiritual world.

The method has received such name because under the guidance of the teacher schoolchildren are put in a position of the composer-creator, as though «anew» composing for themselves and other works of musical art. In fact – the «composing the composed» – is a reconstruction in general outline of the way that the creators went through in the implementation of their artistic design. Note that as the creators and serves all of humanity, and individual composers, and the child himself. This method helps, for example, maturing children's musical-speech intonation in the creativity of children from its emergence to logical completion in certain forms and genres.

So, «composing» «In the corner» M.P. Mussorgsky, the child as if internally «loses» music (situation, roles, the text itself, etc.), gradually plunging into the created whole as a prerequisite for finding «the only correct» (because common for all people – typical) intonations, in an amazing proximity to the means of embodiment their true author. The value of this method lies not so much in the ability to create the proposed musical constructions, as in the need, the readiness to express the state of mind, the thought, the impression, and that the performing skills are no longer introduced «from the outside», but, as it were, born in the process itself a conscious need.

*The method of a meaningful analysis* of musical works reveals to the students the process, a kind of «technology» of the activity of the listener [17, 233 – 260]. On the basis of the characteristic features of the correlation of the very first musical meanings and in support of the generalizing «formulas» of development, the listener poses (represents) a kind of «working hypothesis» for the development of music in this particular work. Putting it as a content «ahead» of perception and using the mechanism of «anticipatory reflection», the student-listener gets the opportunity *to feel and think from the content*, constantly projecting the put forward artistic idea into a particular concrete form. This gives the entire perception not obediently passive (when the sounding form is filled with content later, post faktum), but an interested and *creative character*.

It should be noted that the shown methods presuppose, first and foremost, the pedagogical creativity of the teacher with the aim of realizing the main goals and tasks of general musical education of primary and basic school students. The application of the indicated methods contributes not only to the intensive creative development of schoolchildren, but also to the generalized understanding of the moral and aesthetic content of musical art by growing children, the formation of a holistic view of modern people about the transformation of the phenomena and facts of the objective world into musical images in the unity of content, form and means of expression.

The results and conclusions of the study will be presented in part 2 of this article (№1 2019 year).

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