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THE SIGNIFICANCE AND RELEVANCE OF MUSIC THEORY SUBJECTS IN SPECIALIZED ART SCHOOLS AND MUSIC SCHOOLS

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Abstract: The article examines the role of music theory subjects – solfeggio, elementary theory, harmony and musical analysis – in the professional training of students at specialized art schools and children's music schools. Drawing on international research on aural skills and sight-reading, as well as Uzbek teaching materials and recent state policy in the arts, the study shows how theoretical knowledge supports performance, interpretation and musical independence. Typical problems are identified, including the perceived gap between theory and instrumental practice, limited Uzbek-language textbooks and low student motivation. Practical recommendations are proposed for linking theory lessons with repertoire, national musical heritage and digital ear-training tools.

Keywords: music theory, solfeggio, harmony, aural skills, sight-reading, specialized art school, music education, national musical heritage.

IXTISOSLASHTIRILGAN SAN'AT MAKTAB VA MUSIQA MAKTABLARIDA MUSIQIY NAZARIY FANLARNING AHAMIYATI VA DOLZARBLIGI

Aliyorova Dilyoraxon Obidjonovna
Farg'ona ixtisoslashtirilgan san'at maktabi
Musiqa nazariyasi bo'limi o'qituvchisi

Annotatsiya: Maqolada ixtisoslashtirilgan san'at maktablari va bolalar musiqa maktablarida solfedjio, elementar nazariya, garmoniya va musiqiy tahlil fanlarining kasbiy tayyorgarlikdagi o'rni tahlil qilinadi. Eshitish ko'nikmalari va notani varaqdan o'qish bo'yicha xalqaro tadqiqotlar, o'zbek tilidagi o'quv adabiyotlari va san'at sohasidagi davlat siyosati asosida nazariy bilimlarning ijro, talqin va mustaqil musiqiy fikrlashga ta'siri ko'rsatiladi. Nazariya va ijro amaliyoti o'rtasidagi uzilish, o'zbek tilidagi darsliklarning kamligi va o'quvchilar motivatsiyasining pastligi kabi muammolar aniqlanib, ularni hal etish bo'yicha tavsiyalar beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: musiqa nazariyasi, solfedjio, garmoniya, eshitish ko'nikmalari, notani varaqdan o'qish, ixtisoslashtirilgan san'at maktabi, musiqa ta'limi, milliy musiqiy meros.

ЗНАЧЕНИЕ И АКТУАЛЬНОСТЬ МУЗЫКАЛЬНО-ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИХ ДИСЦИПЛИН В СПЕЦИАЛИЗИРОВАННЫХ ШКОЛАХ ИСКУССТВ И МУЗЫКАЛЬНЫХ ШКОЛАХ

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Аннотация: В статье анализируется роль сольфеджио, элементарной теории музыки, гармонии и музыкального анализа в профессиональной подготовке учащихся специализированных школ искусств и детских музыкальных школ. На основе международных исследований слуховых навыков и чтения с листа, узбекских учебных

материалов и государственной политики в сфере искусства показано влияние теоретических знаний на исполнительство, интерпретацию и музыкальную самостоятельность. Выявлены проблемы разрыва между теорией и практикой, нехватки учебников на узбекском языке и низкой мотивации учащихся, предложены практические рекомендации.

Ключевые слова: теория музыки, сольфеджио, гармония, слуховые навыки, чтение с листа, специализированная школа искусств, музыкальное образование, национальное музыкальное наследие.

INTRODUCTION

Specialized art schools and children's music schools occupy a particular place in the system of music education. They are not simply leisure institutions: for many students they are the first stage of a professional path that continues in colleges, institutes and conservatories. At this stage a young musician must master not only an instrument or voice, but also the language of music itself – its intervals, scales, chords, forms and stylistic conventions. This language is taught through a group of music theory subjects, usually solfeggio, elementary music theory, harmony, musical analysis and music literature.

In everyday school practice, however, these subjects are often seen as secondary. Students and sometimes parents measure progress by performance results – concerts, competitions, examinations on the instrument – while the theory class is treated as an obligation to be passed. Teachers of theory therefore face a double task: to teach the content and to convince students that the content matters for their playing. This attitude is not unique to Uzbekistan; it is widely discussed in the international literature on aural skills, where the transfer of classroom knowledge to real musical activity is a recurring concern [2].

The question has gained new relevance in Uzbekistan in recent years. The Presidential Resolution of 2 February 2022 on additional measures for the development of culture and art strengthened music education in general schools, requiring, from the 2022/2023 academic year, that pupils learn to play a tune on at least one national instrument [6]. Such measures increase the demand for well-trained music teachers and performers, and consequently raise the requirements for the theoretical preparation that specialized schools provide. The aim of this article is to analyse the significance of music theory subjects in specialized art and music schools, to identify the main problems of their teaching and to propose ways of making them more closely connected with performance practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The study is based on theoretical analysis of scientific and methodological literature, comparison of international and national approaches, and generalisation of the author's teaching experience at the Fergana Specialized Art School. Sources were selected in two groups: empirical studies on the relationship between aural and theoretical training and musical performance, and Uzbek educational and normative documents.

The strongest quantitative evidence comes from research on sight-reading. J. Mishra conducted a meta-analysis of 92 quasi-experimental studies containing 124 separate analyses of methods intended to improve sight-reading accuracy [1]. Although the overall effect across all treatments was small, the type of treatment proved decisive: aural training, controlled reading practice, creative activities and singing with solfège each produced a significant positive effect. In other words, the very activities that form the core of a solfeggio lesson were among those most clearly linked to better reading at the instrument. This result is important for specialized schools, where sight-reading is part of examinations and of everyday ensemble work.

A more recent study by J. Pomerleau-Turcotte, F. Dubé, M.T. Moreno Sala and F. Vachon explored what happens in the mind of a musician during sight-singing [2]. Using eye-tracking and

retrospective interviews with 56 post-secondary students, the authors identified 82 strategies grouped into seven categories. The use of musical knowledge predicted pitch accuracy and overall scores, while reliance on automatised skills predicted every dimension of performance. The authors concluded that aural skills teachers should teach strategies explicitly and help students build solid theoretical knowledge, because it is this knowledge that later becomes automatic. Their findings suggest that theory is not an alternative to "feeling" the music, but the foundation on which fluent musical perception is built.

The theoretical basis of these ideas was developed by G.S. Karpinski, who described aural skills acquisition as a sequence of stages – from listening and memory to understanding, notation and reading – in which each stage depends on the previous ones [3]. This model explains why gaps in elementary theory, such as unclear knowledge of intervals or keys, later appear as difficulties in harmony and analysis, and finally as uncertainty in performance.

In the national context, the most significant development has been the appearance of theory textbooks in the Uzbek language. A. Azimova's "Garmoniya" (2018), recommended by the Uzbekistan State Conservatory, is presented as the first harmony textbook in Uzbek and was prepared partly because secondary-level institutions needed material covering the basics of the subject [4]. Methodological articles by teachers are also appearing. G. Elmuratova, for example, argues for integrating traditional and innovative methods in teaching music literature, combining musical analysis, listening culture and interactive technologies within a competency-based approach rooted in national and world heritage [5]. At the same time, published research on teaching solfeggio and harmony specifically at the level of specialized schools remains limited, which defines the practical orientation of this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis allows the contribution of each theory subject to be described more precisely. Solfeggio develops inner hearing – the ability to imagine sound from notation before it is produced. For a pianist or violinist this skill means that the fingers follow an already heard intention rather than searching for notes by trial and error. Mishra's meta-analysis directly supports this connection: singing with solfège and aural training improve reading at the instrument [1]. In practice, a student who can sing a melody from the page also learns a new piece faster and makes fewer pitch errors in ensemble playing.

Elementary music theory provides the vocabulary without which other subjects cannot work. Knowledge of keys, intervals, chords, metre and rhythm gives a student tools for understanding any score. When this knowledge is incomplete, the student memorises music mechanically and has no means of explaining why a passage is difficult or how it is built. Pomerleau-Turcotte and colleagues showed that it is precisely the active use of musical knowledge that distinguishes more successful sight-singers [2].

Harmony and musical analysis move the student from reading notes to understanding musical meaning. A performer who recognises a cadence, a modulation or a deceptive resolution can shape phrasing and dynamics consciously rather than by imitation of a teacher or a recording. For example, when a student playing a classical sonata understands that the development section moves through distant keys, the growing tension can be expressed through tempo and tone colour. In this sense harmony is not abstract writing of chord progressions but a guide to interpretation. Music literature, in turn, places individual pieces within a historical and stylistic context and forms listening culture, as Elmuratova emphasises [5].

Despite this importance, several problems reduce the effectiveness of theory teaching in specialized schools. The first is the gap between theory lessons and instrumental lessons. Students study chords in the theory class and play pieces in the instrumental class, but rarely see the connection. If examples in the theory lesson come only from textbooks, the student does not transfer knowledge to his or her own repertoire. The second problem is the shortage of Uzbek-

language materials adapted to the age and level of school students. The appearance of Azimova's textbook was a significant step [4], but it is intended mainly for higher education, and school teachers often have to adapt Russian-language or university materials themselves.

The third problem is motivation. Theory subjects require regular, systematic work, and their results are less visible than a successful concert performance. Students who do not perceive immediate benefit tend to treat these classes formally. Finally, national music is still insufficiently represented in theory teaching. Uzbek maqom, folk songs and the works of national composers contain distinctive modal and rhythmic features that could make theory lessons more meaningful for students, yet traditional curricula are built mostly on Western European examples.

Based on the analysis and teaching experience, several solutions can be proposed. First, theory lessons should regularly use material from the pieces students are currently performing. Analysing the harmony of a student's own sonata or étude, or singing its main theme in solfeggio, shows the practical value of theory immediately. Cooperation between theory teachers and instrumental teachers – for instance, agreeing on shared repertoire each term – makes this connection systematic. Second, strategies should be taught explicitly, as recommended by Pomerleau-Turcotte and colleagues [2]: students should learn how to scan a score before reading, how to find tonal centres, how to use body movement to keep rhythm.

Third, examples from Uzbek national music should be included in dictations, analysis and sight-singing exercises. This not only broadens students' musical experience but also responds to state policy aimed at strengthening national musical traditions in education [6]. Fourth, digital ear-training applications and notation software can supplement classroom work, allowing students to practise intervals, chords and rhythms independently and to receive instant feedback. Such tools are especially useful for maintaining regular practice between weekly lessons, which is often the weakest link in theory learning.

Comparing international and national experience leads to an important conclusion. In the research literature, the effectiveness of theory and aural training is measured through concrete performance outcomes – reading accuracy, pitch accuracy, rhythm [1; 2]. In school practice in Uzbekistan, theory subjects are still often assessed separately from performance. Bringing the two closer – for example, by including sight-reading and analysis of the performed programme in instrumental examinations – would demonstrate the value of theory in the most convincing way.

CONCLUSION

Music theory subjects form the intellectual foundation of professional music education in specialized art schools and children's music schools. International research shows that aural training and solfeggio improve sight-reading, and that the active use of musical knowledge predicts more accurate musical performance. Harmony and analysis allow students to interpret music consciously, while music literature develops listening culture and stylistic understanding.

At the same time, the effectiveness of theory teaching is limited by its separation from performance practice, a shortage of Uzbek-language school materials, low motivation and insufficient use of national music. To overcome these problems, it is recommended to connect theory lessons with students' repertoire, to develop cooperation between theory and instrumental teachers, to teach musical strategies explicitly, to introduce Uzbek national music into theory courses and to use digital ear-training tools. Further research could focus on experimental testing of these recommendations and on developing Uzbek-language solfeggio and harmony materials designed specifically for specialized schools.

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