

**Sociology of music  
and its cultural implications**

**Interdisciplinary insights  
from theoretical debate  
and field work**

edited by **Ilaria Riccioni,  
Paolo Somigli**

**LABORATORIO SOCIOLOGICO  
FRANKO ANGELI, 2015**

# *Impact of social changes on the development of teaching music in Croatia and Slovenia since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until today*

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## **1. Introduction**

The present-day independent Republics of Croatia and Slovenia went through a number of changes and different socio-political systems in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning of the previous century they were parts of Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, then of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), and after World War II they were parts of the socialist Yugoslavia. The most recent and very significant change occurred at the beginning of the 1990s, when Croatia and Slovenia became independent republics through democratic processes. All those social changes resulted with deep changes in education and, therefore, in music teaching, the subject of this paper. It is interesting to observe the manner in which the music-pedagogical profession coped with those changes and how much it succeeded in the improvement of music teaching in those respective periods. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the period between the two world wars, a modest advancement or even stagnation in music pedagogy is noted. After World War II, however, conditions were created that lead to a significant improvement of the profession. The period from the republics' independence until the present-day still waits for a thorough evaluation.

Social changes inevitably influence the development of education and, therefore, music teaching. As a rule, the ruling structures do not determine aims and objectives of music teaching, but create the environment in which those aims are determined. Each of the periods analysed in this paper brings new conditions that significantly influence the changes in music teaching.

## 2. Social situation and education at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Croatia and Slovenia were parts of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. Diverse administrative governance (Slovenia was governed by Austrian, Croatia by Hungarian administration) created different conditions for the development of general education and music-pedagogical practice. The state of Croatian and Slovene societies and public education was inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since 1848, by demands of the civil revolution, decisions were made that led to the introduction of the national language into elementary schools. That period was marked by national revival and all activities of particular nations were directed towards the fight for national languages (Franković, 1958, 140-141; 148-149). Under the influence of the national revival, music pedagogues, teachers and other authors of music-pedagogical literature recognised the importance of folk songs in music teaching, not only as an instrument of national education, but also as an important music-didactic element of the attainment of musical, educational and aesthetic objectives of music education. The struggle for the national language in the official use and the struggle for the use of folk song in music teaching marked the whole period before World War I and afterwards.

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period of an institutional reform of education in which important legislation was enacted that set the foundation for the new development of education. In Slovenia, singing was introduced as a compulsory school subject by an education act in 1869, in Croatia in 1874.<sup>1</sup> School subjects introduced as compulsory at that time were: religion, national language, science, geography, history, writing, singing and physical education (Winkler Kuret, 2006, 48; 52). The music pedagogues who studied in Vienna and Prague transferred the influence of European pedagogical trends to their home territories. The German pedagogy had a great influence, especially regarding the emergence of school doctrines of the enlightened absolutism of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when ideas of J.F. Herbart were prevailing. Under the European model and opposed to traditional schools, new pedagogical movements evolved that promoted greater activity of children in learning, and against verbalism (Protner, 1999, 70). Music pedagogues attempted to further some advancement in that direction. The school subject retained the denomination 'singing', and the objectives were mostly the same

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<sup>1</sup> Similar education acts were passed in greater part of Europe within the period of several years: in England in 1870 and in Italy in 1871.

everywhere. It related to the development of musical ear and to aesthetic and patriotic education. In Croatia and Slovenia there were differences in attitudes of music pedagogues towards teaching musical notation.

### **3. Societal changes after World War I**

Since 1867, Croatia autonomously designed its education planning; however, although smaller differences existed, the development of Croatian and Slovene education systems was similar to those of other Austrian-Hungarian countries. The philosophy of music teaching established in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was present until the period between the two world wars. Considering the fact that Croatia and Slovenia were in the same socio-political environment after World War I (first the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and since 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), no significant differences were detected in the development of education and music teaching. As noted above, the state of education was inherited from the period of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy and was on an unsatisfactory level. The hope that Croats and Slovenes would be liberated from significant national and economic repression of the Austrian-Hungarian period soon faded out. Nations of the newly-created Monarchy instantly understood that desirable changes would not occur primarily because of the Serbian centralist policy that oppressed the other Nations of the Kingdom on national and economic bases (Pavličević, 2000, 331). In the first period of state-building, education was given little attention. Elementary school had the duration of four years and high schools were rare. Civic school was a specific kind of vocational high schools attended by a limited number of students. Continuation of education was possible in grammar schools that could have been attended only by students from wealthy families. The result of that undemocratic elementary education was the high level of illiteracy and the situation was further aggravated by the economic crisis and the ruthless politics of the ruling dynasty that led the country into a state of permanent exhaustion and underdevelopment (Franković, 1958; 308-309).

The government in Belgrade was seeking to unify education on the entire state territory and enacted law and curricula for that purpose. The first curriculum was enacted in 1926. It comprised music teaching under the denomination 'singing' that was to be taught one hour a week. The first education act after World War I was enacted in 1929 and it stressed the education of children for national and ethnic unity, and religious education. Little attention was given to the quality and content of teaching.

The curricula did not have significant effects due to the undefined strategy of education development and music teaching and frequent changes that occurred almost annually. In addition, there were no preconditions for their realisation (e.g. the 1929 Act prescribed the eight-year elementary school, which was realised on the territory of Yugoslavia only in the 1950s). In the 1926 and 1933 curricula, familiarization with the music theory elements was prescribed for high schools, and in the 1937 curriculum for the second grade of elementary schools. New legislation and curricula did not bring novelty and advancement for Croatia and Slovenia, the two advanced societies within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Franković, 1958, 333-334; Okoliš, 2009, 94).

The stagnation of education development was understandable. One of the leading politicians of that time was Stjepan Radić, the head of the Education Ministry of the Kingdom until 1926. He viewed the education issues through the prism of societal isolation, especially in regard of the fact that education was not accessible to all layers of society. The ruling dynasty controlled human resources, which may be substantiated by the fact that in the period from the state foundation till World War II there were 47 heads of the Ministry of Education. During his term of office, Radić objected to the unification of the schooling system because he considered it detrimental for Croatia and Slovenia. Despite his objections, from 1933 on unified curricula were designed for all of the monarchy (Grgić, 2008). Despite difficulties, certain changes and detachments from dogmatic and peremptory teaching occurred during the 1930s. Thus, in the 1936/37 school year the Education Department of *Savska banovina*<sup>2</sup> issued a decree by which teachers were obliged to familiarize with the methods of 'the school of work'. Moreover, new schools that were based on 'new school' and 'the school of work' philosophy were founded. The government strictly controlled all changes in schools and made efforts to subordinate the profession and all schooling to the realisation of educational aims and objectives of the government, which implied loyalty to the dynasty.

With respect to the music-pedagogical profession, nevertheless, it has to be stressed that new music pedagogues emerged and initiated an active discussion about the objectives of singing as well as about the methodology of music teaching. For most of music pedagogues in Croatia and Slovenia folk song was an inevitable part of music teaching. Because of the mentioned difficult situation in the Monarchy, textbooks and songbooks

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<sup>2</sup> After the 6<sup>th</sup>-of-January Dictatorship in 1929, The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Its territory was organised into counties called '*banovina*' that were named after large rivers in order to diminish the national pride.

originated in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were used in schools. A significant leap forward was done in Croatia by Stjepan Basariček, Zlatko Grgošević and Zlatko Špoljar, and in Slovenia by Hinko Druzović. It was already said that the period in question was the time of maturation of new pedagogic ideas in Europe, which set new requirements for music teaching. New ideas and methods were pervading the music-pedagogical practice, accepted by the above mentioned music pedagogues.

In that period, aims and objectives of music teaching were studied critically. Therefore, it may be concluded that despite the unfavourable social situation a firm foundation was laid for the great advancement of music-pedagogical profession that would occur after World War II.

#### **4. The advancement of schooling and music pedagogy in the period after World War II**

With the end of World War II, Croatia and Slovenia became parts of the newly-founded state of Yugoslavia, which was organised into six republics and two autonomous provinces. The government was run by the Communist Party that sought to arrange the country after the Soviet model. The post-war country was in a difficult economic and social situation. The material and cultural goods were devastated; many schools were destroyed. All of that, especially considering the high level of population illiteracy, demanded radical reforms and rebuilding of the social order. In that period, drastic changes occurred in all societal fields, and therefore in schooling.

The communist authorities recognised Marxism as the only acceptable philosophy, which resulted with indoctrination pervasive throughout the educational system. Despite a common constitution, some republics autonomously planned segments of their schooling. During World War II, the Education Department of the State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia (ZAVNOH) was founded and took care of the development of schooling. That department became the Ministry of Education of the Federal Republic of Croatia in July 1945, which issued a provisional curriculum for elementary schools. That curriculum was designed in line with the master curriculum for elementary schools in new Yugoslavia. In the same year, the seven-year compulsory elementary education was introduced (Franković, 1958, 439). The seven-year compulsory education was impossible to carry out due to numerous shortcomings, and that was further substantiated by the fact that although the eight-year compulsory education had been introduced in 1951, it was only realised in 1957. The subject list of the mentioned curriculum included the following subjects: the Croatian or Serbian language, history,

geography, natural science, mathematics, drawing, singing, physical education and handwriting. One weekly hour of singing was planned in all classes.

The purpose of the teaching of singing was to develop musical ear, voice and proper pronunciation and to prepare students for solo and choral singing. Singing should arouse interest for songs, aesthetic and social feelings and patriotism. In elementary schooling, singing was realised as a separate subject and as a methodological principle in the practice of other subjects. Children's, folk and war songs were sung, in one voice or two voices. Singing was practised by musical ear and it was also related to movement. Students were motivated to practise musical creation.<sup>3</sup> It is already in this curriculum that one can notice the introduction of other teaching areas next to singing.

The new socio-political environment had expectedly brought new changes in schooling. The role of education gained new foundations, it was ideologized and had to serve 'the fight against foreign subjugators and domestic traitors'. Education of the people and youth was conducted in the spirit of the new, Yugoslavian patriotism, brotherhood and unity of all nations and in the spirit of the true internationalism (Franković, 1958, 419). It was clear later that one dictatorship had only been substituted by a new one. Many segments of education served the communist authorities for the building of a personality cult. Despite the negative side of that, the newly created situation was an opportunity for a great advancement in schooling and music teaching. New ideas penetrated the school system, the number of pedagogues grew up, and with the betterment of the financial state and school conditions, new possibilities were created for the advancement of music pedagogy in Croatia and Slovenia. The seven-year elementary school created the need for additional educators. During the war, teachers were educated on courses that lasted from two to six months, and already in 1945 there were 14 schools of teacher education, while in 1951 three more schools were established (Franković, 1958, 410-411).

The first school act in the new Yugoslavia, the 'Public School Act' from 1951, prescribed a gradual transition to eight-year compulsory education. That was the first step towards the complete reform of the elementary schooling and the building of a unified system on the entire territory of Yugoslavia. In 1953, the Committee for School Reform was established, which demonstrated that the Socialist authorities attended to schooling better than all preceding political systems. The 1950/1951 curriculum in Croatia was the result of cooperation between experts, pedagogues and

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<sup>3</sup> Curriculum, 1946.

practitioners. The subject content of all school grades was appropriate for the students' age.

The objectives of the teaching of singing were: acquisition of basic knowledge about music, development of voice, musical ear and sense of rhythm, development of abilities for active participation in a singing choir, development of social, patriotic and aesthetic sentiments, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Up to the end of the 1950s, music teaching was not conducted systematically and there were not any appropriate textbooks. The socio-political changes that led to the mentioned changes in schooling resulted in the creation of new quality textbooks. Among the significant music-pedagogical authors one has to single out Joža Požgaj, Vladimir Tomerlin, Vera Makjanić, Josip Završki, Branko Rakijaš, Lovro Županović, Božidar Antonić, Miroslav Magdalenić from Croatia, and Peter Potočnik, Maks Jurca, Juri Gregorc, Makso Pirnik, Pavle Kalan, Albin Weingerl, and Breda Oblak from Slovenia. All of the above mentioned pedagogues had published a number of textbooks and manuals in the period from the end of World War II until the 1990s.

The most significant advancement in music teaching was noted in that period. The initial teaching of singing evolved into a broader music education; new textbooks and methodological manuals were created. Besides singing, new elements were introduced into music teaching: listening to music, playing instruments, musical creation. Elements of intonation, rhythm and notation, as well as concepts of musical culture, were taught and learned. Significant societal changes created conditions for the advancement of music-pedagogical profession. Music pedagogues investigated subject philosophy, set new aims and sought to develop students' musical abilities as much as possible. A discussion on the methodology of music teaching and intonation methods was initiated. Joža Požgaj from Croatia and Peter Potočnik from Slovenia were the music pedagogues who significantly marked the advancement of music teaching. A discussion on intonation methods in music teaching developed. Zlatko Grgošević and Božidar Antonić introduced the Tonik-Solfa method. Elly Bašić built her 'functional method' based on Tonika-Do method. Miroslav Magdalenić, Joža Požgaj, Vladimir Tomerlin and Josip Završki used children's, folk, or artistic song as a basis of intonation. Joža Požgaj critiqued the use of Tonika-Do method in music teaching and believed that excessive significance had been given to methods of intonation, when compared to other methods of music teaching (Požgaj, 1950, 99-100).

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<sup>4</sup> Curriculum for eight-year public schools and junior grades of grammar schools, elementary schools and extended courses (1950), Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia, Zagreb.

Similarly, new methods of acquiring intonation appeared in Slovenia in textbooks written by Peter Potočnik, Albin Weingerl, Maks Jurca and Pavle Kalan. Until the 1970s, a clear model of active music making was in use, whose main role was the learning of music language and notation. Music teaching prepared in that way remained in use until the enactment of the 1972 Curriculum, when listening to music and certain musicological contents were added to singing. The last curricula before the democratic changes and independence of Croatia and Slovenia (from 1984 and 1989) represent a kind of an integration model that differed from the previous ones only in placing more stress on listening to music.

Since the end of World War II until the independence of Croatia and Slovenia, the entire schooling, including music teaching, experienced substantial changes and progress – from four-year to eight-year compulsory elementary education; from singing to musical education. A long-term process that educates, orients, and upgrades the musical abilities of students became the main objective of music teaching. However, there were more and more critiques of that kind of music teaching and in the 1980s, and especially after gaining independence, greater differences could be noticed in music teaching in Croatia and Slovenia.

Already in the 1980s, Slovenia initiated the redefining of subject philosophy owing to the activities of Breda Oblak. She set the philosophy of music teaching in Slovenia on the cornerstones of the art of music, and those were music production, reproduction and reception, which are connected by creativity as a basis of music.

## **5. Since democratic changes of the 1990s until the present day**

At the beginning of the 1990s, the democratic changes started a dual process: secession and formation of independent Republics of Croatia and Slovenia and building of a pluralistic civil society. Until the 1990s, the institutional school education developed in a relatively closed frame of the socialist Yugoslavia with a certain level of autonomy of the republics (Munjiza 2009, 223). All changes in independent republics also required the changes in school systems. Despite numerous proposed models, the elementary education in Croatia remained the eight-year education, structured into four grades of class teaching and four grades of subject teaching. The elementary education in Slovenia was restructured into three triennia, a total of nine years. In line with the new conditions, new curricula were developed that included music teaching as ‘music culture’ and ‘music education’.

Until the democratic changes of the 1990s, pedagogy was serving the needs of the ruling ideology. It is only with the democratic changes that

democratisation entered pedagogy, schooling, approaches to learning and teaching. Before that, everything was directed towards the execution of the prescribed curriculum, while students and their needs were neglected. With the direction towards a curricular approach to teaching, i.e. with the enactment of the Croatian National Master Curriculum and the preceding Croatian National Educational Standard (which is not the right way, because first the curricular frame has to be passed and then the standards are set up) the pedagogical aims in independent Croatia and Slovenia were targeted at harmonisation with contemporary European trends. Consideration of pedagogical science and educational development in Croatia should not be confined to the frame of Croatian educational space. Pedagogical development of a country has always been a part of activities of a wider scientific community. It is only partially a product of local and autochthonous conditions, and it is more and more a part of a regional development, or ultimately, of the global educational space. That is exactly why pedagogical developments in Croatia were considered in relation with all the activities occurring outside the Croatian educational science. The Croatian pedagogy in that period aims at participating in the (con)text of the pedagogical development of the world we live and work in (Šoljan, 2003, 134).

Since the Croatian independence, in scientific-theoretical discussions some new subjects emerged. Those are, for example, pluralism in education, education for democracy and civic society, intercultural education, education for human rights and civic responsibilities, education for peace, education for non-violent conflict resolving, education for understanding and cooperation, etc. The erosion of communism and the 'discovery' of democracy brought a number of other topics into the centre of scientific and professional pedagogical interest, and those topics attracted the attention of scientists and pedagogues. Besides others, those are: purification of curricula of ideologically charged subjects and content, pluralism of school textbooks and manuals, creation of pluralist practice in school selection – public or private, introduction of religious education into public educational institutions, etc. (Šoljan, 2003, 135).

The member states of the European Economic Community, later the European Union, had a great advantage with respect to formation and realisation of the practice of free movement of goods, persons and ideas. At the same time, transitional and newly-formed states tried to meet the necessary requirements for accession to that and other European organisations and integrations. Concurrently, Croatia underwent war conflict and later was involved into post-war restoration and rebuilding of government and civilian institutions appropriate for a democratic society. In the entire period from the Croatian independence until recently, the

Croatian educational institutions and universities were provided with no or extremely limited access to certain programmes and activities that contributed to the formation of a unified educational and scientific space in Europe. It was only in recent years that some programmes and projects became available to Croatian pupils, students, teachers, scientists, and educational and scientific-research institutions (Šoljan, 2003, 139). In that segment Slovenia made a significant progress in relation to Croatia, considering the fact that it went through its integration process to the European Union much sooner. Slovenia has integrated European standards into its schooling system, while Croatia is still going through that long-term process.

Similarly as in earlier periods, in the moment of important socio-political transformations educational aims and objectives varied and that affected music teaching, too. Consequently, potential aims of education did not originate from the profession; on contrary, they were imposed from the outside, more precisely, from the influence of the socio-political situation. As a rule, the ideology in power does not prescribe educational aims and objectives – it creates the conditions in which aims are set. Abel-Struth concluded that the less developed a professional didactics is, the more powerful the domination of non-professional groups is.<sup>5</sup> That was significant for the music-pedagogical profession at the beginning of the 1990s. After the Croatian proclamation of independence, the war broke out and resulted with the fact that a third of the national territory was occupied until 1995. In such an unnatural and unpleasant environment there was little space for considerations about schooling, especially about music teaching. In that period, a thorough de-ideologizing of curricula took place. The first curriculum in Croatia was enacted for the 1991/92 school year. It was not different from the previous one (from 1984, or 1989) by its content, except in the fact that it had been de-ideologized. The terminology was modified, but the aims remained the same or were reduced. The objectives, such as those that referred to the ‘formation of an integral socialist personality’, were deleted.

The concept of music teaching in independent Croatia was inherited from the previous periods. The concept was referred to as ‘dabbling’ and was not significant only for Croatia, but it spread throughout Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, under the influence of pedagogical reforms. Immediately after gaining independence, a process of thorough changes started in Slovenia. The new curriculum was designed in 1998 with the participation of many committees, experts, teachers and others. Unlike the Croatian one – which was only de-ideologized, but had the same content as

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<sup>5</sup> Taken from Rojko Pavel (1996): *Methodology of music teaching*, p. 51.

in previous periods – the new Slovene curriculum was more complex and structurally different. It was based on four educational areas that corresponded to the development of listening to music, the development of performing music, the development of music creation and the development of musical abilities, skills and knowledge. Emphasis was placed on the inclusion of a European dimension into the Slovene education, which implied relying on the common European heritage of political, cultural and moral values that can be recognised in human rights, rule of law, pluralist democracy, tolerance and solidarity (Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji, 1995, 5-9).

A more significant change in Croatia occurred with the introduction of the national educational standard in 2006. Music teaching was based on the logic of the aim, not on the logic of the profession. The aim was defined as the introduction of pupils into musical culture and the main emphasis was on the culturological aspect of music teaching (HNOS, 2005). The practice remained almost the same and music teaching continued to be one of the ‘insignificant’ subjects, especially in lower grades. That may be interpreted as an influence of social change. Global changes that occur faster than ever before, great influence of the mass media and wider availability of music of mostly questionable quality affect the students’ musical education. Many recent research projects in Croatia (Dobrota, Ćurković, 2006; Šulentić Begić, 2009; Šulentić Begić, 2010) proved that schooling (music teaching) is the least affective factor of students’ musical preferences. The greatest emphasis in music teaching is placed on listening that, next to other activities, should introduce students to musical culture, get them familiarized with the main characteristics of music and, finally, teach them the values of music, which should improve the quality of their lives; and that is not happening. The influence of music teaching in schools faltered under the influence of the society.

The present-day reality of Croatia and Slovenia is the full-fledged membership in the European Union. Slovenia had become a member earlier and had earlier initiated reforms that were necessary for the advancement of the educational system and music teaching, which is the subject of this paper. In addition, Slovenia started the reforms studiously and with a clear strategy. Clearly, all reforms are difficult to implement and many objections and problems could be found in the Slovene model. Concurrently, Croatia enters the schooling reform unprepared. The educational standard was enacted before the master curriculum. Eight years later, no one wonders why the 2006 reform did not show results. The Bologna process, too, was introduced unpreparedly. Although it refers to higher education, it did not make progress in quality. Consequently,

students who are candidates for future teachers do not bring advancement to their profession.

## **6) Conclusion**

The educational system, within which music teaching is observed, is a living organism that is susceptible to constant changes. This paper has presented the influences of social changes that had significantly affected the development of music teaching in two neighbouring countries, Croatia and Slovenia. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the state of schooling was determined by the requirements of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century national movements. Under that influence music pedagogues recognised the importance of folk songs that had served not only as a medium of national education, but also as an important music-didactic element in the fulfilment of musical, educational and aesthetic aims of music teaching.

After World War I, the first significant socio-political change occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Croatia and Slovenia became parts of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). That period was marked by a difficult economic and social situation and centralist politics that did not create favourable conditions for the development of education. The teaching on the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was sought to be unified, which had detrimental consequences for the development of schooling and music teaching in Croatia and Slovenia. The government controlled all changes in schools and teaching processes served the aims of the government and the loyalty of the ruling dynasty. Notwithstanding the unfavourable conditions, the music-pedagogical profession accepted more and more new ideas and methods under the influence of the pedagogical movements from Western Europe.

The second significant socio-political change occurred after World War II. Croatia and Slovenia became parts of the new socialist Yugoslavia. Due to the utter devastation of material and cultural goods and high level of illiteracy, a thorough reform of schooling system took place. That period was marked as the most significant one for the development of education and, therefore, music teaching. Compulsory education slowly became eight-year-long and the initial singing classes evolved into a wider musical education.

Democratic changes of the 1990s led to the independence of Croatia and Slovenia. Pedagogy, which previously served ideology, became more democratic. The influence of social changes on schooling was quite obvious. The new topics that have been active since then are pluralism in education, education for a democratic society, intercultural education,

education for human rights, and others. The heritage of the Western European cultural and political context was sought to be implemented into schooling systems. In this paper, it is important to stress the influence of social changes on the development of the music-pedagogical profession. In the same line, a statement by Abel-Struth should be stressed, who thought that the less developed a professional didactics is, the more powerful the domination of non-professional groups is. Thus, for a quality development of music teaching an informed and determined professional public is needed that would lead to the progress of music teaching in schooling. The importance of music in schools must not be neglected. It will always be under the influence of social changes, but the music teaching profession also has to impose itself in order to make the (music) education affect the social changes.

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