

University of Pécs
Doctoral School of Education and Society

András Suki

The Rajkó Orchestra and the Rajkó method

Thesis on doctoral thesis

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Forray R. Katalin

2019
Thesis booklet

Introduction

My doctoral thesis illustrates the history of the *Rajkó Orchestra* and the method of music education behind its successes, which is embedded in a long story from the onset of gypsy music, (and it is made up before the reader). The first major chapter of my doctoral dissertation is the history of Gypsy music and the social prestige of Gypsy musicians in the first half of the 20th century. The next big chapter processes the history of the Rajkó Orchestra, which considered to be a major research in the cultural history. Then I will be working on a presentation of the *Rajkó-Talentum School of Music and Dance*, which is closely linked to it. In our country, this is the only school where Roma young people can learn the Hungarian gypsy music now. In this way, I would like to present the *Rajkó method* in the last two major chapters, which is used in the Rajkó orchestra and at school, as well as the theoretical background to understand it. The exploration and effectiveness of this study is at the heart of my research, in which I compare it to other pedagogical methods.

I. Research history

A deeper understanding of the history of the Rajkó Orchestra and the exploration of the music education method used by me come from personal motivation. My father *András Suki* (b. 1955) moved to Budapest at the age of 10 to study in the famous Rajkó Orchestra. Later on he turned back to his roots as a teacher of the School of the Rajkó Orchestra and the Art Director of the Rajkó Orchestra. After my graduation I received a piano teacher job at the Rajkó-Talentum School of Music and Dance. I felt that it was a great honour for teaching classical music, where most of my family studied in their childhood. So the theme of my dissertation was in front of me from my childhood.

My previous own publication also gave the base for a more thorough understanding of gypsy music, which started me to explore the history and the unique method of music education of the Rajkó Orchestra.

II. Research methods

Due to the theme of the thesis, the research is divided into two parts, in which one large slice is the exploration of the history of the Rajkó Orchestra, and the other part is the music education method used there. In the historical part the source was mainly interviews, newspaper articles, some brochures and a book. However, the method of music education used in the Rajkó Orchestra and in the associated music school, I could only be explored on the basis of interviews, because there was not a written source. This is why his research on the success of the Rajkó Orchestra is a significant historical milestone for education and music. So I directed the essence of my research towards one of the most controversial pillars of the Rajko method, which is *teaching from the hands*. Teaching from the hands is primarily a paradigm shift in the teaching of classical music.

III. Results of the research

In the course of the dissertation, we can get to the musical method used there, from the presentation of the Gypsy music, through the history of the Rajkó Orchestra and its associated school, one of the essential pillars of which is teaching from the hands.

The Rajkó method is a method to learn music based on a system built around the teachings of *Gyula Farkas* and the popular Rajkó Orchestra. *The teaching from the hands* was one of the pillars of the music learning process. However, the Rajkó method is not only about learning after hearing. The traditions of the famous gypsy musician dynasties, the methods of teaching or teaching their children, as well as their environment, all contributed to the emergence of another excellent musician. One of them is the *early musical education* of the child from the fetal period. The other indispensable pillar was the *regular concert opportunities* that motivated the children. These actions not only provided a stage practice for the children, but in addition to success, the payment was also an excellent motivator for them. The famous Rajkó Orchestra was part of the KISZ Central Art Ensemble and they had the *infrastructure* to get all needs. The *boarding school* ensured the possibility of the poorer, predominantly rural child's studies in

Budapest. Therefore, I consider the nature of boarding school to be a fundamental and one of the pillars of the Rajkó method. The *cultural policy* background was fundamental to the creation of the Rajkó method, which is why it is also one of the pillars of the method.

This complex musical training and musical environment can actually be called the Rajkó method, which is based on auditory music education and early music development, which created the opportunity for the creation of an extraordinary children's orchestra and its global success. In doing so, it preceded his age and provided a complex musical education that was already doomed to success.

The purpose of the experiment was to demonstrate the effectiveness of *the teaching from the hands*, what is the most important pillar of the Rajkó method. I compared the teaching from the hands with the traditional learning from musical notation, and the use of educational video material published in the past few years on the Internet. The results from the measurements of the different learning methods was the learning from the hands was almost always faster than studying the musical notation in certain cases.

Based on my previous experience my assumption was that this would be a quicker learning method under certain conditions. However, demonstrating the effectiveness of learning from the hands does not mean that we should only use this method and all the musical learning difficulties will be solved. But the traditional teaching method, which has been well proven in recent decades, should be complemented more intense by teaching from hands. The adoption and broader dissemination of this paradigm shift is a strong advance on the quality of Hungarian music education.