



PRIMARY EDUCATION
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
NICOSIA – CYPRUS 2003

The Primary Education Music Curriculum of Cyprus

Introduction

Music as a discipline, has a lot of educational values and forms an integral part of the whole educational endeavour and plays an important role to the cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor development of the child.

This Curriculum is based upon contemporary musical pedagogical systems and fulfils the goals of current education.

The various learning theories used here, require that the methodological approaches of music teaching are based upon workshop activities, in which cognitive elements (patterns), technical skills, as well as musical activities become of equal importance.

The most important objectives of the curriculum are the following: development of personality and creativity, and preparation for life.

Aim

To assist students' progressive entry into the world of sound, develop their musical sensitivity through the understanding and use of sound patterns, which are an essential element to the development of their inner emotional and innate musical abilities. In this way they become able to enjoy and create music, as well as to contribute both to their own musical development and to that of society.

Objectives

Students are expected:

- *to develop their aural perceptive abilities*
- *to sing while deriving utmost pleasure*
- *to learn various forms of musical notation and use them so as to reproduce and create music*
- *to express their inner selves by reproducing and creating music through the use of various means (voice, home-made instruments, traditional instruments, movement) according to their own abilities and for their own satisfaction as well as in the communication with others*

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- to develop an understanding of the basic elements and concepts of music theory, musical form, and history of music
 - to enjoy, appreciate, and accept good quality music.
 - to get to know traditional music (folk songs, Byzantine chant), and to develop a sense of respect and love towards our national tradition, by being able to preserve it and disseminate it to appreciate the musical traditions of other cultures.
 - to appreciate the music heritage of other people
 - to develop their ability to evaluate and select compositions of folk and pop music
 - to develop their individual musical abilities
 - to integrate music with other curriculum subjects
 - to employ music in order to develop the ability to develop the qualities of co-operation, responsibility, discipline, and the ability to communicate
 - to become acquainted with music microtechnology

CONTENT OUTLINE

GRADE 1

RYTHMIC CONCEPTS

- * *Beat*
- * *Rhythmic concepts which relates to basic movements (walking, running e.t.c.)*
- * *Rhythmic pattern*
- * *Crotchet*
- * *Quavers*
- * *Minim*
- *Time-signature 2/4*

MELODIC CONCEPTS

- * High and low sounds
- * Sounds of either the same or different pitch
- * Melodic pattern
- * Note G (sol)
- * Stave (lines-spaces)
- * Note E (mi)
- * Note A (la)
- * Note B (si)

HARMONY

- * Two or more sound chord

FORM

- * Music phrase
- * Repetition marks

EXPRESSION

- * Slow-fast
- * Loud-soft
- * The timbre of the instruments used by the children

* Basic
- Optional

GRADE 2

RYTHMIC CONCEPTS

- * Time signature 2/4
- * Semibrave
- * Crotchet rest
- * Minim Rest
- * Time signature 4/4
- * Rhythmic ostinato
- Bind (Tie)
- Rhythmic canon

MELODIC CONCEPTS

- * Ascending, descending and of the same pitch melody
- * G clef
- * Note D (re)
- * Note C (do) below the clef
- * C Pentatonic scale
- Melodic canon

HARMONY

- * Two sound chord

FORM

- * Rythmic and melodic motifs
- * Music phrase -question
- * Music phrase -answer
- Rythmic dialogue

EXPRESSION

- * Faster and slower
- * Louder and softer
- * Soft and slow
- * Soft and faster

* Basic
- Optional

GRADE 3

**RYTHMIC
CONCEPTS**

- * *Bind (Tie)*
- * *Rhythmic canon*
- * *Dotted minim*
- * Time signature 3/4
- * Semibreve rest
- Time-signature of 7/8 through an empirical approach
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**MELODIC
CONCEPTS**

- * Melodic canon
- * Note F (fa)
- * High C on the treble clef (do')
- * Tones and semitones
- Slur
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HARMONY

- * Bordun (interval of the perfect 5th)
- * Three sound chord

FORM

- * Music dialogue (question - answer)
- * Binary form AB

EXPRESSION

- * Loud and slow
- * Loud and fast
- * Dynamics: *piano (p)* and *forte (f)*
- * Male and female voices

* Basic
- Optional

GRADE 4

RYTHMIC CONCEPTS

- * Time signature 3/8
- * Dotted crotchet in 3/8 beat
- * Time signature 7/8
- * Anacrusis - upbeat
- Time-signature 5/8
- The dotted crotchet with quaver through an empirical approach
- Semiquavers

MELODIC CONCEPTS

- * Slur
- * High D (re) on the treble clef
- * Low B (si) below the treble clef
- * Low A (la) below the treble clef
- * Aural **identification** of A harmonic minor scale
- The relationship between melody and tonal centre

HARMONY

- * Chord of a third
- * Chord of a sixth
- * Tonic chord

FORM

- * Binary form AB
- * Ternary form ABA

EXPRESSION

- Dynamics:
- * *ff (fortissimo)*
 - * *pp (pianissimo)*
- Tempo indications:
- * *Gradually slower (ritartando)*
 - * *Gradually faster (accelerando)*

* Basic
- Optional

GRADE 5

**RYTHMIC
CONCEPTS**

- * Semiquavers
- * Dotted crotchet with quaver
- * Quaver rest
- * Time signature 5/8
- * Time signature 6/8
- * Dotted quaver with semiquaver

**MELODIC
CONCEPTS**

- * A minor melodic and harmonic scale (the augmented second)
- * Sharp
- * Flat
- * Natural
- * Low G (sol) on the treble clef
- * High E (mi) on the treble clef
- * High F (fa) on the treble clef
- * High G (sol') above the treble clef
- * G major scale
- F major scale

HARMONY

- * Interval of the minor third
- * Interval of the major third
- * Three sound major chord
- Three sound minor chord
- Dominant chord

FORM

- * Ternary form ABA
- * Dancing form Minuet
- * Dancing form Valse

EXPRESSION

- Dynamics:
- * *mezzo piano (mp)*
 - * *mezzo forte (mf)*
- Tempo indications:
- * *Allegro*
 - * *Moderato*

* Basic
- Optional

GRADE 6

RYTHMIC CONCEPTS

- * Quaver with two semiquavers
- * Two semiquavers with quaver
- * Semiquaver with dotted quaver
- * Triplet of quavers

MELODIC CONCEPTS

- * F major scale
- * D major scale
- * D minor scale
- E minor scale
- F clef

HARMONY

- * Three sound minor chord
- * Dominant chord
- * Subdominant chord

FORM

- * Cypriot Suite (male and female)
- * Different kinds of marches (military, wedding, funeral, grand)
- Rondo form
- Theme and variations

EXPRESSION

- * Gradually louder crescendo
 - * Gradually softer decrescendo
- Tempo indications:
- * *Andante*
 - * *Largo*
 - * *Presto*
- Ways of performing
- Staccato
- Legato
- The voices in a four-part chorus (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass)

* Basic
- Optional

MUSICAL

Teaching music consists of the following types of activities which are

ACTIVITIES interrelated to each other and which through the appropriate structure and organisation, fulfil the aims of music education, which are as follows:

- * Listening
- * Singing
- * Movement
- * Playing classroom instruments
- * Creative activities
- * Reading and writing of music

Listening

Listening aims at helping students to gradually acquire aural sensitivity, so as to be able to discern various sounds, natural or synthetic, and develop and expand their aural ability and sensitivity (sic), so as to appreciate good music and desire to listen to it for their own pleasure.

Listening is a part of every musical activity in the classroom, as for example singing, movement, reading as well as creative activities. However, it is also important that the appropriate time is given to listening to recorded pieces, radio and TV programmes, as well as to live performances especially those which provide help and guidance towards attentive listening.

Although listening is one of the most important skills that students need to develop, it is essential that we are aware of the fact that it is not an easy task for students to listen either to recorded music or live performances. This task is much easier for children who have many visual and musical experiences, which help them to comprehend whatever they hear either from a recording or from a live performance. On the other hand students with no visual and musical experiences, have much more difficulty in deriving aesthetic pleasure from listening to music.

To be able to develop the listening skills students should:

- be focused during a listening activity.
- become conscious of what they hear
- remember what they have heard.

There are several ways, in which we can help students to become active listeners. In order to achieve this they should be encouraged from a very early age to listen:

- to their sound environment.
- to their own musical creations and compositions.
- to live music.
- to recorded music

Singing

Singing is the fundamental basis of students' music education and it therefore is placed at the centre of all their musical activities. Through singing important concepts such as rhythm, melody, harmony, counterpoint, form, expression and style are brought forward. Teachers should choose songs suitable to the student's age taking into consideration the content of the songs, their relevance to general school and social life and the underlying teaching objectives. To enable the students to feel the aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction which is provided by singing, teachers should be concerned about the correct placement of the voice, singing the melodic line in tune, correct enunciation, acquisition of

Movement

correct breathing habits, and dynamics and the quality of sound. A few minutes at the beginning of each lesson, could be devoted to various breathing control and vocal exercises, which will enable the students to have a control of the tonal centre. Solo singing should also be encouraged either during the music lessons or at school performances. As soon as students become able to express themselves freely and sing correctly with naturalness, clarity, simplicity and without any tension they can sing songs for more than one voice.

Music is very closely related to movement, and movement is closely related to the child. This is why movement is considered to be the best way for initiating a child's music education. Through movement children can express their inner world in a better way: Through movement, children learn to react to music naturally, to listen to music and interpret its mood and character by developing rhythmic and melodic concepts as well as concepts related to the other constituents of musical material.

With younger children movement should begin through improvisation. They listen to music and move freely. In order to familiarise them with movement, the teacher may encourage children to imitate and interpret movements which are met in nature and in everyday life as well as in their immediate environment. For example, to imitate the way various animals move, the ascending [flickering] of the birds, the way a car or a plane moves, and so on. This will gradually introduce the children to rhythmical movement.

Moreover with younger children, movements should be simple, basic, and natural like for example walking, running, hopping, galloping, swaying, marching, etc.

(a) Interpretation of music through movement:

When children acquire substantial experiences through basic movements, teachers should introduce children to the interpretation of music through movement. For this purpose, it is important to choose music, in which the phrases are easily recognisable and the instrumentation is simple. Sometimes the most appropriate music for the above purpose that which is performed by only one instrument, or a small combination of instruments like, for example, a duet, trio, or quintet. Music should be complete and short, so as children could be able to remember its basic characteristics (the phrasing, soft and loud sounds, the articulation of musical patterns: legato, staccato and so on)

(b) Songs-Musical games-Folk dances:

Very often through the performance of appropriate songs, games and folk dances children develop their expressive movements, because the content and the music of those pieces guide (direct) their movements.

(c) Programme Music:

Through the use of programme music children may also have the chance to acquire many experiences through movement. For this reason it is advisable that children interpret musical pieces through movement, which describe one or more characters (e.g. children try to interpret various pictures through movement (illustrations) from the "Pictures from an Exhibition" by

Mussorgsky, from “Nutcracker” suite by Tchaikovsky, from “Peter and the Wolf” by Prokofiev, from “Fairies and Giants” by Elgar, from the “Mosquito Dance” by Liatov e.t.c.

(d) Creative Activities-Conducting:

The range of musical activities which could be combined with movement is very wide; dramatisation of musical pieces that have been composed by children themselves can also be included in these activities. Moreover, conducting can also be included as an activity which constitutes the use of movement and gestures.

***Playing the
classroom
instruments***

One of the best way, in which children could be enabled to acquire musical experiences as well as a deep understanding of music is the playing of instruments. Instruments that can be used vary: (from the most easily used instruments, to the orchestra and the piano. Apart from merely learning to play an instrument, children should be encouraged to compose their own simple melodies and sound effects either through individual experimentation or through group work. In addition to this, playing with classroom instruments will help them to discern the different pitches and the combinations of sounds; moreover, their efficiency in performance will be developed and they will be able to perform rhythmic and melodic patterns from simple notation.

Their first experiences should be simple; apart from producing sounds through different body movements (e.g. clapping, tapping, stamping, and singer snapping), instruments must also be simple, and match students’ psychological needs. Home-made instruments can also be constructed by the students with the help of their teachers (i.e. percussion instruments or wind instruments).

The musical instruments which are nowadays used in Cypriot elementary schools belong to the following categories:

Unpitched percussion instruments

Pitched percussion interments

Harmonic instruments

Wind instruments and

String instruments

***Creative
Activities***

Creative activities are an essential part of musical expression in music education. Creativity relates to all students’ attempts to organise musical material in a way which is new, unique, and genuine, as well as original. The above can only be achieved if children’s imagination and inventiveness are fostered from an early age. Thus, students should be provided with a framework in which experimentation and discovery constitutes an essential part.

Some of the factors that can affect children’s interest towards self-expression and composition belong to the following categories:

- *stimuli and motives which are found outside the world of music and stimuli*

and motives which are encountered inside the world of music.

The following are some forms of creative activities:

- free creative expression either in groups or individually*
- creating sound effects and music which come from children's world*
- sound-stories, sound-pictures, novels, sound-poems.*
- musical dialogues created by the children either with the use of their voice or with the use of other instruments*
- rhythmic, melodic, harmonic accompaniment of songs or of any other kind of recorded music*
- improvisation of phrases, sentences, and poems which are expected to be accompanied by appropriate rhythms and melodies*
- putting music into words*
- composing instrumental music*
- creating expressive movements which reflect the flow of musical compositions*
- descriptive compositions*
- creating music which is related to general school and social life, writing background music for theatre performances, fairy tales, cartoons, projection of pictures, reciting.*
- composition and performance of musical, operatic works.*

For the success of creative activities, there should be an atmosphere in the class which would encourage students to express themselves freely, and to think actively. Teacher's help and guidance should be available whenever is needed.

Reading and writing music

Students' ability to read and write music is very important and should have an essential place in the school curriculum. This skill helps students to perceive music, to form musical concepts, and develop aural imagination, memory and attention. Through reading and writing music, students' confidence rises increasingly since they can get access to musical literacy, which otherwise would be inaccessible and incomprehensible. In addition, it helps the students in later years of life to become amateur performers by participating either in a choir and/or in instrumental group. Finally, notation makes music permanent, continuous, and unchangeable. Although reading and writing of music are just a part of the music curriculum, and are only means for the creative activities of students, they should be taught systematically on a well organised programme.

Reading and writing music should begin when the students are ready for this task. It is advisable that they begin between the age of five and a half and seven,

when they begin to read and write both language and maths. Teachers should take advantage of this period of students' life, because if this opportunity is lost, reading and writing of music will become both difficult as well as boring. Of course before the reading and writing of music are introduced, students should have the chance to experience music through movement, singing, playing instruments, creative activities, and listening to music. Through creative musical experiences students will begin to discern musical concepts and develop the need to employ symbols to represent these concepts.

It is important that only when students are ready and only when they have built the relevant experiences which would give meaning to notation, the latter should be introduced. For this reason music symbols and theory must be connected with experiences so as the symbols are not incomprehensible signs.

Evaluation of the music lesson

To evaluate all the aspects of musical development (i.e. skills, attitudes and values, suitable means should be used. Musical understanding can be identified by students' ability to master musical elements through creative activities (e.g. song compositions, orchestral pieces, introduction, descant, variations). Improvisational ability could reveal the extent of musical sensitivity and taste. Musical knowledge can be assessed through tests. More complex written tests can assess both knowledge and understanding. In such tests students display their understanding by using musical concepts and elements so as to solve musical problems. The standard of their performing ability as well as their skill to move to music can be observed. Reading skills can be examined either through sight singing/reading or through dictation. Students' ability to analyse music by ear reveals their listening skills, whereas their ability to analyse music from a printed page reveals their reading skills. Attitudes can be measured by the degree to which students participate particularly in extra-curriculum activities. The followings are some criteria for evaluating musical compositions:

Evaluation of musical compositions:

Sensory mode: Ages (4, 5, 6):

At this level children are fascinated by the sound, especially by the dynamic levels and by the extreme intensities of loud-soft. Elements of music are disorganised, pulse is unsteady and variations of tone colour appear to be musically arbitrary, having no apparent structural or expressive significance. Unpredictable sound exploration.

Manipulation of instruments: Ages(4, 5, 6):

At this stage children acquire better control in the techniques involved in handling instruments. Some repetitions are possible. They begin to organise regular pulse and start to use technical devices suggested by the physical structure and layout of available instruments such as glissandi, scaling and intervallic patterns, trills and tremolo. Compositions tend to be long and rambling as children enjoy the repetitions; there is also increasing control in manipulating skills.

Personal expressiveness: Ages: (4, 5, 6):

Expressiveness become very apparent in the exploitation of changes of speed and loudness levels. There are signs of elementary phrases musical gestures which cannot always be repeated. The impression is of spontaneous and

uncoordinated musical ideas emanating directly from the immediate feelings of children without critical reflection and shaping.

Vernacular: Ages (7, 8, 9):

Patterns begin to reveal rhythmic and melodic figures that can be repeated; compositions are rather short and they are contained within established and general musical conventions. Melodic phrases begin to fall to standard 2,4 or 8-bar units. Metrical organisation is common along with such common devices as syncopation and melodic and rhythmic ostinati and sequences. Their compositions are often very predictable and show that they have absorbed musical ideas from elsewhere while singing, playing and listening to others.

Speculative: Ages (10, 11, 12):

The deliberate repetition of patterns makes way for imaginative deviation. Surprises occur, through perhaps not fully integrated into the style of a piece. There is considerable experimentation, a desire to explore structural possibilities, looking to contrast or vary established musical ideas. One of the first ways of creating musical surprise or speculation, is to have a novel ending after establishing musical norms by frequent repetition.

Idiomatic: Ages (13, 14, 15):

Structural surprises now become integrated into recognisable style. Contrast and variation take place on the basis of emulated models and clear idiomatic practices, frequently, though not always drawn from popular musical traditions. Harmonic and instrumental authenticity is important for them. Answering phrases, call and response, variation by elaboration and contrasting sections are common. Technical, expressive and structural control is established more reliably in longer compositions.

Symbolic: Ages (13, 14, 15):

At the symbolic level, technical skill promotes music communication. Commitment to music is founded on an intensity of personal feeling that is felt significantly unique.

Systematic: Ages (13, 14, 15):

Works may be based on sets of newly generated musical materials, such as a whole-tone scale, a note-row, a novel system of harmonic generation, electronically created sounds or computer technology. In the systematic mode, the universe of musical discourse is explained, reflected upon, discussed and celebrated with others.

VARIOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLES IN THE PRIMARY EDUCATION OF CYPRUS

1. Choirs and Orchestras using mandolins and accordions (1960 – 1975)



2. Choirs and Orchestras using new educational musical instruments, especially the Carl Orff family (since 1975)



3. Members of the Cyprus State Orchestra playing music with the children in primary schools



SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

During the six-grade basic primary education of Cyprus the children have two forty-minute periods of music lesson per week in big schools and one period of music in small schools.. The lesson of music is taught by specialised music teachers in big schools, while in small schools a teacher has to teach music along with other subjects of the general curriculum.

The lesson of Music encompasses a wide variety of children's songs, ranging from local and foreign traditional, to contemporary songs. This range of songs is used in order for the children to acquire a fuller understanding of various theoretical issues of music, it assists instrumental teaching, and it also sets the ground for the creation of musical groups and their consequent participation in school concerts. The lesson includes many activities which serve the aims of the primary music school curriculum, such as singing, music listening, music and movement, learning how to play a personal music instrument, creative work and learning how to read and write notation. Recently a first encounter with the Byzantine notation has been added to the program. The Cyprus State Orchestra, also, participates in the music education of the children through specialised programs.

The Ministry of Education and Culture provides the teacher with a variety of teaching means, including a student's book and a teacher's guide book for all grades, teaching methods of musical instruments, anthologies of songs, series of tapes and CDs for musical listening in all classes, classroom musical instruments and other auditory-visual means. The parents' board committees usually contribute in buying various musical instruments.

The lesson of Music is usually taught in non-specialised classrooms; luckily the schools that are being built nowadays have provisions for specialised music rooms.

Each school has its own orchestra and choir that participates in all in-school activities. In certain cases the school choir and orchestra may participate in radio or TV shows and other cultural events out of the school.

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